

# Common Ground:

Favorite Public Spaces in Los Angeles



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# Introduction

Do you have a preferred spot for people-watching? A favorite stretch of sidewalk? A park that resurrects fond childhood memories?

No matter where you live or work, you rely on public space every day. It's the connective tissue throughout our cities. It serves needs both practical (getting from place to place) and life-affirming (places to relax, exercise, connect, or just be).

At Investing in Place, our mission is to leverage public space in LA to enhance the quality of life for all Angelenos.

Over the past several years, we have documented the fragmented and political processes determining priorities for sidewalks, streets, and shared spaces in Los Angeles. But to truly understand public space, we need to hear directly from community members about what isn't working—and what is.

To inform future decision-making, we set out to understand how people see and use public space in Los Angeles.

Magic Johnson Park  
Cover: MacArthur Park

# Executive Summary

To gather the insights shared in this report, we went straight to LA’s public space experts: the people who live here.

From September 2023 to April 2024, we asked Angelenos to name one of their favorite places in LA’s public realm and tell us why it’s special to them, what they do there, why they spend time there, how often they visit, and more.

We conducted 114 one-on-one interviews at citywide public events. Interacting with people in public spaces gave our conversations a deeper feeling of connection. We also offered the survey online, which garnered an additional 82 responses.



Jerry Moss Plaza at The Music Center

We heard from 196 people who named more than 200 different places in Los Angeles (some respondents named more than one, and some named places outside the city boundaries).

The top reasons people seek out public spaces are to connect to nature, to get away and unwind, to walk or exercise, and to meet up with friends and family.

Parks stood out as a clear favorite public space destination, named three times as often as the next popular category of spaces. Overall, the most popular specific places were Griffith Park, the Los Angeles River Greenway, and the Los Angeles State Historic Park. Neighborhoods were the second most popular type of public space: Frogtown, Little Tokyo, Cypress Park, NoHo Arts District, and Marina del Rey were some of the neighborhoods named. People also mentioned general sidewalks and specific stretches in Boyle Heights, mid-city, and the Valley.

Angelenos love their city and its public spaces, even in the face of a government that often fails to meet neighborhood needs. In a region grappling with a housing crisis that has left more than 40,000 people living on the streets and a lack of investment and maintenance in public infrastructure, community members still find joy and connection in the places they visit with their families and friends. Los Angeles is their home.

**In this report, we explore and share these findings in more detail. We also provide context about public space and why it matters for a healthy, connected, resilient, equitable city.**

Answers were tender, nostalgic, and at times heartening—affirming why public space matters:

“I feel at peace.”

“Easily accessible without a car.”

“I grew up going there.”

“It feels like an escape.”

“[Going there] creates happiness for me.”

“[I like seeing] people from different backgrounds and ages.”



## Little Tokyo

“I love the vibrancy and walkable, great restaurants. The juxtaposition of the major cultural institutions in a walkable neighborhood—it creates the opportunity for a whole day.”

# What is Public Space?

**A public space is open and accessible to the general public. It is owned by the public and maintained by government entities or public institutions.**

When considering public space, parks, and plazas often come to mind first, along with streets and any part of the public right-of-way. But equally important are favorite neighborhoods, blocks, specific stretches of sidewalk, bike lanes or paths, hiking trails, street vending zones, or even a bench that provides a great spot to sit and watch neighborhood activity.

## Key characteristics of public spaces include:

- **Accessibility:** Open to everyone without restrictions (except for reasonable regulations).
- **Public ownership:** Owned and maintained by the government or a public entity.
- **Diverse use:** Can be used for various activities, from recreation and socializing to protest and commerce.
- **Functionality:** Streets, sidewalks, public restrooms, benches—features that enable people to use and be in public spaces.



Pan Pacific Park

**We all use and need public space in different ways:**

- People-watching
- Talking with neighbors
- Shopping at a farmer's market
- Attending community events and festivals
- Waiting for a bus
- Running errands
- Walking or rolling to the store
- Walking your dog
- Meeting up for a date
- Standing in the shade of a tree
- Finding water or using a public restroom (if available)
- Struggling to maintain dignity without shelter, restrooms, water, or shade
- Making a living as a street vendor
- Enjoying al fresco dining with friends
- Expanding your business with sidewalk seating
- Relaxing or exercising
- Civic engagement
- Community service
- Organizing, advocacy, and protests



Lafayette Park

There are competing uses of public space (navigating around al fresco dining in your wheelchair), and there are realities we would like to see changed (people living without shelter and basic services). We need to have an inclusive, empathetic conversation about shared space among the people who use and exist in the right-of-way and the people who manage the right-of-way. This is one reason Investing in Place is committed to understanding how people see and use public space and how city leaders manage it.

