



Annual Report

2018

Letter from Our Co-Executive Directors

We are officially **five years old** and excited to make the most of 2019! Over the past few years, we've been pretty focused on two things (that might not seem like they have much to do with each other): **backyard homes and public space**. But for us, they are two sides of one coin. Los Angeles is a city that – for all it's growth – is still a metropolis of pavement and sprawl, where many live below the poverty line. It is in these underutilized spaces that we believe there should be more options for accessible affordable housing and more precedents for public projects that support the pedestrian right of way.

In 2018, we were able to take pilots, installations, and tactical ideas into the realm of something more permanent. We launched our Backyard Homes Project and completed a mile of pedestrian improvements along Western – proving that **backyard homes can be affordable** and that it is possible to **do something different when it comes to pedestrian projects**.

In large part because we've had great partnerships and learned a lot of lessons, we've been able to implement the previously un-implementable. Most importantly, **we are proud that our work supports lower-income and working class families**, especially those who struggle to find affordable homes to rent or walk as a primary mode of transportation.






Finally, our work is only made possible by **our talented and diverse team that reflects the communities we work in and share in our mission**. In addition, we welcomed tiny new members to our LA-Más family – Bobby Timme Neill & Kesem Luna Aboody-López.

It's easy to have great ideas, yet incredibly hard to implement workable solutions. We'd like to thank all of our supporters, partners, and friends who have been hand in hand with us on implementing these much-needed alternatives. We look forward to working with you all again in 2019!

Helen Leung + Elizabeth Timme
Co-Executive Directors, LA-Más

Over the past 5 years we've been proud to be invited to work in communities throughout Los Angeles.

-  Projects Completed in 2018
-  Ongoing Projects
-  Past Projects

Some 2018 highlights include:

AFFORDABLE ADUS

After three years of research and work on Accessory Dwellings Units (ADUs), we launched a new housing initiative that **enables the average homeowner to contribute to affordable housing**. We are excited to explore a model of housing that builds off of our existing expertise in the single-family housing industry and perhaps inspires fellow community organizations to replicate this program.

PERMANENT PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

We completed a permanent **public realm project to promote a safer and more vibrant pedestrian and small business experience** in Koreatown. For the first time, we had a project budget that made steel amenities possible - which means a more resilient product that requires less maintenance. Rather than do all the construction ourselves with paint and wood, we were able to focus our energies on design and construction administration.

DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

We transformed the headquarters of a local organization in Boyle Heights to reflect community values. **Our design was inspired by the ethos of our partner** Proyecto Pastoral and the neighbors they serve. We're honored to contribute to the continual community building that will be on-going.

About Us

OUR MISSION

LA-Más is a non-profit urban design organization that helps lower-income and underserved communities shape their future through policy and architecture.

We envision a world where city growth is equitable and self-directed – where the best local solutions are brought to a city-wide scale.



OUR BOARD

Shauna Nep (President)
Renee Dake Wilson (Vice President)
Mott Smith (Treasurer)
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Naomi Iwasaki
Mia Lehrer
Vinit Mukhija
Alex Sasayama

OUR FUNDERS

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Restore Neighborhood LA (RNLA)
Selbert Perkins Design
Self-Help Federal Credit Union
Social Venture Partners LA
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Thomas Safran & Associates
Tracy Stone Architect
Trammell Crow Company
TransitCenter
UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs
Vera Campbell Foundation
Weingart Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation
WHH Foundation
ZGF Architects LLP
Zuzana Riemer & Shawn Landres



Our Work is Our Approach

This year, we realized that our approach is more important than the buckets or categories that our projects fall into.

Our **interdisciplinary model** and our combined expertise of architecture, policy, and engagement are most impactful when we collaboratively shape a program that is at the service of assisting an underserved community. Fascinated by bureaucracy and inspired by limitations, **we build initiatives with existing political resources** to propose and implement inspiring alternatives.

In that same spirit, the context and location of our projects is equally essential to our model of practice. The sidewalk, the backyard, and the storefront are all the territories and jurisdictions of no one and everyone. These places form the **collective identity of our city** and yet, for the average Angeleno, the message communicated in concrete and in policy text is: 'Your storefront does not serve you, your backyard was not defined by you, you must adapt to navigate this city.' We believe that we can offer beauty and wealth creation to support community members by reusing this leftover space. We lead and implement by organizing a collective team around a common goal. With each project, we build relationships with a **community partner** (to ensure local values are respected and long term project adoption), a **political champion** (to change policy and invest in a new way of service), and a **government advocate** (who knows all the rules and how to work with them).

In 2018, we've worked on testing housing alternatives, re-imagining and developing policy for the public realm, and supporting community-based organizations. Stay tuned on what comes next!

Learn more about our 2018 projects, listed below, in the following pages:

TESTING HOUSING ALTERNATIVES

- » City of LA's ADU Pilot Project
- » Backyard Homes Project
- » LA County ADU Pilot Program
- » Tiny Homes Santa Barbara

REIMAGINING THE PUBLIC REALM

- » Welcome to Western
- » Sidewalk of Gold
- » New Sidewalk Policy

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- » Proyecto Pastoral Courtyard Redesign

City of Los Angeles ADU Pilot Project



PARTNERS

This project is sponsored by the Mayor's Innovation Team and Council District 1, designed by LA-Más, and conducted in partnership with Genesis LA, Habitat for Humanity, Breen Engineering, Nous Engineering, and homeowners Trent Wolbe and Grace Lee.

UP NEXT

- » Stay tuned for an ADU tour in Spring 2019;
- » Make sure the City of LA passes a progressive ADU policy that reflects CA state law;
- » See how lessons from this pilot will shape the City's \$1M Bloomberg Philanthropy Mayor's Challenge!



After breaking ground last year, the hillside two-story Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) in the historic neighborhood of Highland Park is almost complete. This 1000+ square foot, two-bedroom unit in a historic preservation overlay zone (HPOZ) in Highland Park serves as the City's ADU Pilot Project. The goals of the pilot are to explore a model for **affordable construction, contextual design, financial loan innovation, and future ADU policy**. As the project architects, it will be especially exciting for us to see this project realized to reflect both the personality of the homeowners and the character of the community.



Backyard Homes Project

Want a backyard home?

We build you a backyard home,
You rent it affordably for 5 years

About the Program:

- The Backyard Homes Project is a new affordable housing initiative for City of LA homeowners with single family lots and space to build another unit.
- A collective of established non-profit organizations will help you design, permit, finance, and build a new affordable rental unit in your backyard. These backyard homes are officially known as Accessory Dwelling Units or ADUs.
- In exchange, you must commit to renting your unit to a Section 8 tenant for a minimum of 5 years.

Program Partners:

- LA-Más — Program Management, Design, Permitting
- Restore Neighborhoods LA (RNLA) — Construction
- Genesis LA Economic Growth Corporation — Financing
- Self-Help Federal Credit Union — Financing
- LA Family Housing — Tenant Matching and Support
- St. Joseph Center — Tenant Matching and Support
- Housing Rights Center — Landlord Training

Program Incentives:

- Free project management
- Affordable design and construction services
- Optional financing in the form of a permanent mortgage product
- Required landlord training and tenant support services
- Possible signing bonus for new Section 8 landlords

Apply:

- Please apply online at: goo.gl/vYqFJm
- Applications accepted until December 15, 2018

Learn More:

- For more information and program details:
 - Contact LA-Más at adu@mas.la
 - Visit www.mas.la/affordable-adus



We launched a new program this year with a collective of impressive non-profit partners! The Backyard Homes Project is a one-stop-shop incentive program to enable homeowners to contribute to LA's supply of affordable housing. We will **support homeowners in building an ADU in exchange for renting their unit out to a Section 8 voucher holder for 5 years.** We will provide a one-stop-shop for financing, design, and construction that is competitive, remarkable, and affordable. This program is made possible by the generous support of the Wells Fargo Foundation and LISC LA. Read more at www.mas.la/affordable-adus.

UP NEXT

10 homeowners in LA will be selected to participate in the first phase of this program and be in construction by summer 2019!



“There is an amazing non-profit in Los Angeles called LA-Más, who is running I think the most innovative program in the country right now. It’s called the Backyard Homes Project.”