All public space is not created equal. According to Investing in Place's [inventory](#) of the assets in LA's public right-of-way (the first inventory of its kind): nearly half of the city's sidewalks are

broken. Less than one-third of LA's bus stops have shelters. There's a backlog of more than 10 years to install access ramps at intersections.

**Public space is the most-used and hardest-working land in a city.**

Nothing functions without streets, sidewalks, and all the essentials that make them usable: not tax-generating industry, not employment-generating business, not uplifting services like education, healthcare, or places to play.

**The City of Los Angeles at a Glance:**

**4m**  
people

**38%**  
of people in LA  
are foreign-born



**468**  
square miles

**41k**  
people unhoused

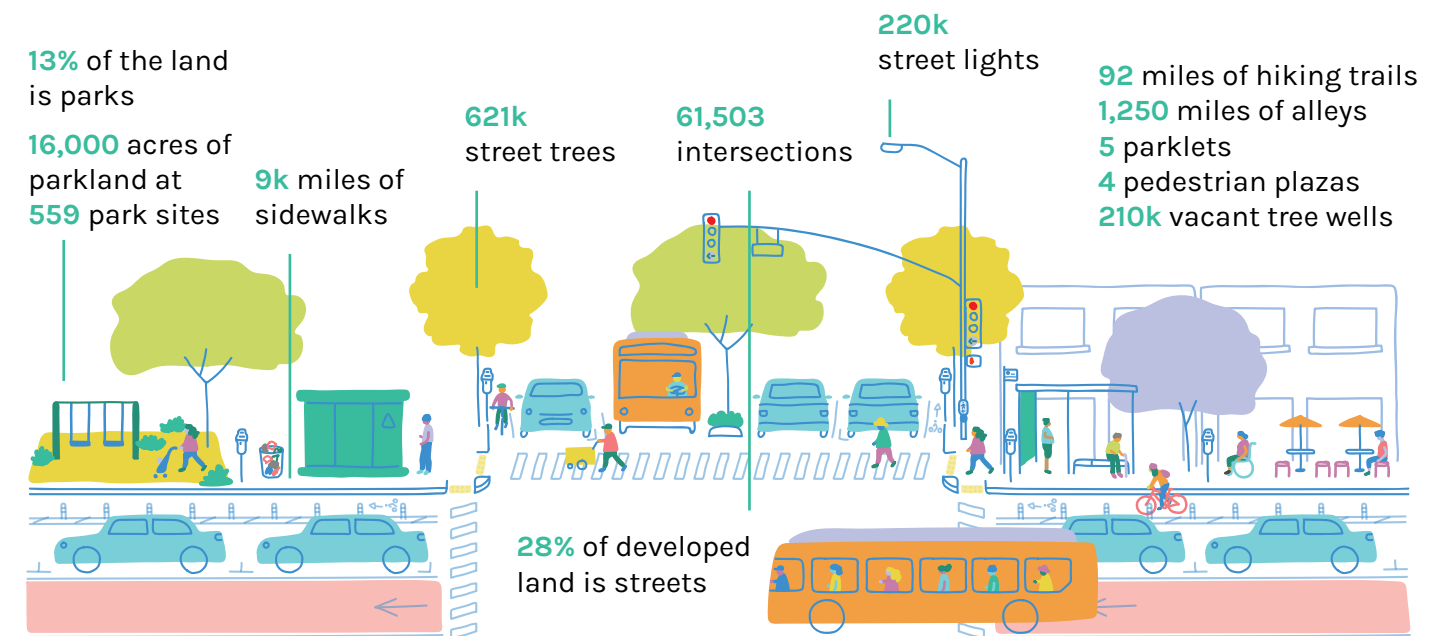
**50k**  
street vendors

**35%**  
of the population  
speaks Spanish

**63%**  
are renters

For a detailed inventory of the elements in LA's public right-of-way, see our 2023 report: [We've Got LA's Number](#)

**LA's Public Space at a Glance:**



Sources are listed in Appendix C

# Findings

## The Types of Places People Favor

### 1. Parks



**Parks were the big winner by far, named three times as often as the next favorite category.**

#### Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Park

“I live across the street. I’ve never lived across from a 3rd space. Because I work from home, it’s a blessing. After I finish working, I head over there to people-watch and decompress from the day.”