– Margaret Morales, Sightline Institute

PARTNERS

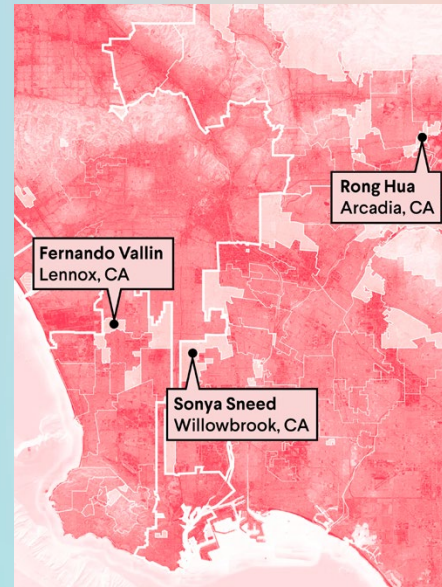
This program is led by LA-Más in partnership with Genesis LA, Self-Help Federal Credit Union, Restore Neighborhoods LA (RNLA), LA Family Housing, St. Joseph Center, and Housing Rights Center.

Los Angeles County ADU Pilot Program



“I was intrigued by the idea of housing homeless people because I used to receive Section 8 myself, and I am so grateful for my landlord at that time.” – Sonya Sneed

The County of LA selected us to serve as technical consultants for the LA County ADU Pilot Program. Based on our strategic analysis, the County of LA selected three homeowners in unincorporated LA County to participate – which includes a forgivable loan of \$75,000 to **construct an ADU that will house people transitioning out of homelessness** for a minimum of ten years. We are working with these homeowners to guide them through the process of financing, designing, permitting and designing their ADUs.

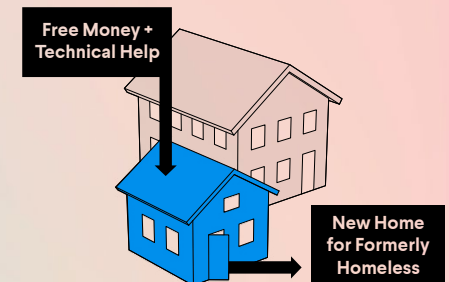


PARTNERS

Los Angeles Community Development Commission, Department of Regional Planning, Office of the CEO.

UP NEXT

3 ADUs will be completed in 2019 and house families transitioning out of homelessness.



Tiny Homes Santa Barbara

We partnered with the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara to develop a 583 square foot, 1 bedroom and 1 bathroom unit. It was designed to be **fully ADA accessible, affordable, and fit within the context of Santa Barbara’s architectural landscape.** In order to address the needs of the future tenant, all the materials and finishes chosen meet the Universal Design Standards.



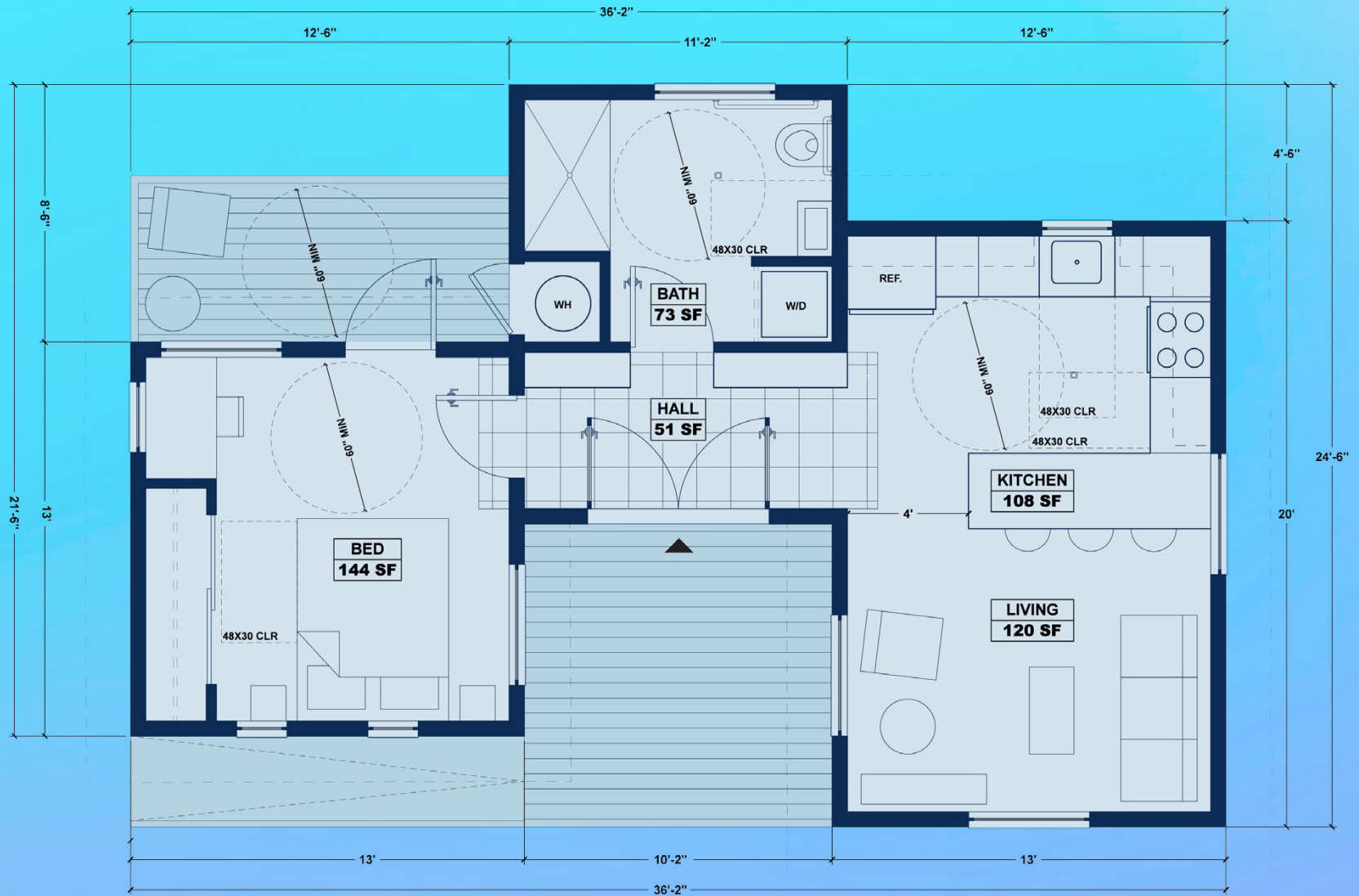
This play on the “tiny home” is a collection of volumes that come together to form a village-like single-family unit.

PARTNERS

The Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara.

UP NEXT

The Housing Authority is in escrow on several properties and will hopefully be under construction in 2019.



Welcome to Western



Welcome to Western is a public realm project informed by the many different users of Western Ave between Melrose and 3rd St. Over the course of this past year, LA-Más facilitated 3 public events and listened to many different Western Ave locals to learn about their diverse experiences on Western Ave and how it could be improved. All of this feedback informed the design of a variety of **physical sidewalk improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience and benefit the small businesses on Western Ave!**

Improvements include permanent steel furniture pieces, colored light poles, aluminum palm fronds on light poles, bike racks on parking meters, a bus shelter mural, and storefront painting for several businesses. Learn more about our work on Western Ave at www.mas.la/welcome-to-western and watch *Groundmaking's* video of the project [here](#).



IMPROVEMENTS

- » 30 furniture pieces and sidewalk painting
- » 73 trees planted
- » 75 colored light poles
- » 15 sets of aluminum palm leaves on light poles
- » 11 Welcome to Western posters at transit stations
- » 1 bus shelter mural
- » 20 bike racks on parking meters
- » 6 storefronts painted
- » 30 trash bins
- » 6 utility box murals
- » 2 mid-block crossings with flashing signal (LADOT-approved, installation schedule pending)