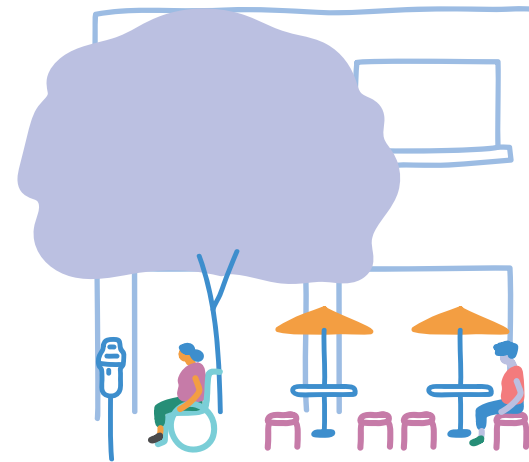
#### Magic Johnson Park

“I like to take my dogs there. It’s really big so I can walk the whole park in an hour. It feels like I’m on a trail. I’ve been going there since I was a kid. It’s close to home.”

#### Griffith Park

“I’ve been going there my whole life and I spent a lot of time there with my parents. It’s what I think of when I think about Los Angeles. It’s my place.”

### 2. Neighborhoods



**People also enjoy particular neighborhoods—especially those that give them safe and interesting places to get outside, walk, and connect with others.**

Frogtown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, NoHo Arts District, Downtown LA, and Marina del Rey were all named more than once. Neighborhoods mentioned once include Studio City Main Street area, Cypress Park, Larchmont Village, Northridge West, North Vermont Avenue, Boyle Heights, and the 4½-mile stretch of Sherman Way from Glade Avenue in Canoga Park to Lindley Avenue in Reseda, among others.

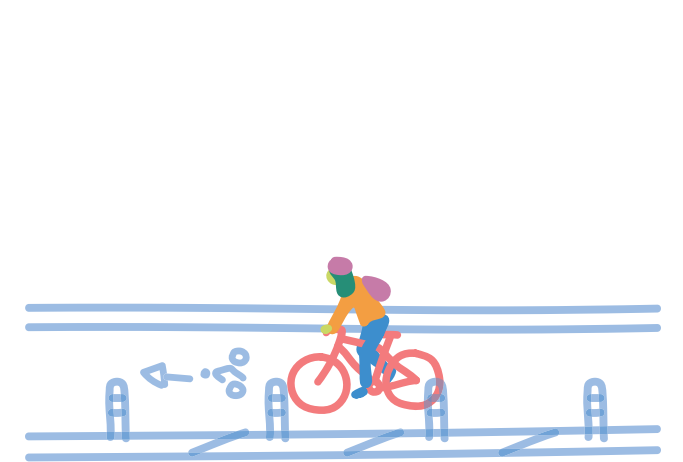
#### Cypress Park Neighborhood

“Coffee shops, market, trees, and street vendors in Cypress. I go there to have tamales and enjoy street food. People want to spend time there.”

#### Thai Town

“Food, neighborhood feel. I go there to eat, see the views, access to separation from the city, and shop for groceries and coffee. I’ve been going since I was a teenager. People care about it.”

### 3. Bike Paths



**Bike paths were the third most popular type of public space.**

Out of 17 total answers naming the LA River Greenway, six specifically mentioned the bike path, while 11 referred to the river more generally. Six people named the Chandler Bike Path, and two said their favorite was the Ballona Creek Path.

#### Chandler Bike Path

“It connects NoHo and Burbank without using a car, and it does it safely. There are so few places in LA that one can reach without a car and feel safe.”

Interestingly, while Los Angeles is often associated with the beach, only eight out of 196 interview and survey respondents named a beach as their favorite public space, and only two mentioned a beach bike path.

# The Types of Public Space Named as Favorites



## ANGELENOS HAVE DEEP ROOTS

LA State Historic Park  
**“My children learned how to ride a bike there.”**

Griffith Park  
**“I’ve been going there my whole life, and I spent a lot of time there with my parents. It’s what I think of when I think about Los Angeles. It’s my place.”**

Exposition Park Rose Garden  
**“I like to go to the Rose Garden by USC to people-watch and see the roses. It brings me memories of when I used to visit that place when I was a little girl with my dad.”**

John Ferraro Soccer Fields  
**“It’s an open space, a great place to spend time, whether playing soccer or watching your friends play. I’ve gone to that place since I was 12, I’m 40 now.”**



## ANGELENOS LIKE LOCAL AND WALKABLE

**25** people said their favorite place was special because **it’s close to home**

people like their place because it’s **accessible without a car** **18**

**7** people said their place is special because it’s **away from traffic**

More people **walk** to their favorite space than any other method of transportation.