PARTNERS

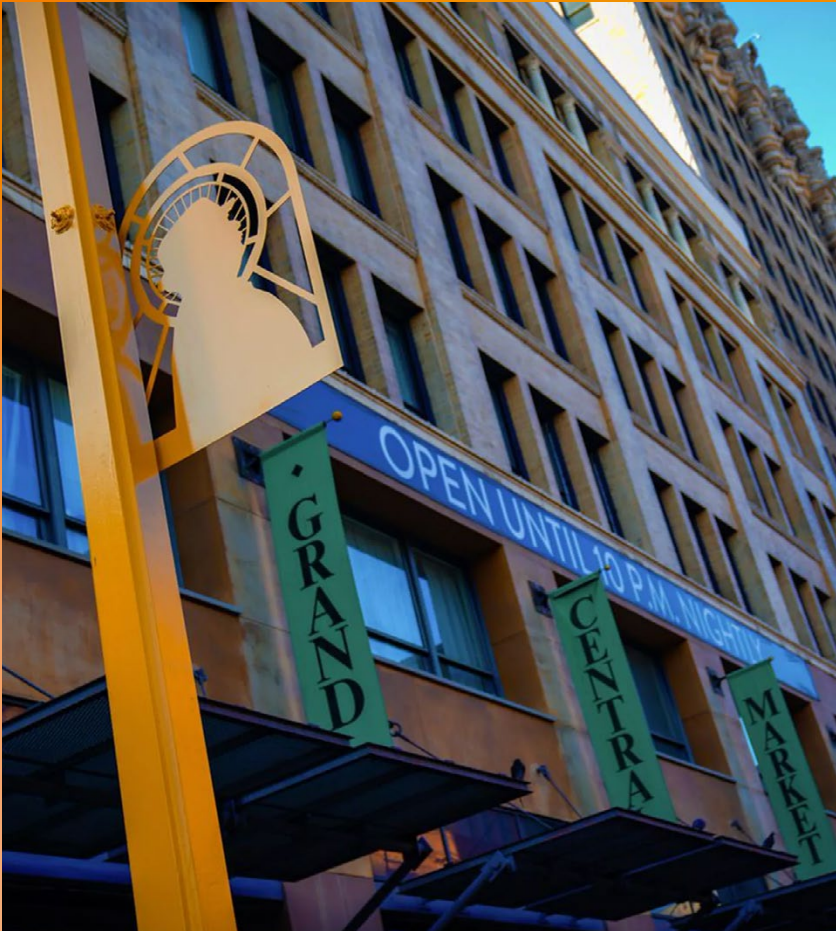
This Great Streets project is made possible by Councilmember David Ryu and Council President Herb Wesson in partnership with LA-Más and the Koreatown Youth & Community Center (KYCC). A huge thank you to our partners C.R.A.F.T. (Install Manager) + Tortoise Industries (Steel Fabrication).

UP NEXT

- » KYCC will maintain improvements for the next 5 years.
- » More hubs may be on the way in 2019 thanks to Council District 4.

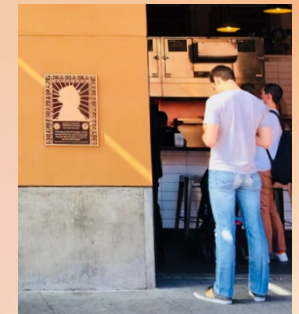


Sidewalk of Gold



PARTNERS

This project was funded by Grand Central Market and made possible by the Mayor's Office and Bureau of Street Lighting.



To honor the life of late great Jonathan Gold, a tribute ceremony was held at Grand Central Market in August 2018. The Mayor's Office reached out to us with a desire to design a fitting commemoration. We designed a **new bronze plaque that now graces the walls of Grand Central Market and reflects Gold's playful and celebratory description of food.** We borrowed from the stylistic language of macaroni art to decorate the plaque, featuring some of his favorite foods. We also designed light pole medallions that feature Gold's well-known profile and honor his much-beloved status in the city. We were excited to partner with the Bureau of Street Lighting, who painted the poles gold and installed these medallions in just two weeks.

New Sidewalk Policy



We are working with City partners to **change sidewalk policy to make it easier for communities across LA to implement projects similar to our Go Ave 26 project** – sidewalk patterning and pedestrian amenities. Through that project, we gained a better understanding of how difficult it was to implement creative solutions to first/last mile transit access despite the low cost, high impact outcome that community members deserve. Councilmembers Buscaino and Blumenfield co-introduced a motion in November to establish a new permit process for these types of public interventions, similar to the Adopt-A-Median and recently adopted Adopt-A-Lot program.

PARTNERS

This project is funded by TransitCenter, and in partnership with Council District 3, Council District 15, & the Board of Public Works.

UP NEXT

Support the City family in developing a new program that is adopted by the City Council by the end of 2019.

“Go Ave 26 serves as a pilot project that aims to transform the public right-of-way through an informed community engagement process and cross-agency approach.”

– Take Shape Magazine

Proyecto Pastoral Courtyard Design

We collaborated with Proyecto Pastoral, a non-profit based in Boyle Heights, to redesign their parking lot with their multidimensional needs in mind. The Courtyard Redesign features a **new decorative fence, inspired by papel picado, that serves as a welcoming face for an organization with long-standing history** in the community. A children's play zone for Proyecto's youth programs was added and includes a climbing area, mountain-inspired mural, and play pads. We also installed a pocket park, additional seating, and a new garden area for community members and the residents of the Guadalupe Homeless Project to enjoy.



REDESIGN FEATURES

- » New decorative front fence
- » Mini pocket park — featuring public seating that doubles as children's play pads and a lily pad hopscotch ground pattern
- » New interior garden area and play zone (funded by a Kaboom grant)
- » Climbing wall, mural, and fence weaving

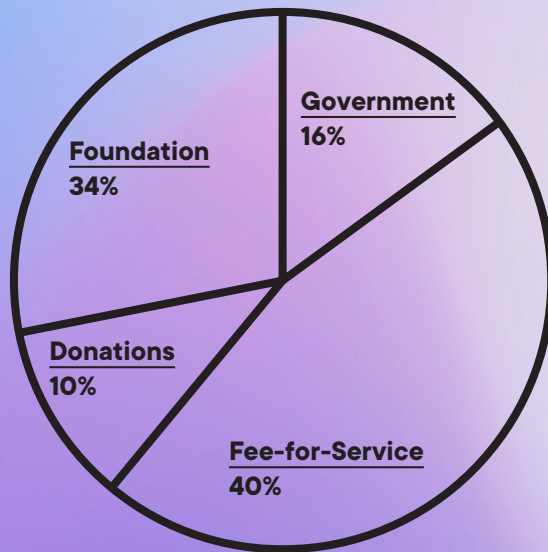




Our Financials

2018 REVENUE BREAKDOWN

- » Fee-for-service: 40%
- » Foundation: 34%
- » Government: 16%
- » Donations: 10%



2018 FINANCES

In 2018, our fee-for service work continued to grow and allowed us to **collaborate with other great community organizations**. This year, our biggest public realm project was in collaboration with Koreatown Youth and Community Center for the Welcome to Western Project.

As we approach our **fifth year of operation**, we are proud to have a reserve for the first time and a lean and solid operating budget.

We are grateful to have the continued support of the following organizations:

- » Hegardt Foundation
- » WHH Foundation
- » Durfee Foundation
- » LISC LA
- » Wells Fargo Foundation
- » TransitCenter

And we are proud to be first time grantees of the following organizations:

- » Weingart Foundation
- » Social Venture Partners LA
- » Capital One Foundation

Hootenanny Fundraiser

Our annual fundraiser is continuing to grow! This year, we held **our biggest fundraiser to date** at LA River Studios. With nearly 300 attendees and 50+ sponsors, we met our goal of raising \$75,000 to support our work in communities. We also had the pleasure of honoring **three incredible activists – Tamika Butler, Clare Fox, and LISC LA** – who are making Los Angeles a better and more inclusive city.