A **neighborhood** was the second most popular type of public space named as favorite.







## Hollenbeck Park

“Grew up in the ‘hood. One of the only green spaces nearby. I go there to hang out, picnic. I grew up going there, we had birthdays and special events.”

# Findings

## Why Is It Special To You?

**Perhaps not surprising, since parks were the favorite types of places, access to nature was the most common reason a favorite place is special.** Sixty-two people said their favorite place was special to them because it has green space, a place to feel calm, an escape from the urban city, or a place to exercise outside.

Another key finding is the element of nostalgia reflected in the answers (tied at 30 for the second most common reason places are special), demonstrating that LA is a city of people who have grown up building memories, connecting with loved ones, and connecting with the city. People gave reasons like, “I’ve been going there since I was a kid,” “It brings me memories of when I used to visit that place when I was a little girl with my dad,” and “so many memories I love are connected with this place.”

People also enjoy spaces where they can encounter fellow Angelenos: 30 people said their place is special because it’s easily accessible and open to anyone, while 26 said it’s a great place to connect with friends, family, and neighbors.

A crucial piece of insight for those who make decisions about our public spaces: people want quality public space nearby. “It’s close to home” and “It’s accessible without a car” were two often-cited reasons a place is special. While Griffith Park was the most popular place, it is not easy to get there for many people throughout the city.

**El Pueblo de Los Angeles Monument**  
 “Lots of vendors and music. There is a lot of life there. I go there to feel the energy of the city. It encapsulates what LA is to me.”

**Leimert Park Neighborhood**  
 “Traffic is calm; streets are lined with palm trees, houses are historic and pretty, and major crossings have traffic lights, so it’s easy to get across. Love riding it during golden hour, getting the LA vibes.”

**The Observation Deck at Santa Monica Airport**  
 “I like the airplanes and it’s free. I like to take quiet time to watch the planes, and eat Bay Cities, sometimes with friends. It has lots of happy memories and still offers novelty even now.”

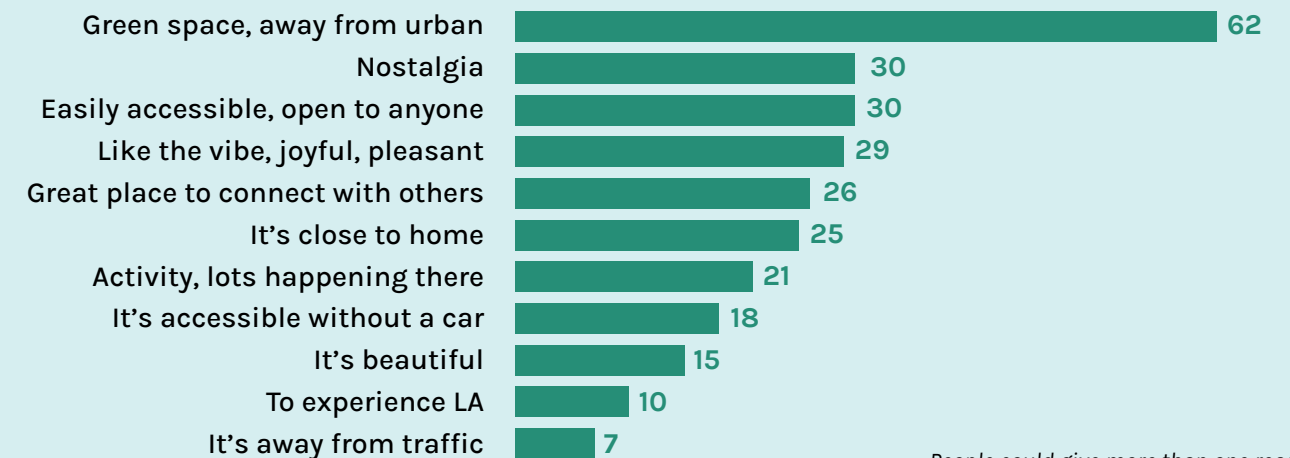
**Sunset Triangle Plaza**  
 “I’ve spent a lot of time alone there, and it made me feel less so. Sometimes it’s just nice to be around people, and this isn’t always easy here if you don’t feel like paying a ton of money to go to a bar or a restaurant.”

**Reynier Park**  
 “A very peaceful pocket park + trees, playgrounds, and lots of green grass. My dog walks me there to hang out.”