HOST COMMITTEE

Gaby Medina & Lila Burgos (Co-Chairs)
Gio Aliano, Ava Bromberg, Renee Dake Wilson, Anna Margaret Hollyman, Jenna Hornstock, Kelsey Keith, Debby Kim, Andy Lantz, Monique Lopez, Max Podemski, Jennifer Pope McDowell, Heather Repenning, Jennifer Samson, Arnoldo Ulloa





Our Team



AVITAL

ELIZABETH

RONNIE

ALEJANDRO

CHAZ

HELEN

ABBY

ALISA

SHANY

LA-MÁS TEAM:

- » **Elizabeth Timme**
Co-Executive Director
- » **Helen Leung**
Co-Executive Director
- » **Abby Stone**
Design + Engagement Lead
- » **Avital Aboody**
Community + Policy Lead
- » **Chazandra Kern**
Design + Engagement Associate
- » **Alejandro Dobie-Gonzalez**
Community + Policy Associate
- » **Ronnie Han**
Operations Associate
- » **2018 Staff Alum:**
Alicia Jones
Alisa Tiong
Alejandra Guerrero
Christian Mendez
Shany Albalak

Awards + Recognition

AWARDS

Washington Street Civic Leaders

Exhibit Columbus selected us as a Washington Street Civic Leader! This honor is awarded to five mission-driven organizations that are utilizing their work to make cities more equitable and sustainable. We are thrilled to be able to contribute to the architectural mecca that is Columbus, IN with an installation that will be unveiled in summer 2019.

Rubinger Fellowship

Our Co-ED Helen has been selected by LISC as one of nine recipients for the second cohort of this national community development fellowship. This fellowship is awarded to talented leaders who have projects that address critical issues in our country. Helen will focus on ensuring The Backyard Homes Project is a success.

New Talent

Metropolis Magazine featured our organization as ‘New Talent’ in their July 2018 issue, making this the first time we made the cover of a magazine. One of our favorite quotes comes from our Co-ED Elizabeth, who said “we’re like the Jonathan Gold of urban design...we share the idea that you should represent diversity and hold space for the entire Los Angeles community. You don’t try to sanitize it.”

New Creatives

Architectural Digest featured our organization as “New Creatives” in their August 2018 issue. We are humbled by their description of us: ‘an innovative nonprofit—part design studio, part public-policy think tank—dedicated to improving urban conditions and supporting vulnerable populations in the face of gentrification.’

RECOGNITION

» Metropolis Magazine

“New Talent 2018: Nonprofit LA-Más Is Revitalizing Los Angeles’s Overlooked Corners.” 11 July 2018.

» Architectural Digest

“New Creatives - LA-Más.” 18 September 2018.

» Washington Post

“One Answer to the Lack of Affordable Apartments Might Begin at Home.” 13 September 2018.

» New York Times

“A Novel Solution for the Homeless: House them in the Backyards.” 29 October 2018.

» Fast Company

“Los Angeles Plans To Find The Solution To Its Housing Crisis In Its Backyards.” 9 April 2018.

» Los Angeles Times

“L.A. County wants to help build guest houses in backyards — for homeless people.” 11 April 2018.

» Los Angeles Magazine

“How to Build a Rental Unit or Granny Flat in Your Backyard.” 12 April 2018.

Looking Ahead to 2019

FAST PITCH LA

We're proud to be part of the System Change Accelerator program and are excited to compete in the highly anticipated Fast Pitch event on March 21st at the Ebell Center. Please come out and support us! Thank you Social Venture Partners LA and our advisors Mark Loranger, Jackie Laine, Ev Boyle and Nicholas Ting for your mentorship.

EXHIBIT COLUMBUS

Being a Washington Street Civic Leader gives us the unique opportunity to contribute to Columbus' remarkable architectural landscape. We will be releasing interventions in downtown Columbus in the summer of 2019. If Columbus is on your to-visit list, make it happen with us!

STRATEGIC PLAN

Our inaugural 3 year strategic plan of 2016-2018 served us well and we're ready for our next one. We look forward to working towards our next strategic plan, which will help us be more intentional in creating the most impact.

NEW OFFICE

We are privileged to maintain our roots in Frogtown. Thanks to our friends Julie Meltzer and David Thorne, we will be moving into our new permanent office space in February of 2019. We look forward to sharing offices with Clockshop, a multifaceted arts non-profit that we greatly admire. We are very grateful for our friends at Cafecito Roastery, who housed us temporarily for eight months and kept us productive with the delicious smell of coffee. Come visit us next time you're in the neighborhood!



LA-MÁS

www.mas.la