**Bellevue Park**  
 “It’s just a really sweet park that’s within walking distance from home! A rare treat in LA.”

**Stocker Corridor Trail**  
 “Greenspace close to my house.”

### Why Is Your Favorite Public Space Special To You?



People could give more than one reason.

# Findings

## Why Do You Spend Time There?

**To be outside and connect with nature, to unwind and get away, or to walk were the three most cited reasons people spend time in their favorite public spaces.**

When we consolidate the specific answers into broader categories, physical activity rises to the top: 147 people said they go to their favorite place to walk, run, hike, bike, perform other types of exercises, or let their kids play.

The second highest reason people spend time in public spaces was connection: 78 people said they go there to see family, friends, or neighbors, or to watch people or experience the energy of the city.

Seventy-four people said they go there to connect with nature, giving responses that included being outside, watching the sunset, or taking in the views. The category of quiet moments included answers like unwinding, relaxing, getting mental clarity, hanging out, getting away, thinking, reading, writing, and getting some peace.

### Grand Park Fountain in DTLA

“My kid loves it and we can get there by bus, so it’s a fun outing. The fountain just draws people to it and into it.”

### Kenneth Hahn Park

“It’s multiuse, multipurpose, and accessible for all ages. It’s easy for a stroller and safe for children. There is green space, shade, a walking path, a view of DTLA, and a civil rights memorial in the bowl. I go there to relax, get exercise, reflect, and spend time with my family. The skyline is big. There is a special view of LA; something about the view is peaceful.”

### LA River Greenway

“It lets me travel along a good stretch of Los Angeles without needing a car or worrying about being killed by cars.”

### Wilshire Blvd: The Whole Street

“I go there to feel the energy of the city. It’s the first major street when I came to LA that I explored.”

### Rosecrans Recreation Center

“To commune with nature and remember the natural environment that was there before the rancho era... the many sycamore trees and rock-lined bioswales.”

### Ted Watkins Memorial Park

“The ability to see green in a sea empty of it.”

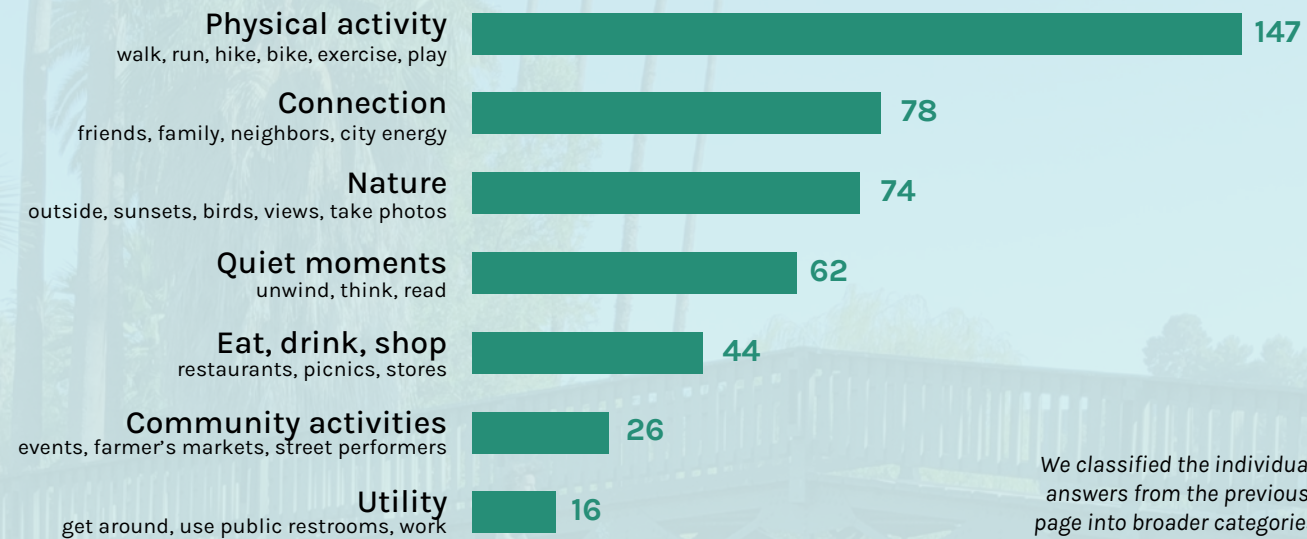
# Why Do You Spend Time There and For What Purpose?



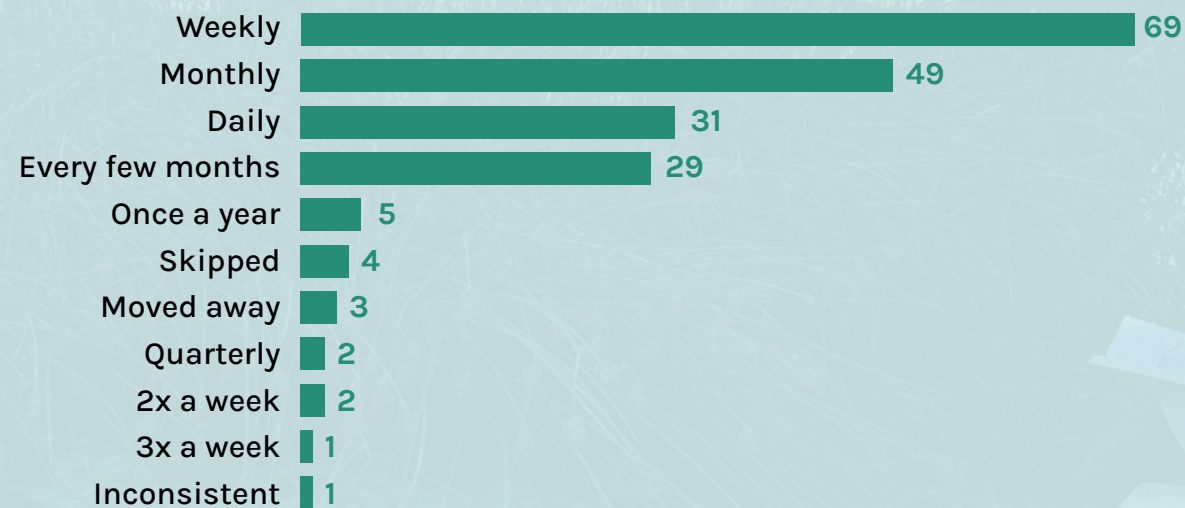
Some respondents gave multiple answers. We counted each as a separate purpose.

## Public Space is Special

### Why Do You Spend Time There?



### How Often Do You Visit Your Favorite Public Space?



Echo Park Lake

Being in nature

A bit of urban charm is a wonderful thing

Creates happiness for me

Get away from the usual bustle

Easily accessible without a car

It's beautiful, accessible, and has incredible city views

Beautiful views

Helps me stay grounded

You see a lot of people from different backgrounds and different ages

It feels like an escape from busy city life

I grew up going there

It's in my neighborhood and it kept me more or less sane during lockdown

I feel at peace

WILSHIRE PARK PLACE

Koreatown  
Wilshire/Western

“It’s super walkable and has lots of bus connections. I go there to do work, I like going to cafés to hang out.”



# Findings

## How Do You Usually Get There?

82

people said they **walk at least part of the journey** to their favorite public space—more than any other method of transportation

people reach their space by a **combination of methods**

50

53

**exclusively drive** (not combined with any other methods)

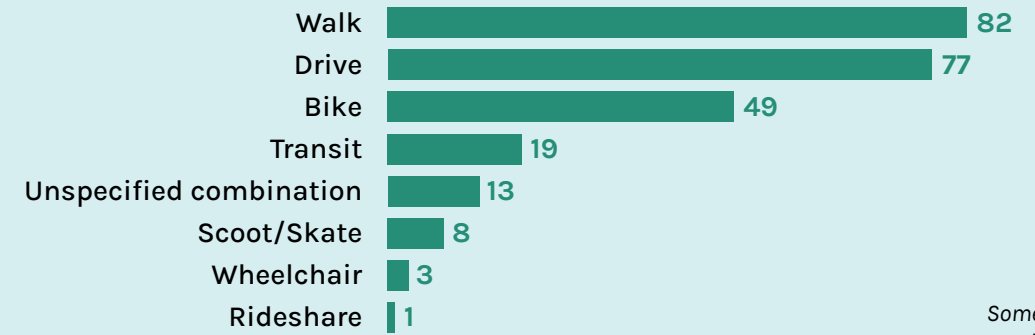
exclusively walk

49

26

exclusively bike

### How People Get to Their Favorite Public Space



Some people named multiple methods.



MacArthur Park

# Why Public Space Matters

## PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ENABLES SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE: A City's Backbone

Public spaces like sidewalks, parks, and community centers are vital parts of our neighborhoods. When we invest in and maintain them properly, these spaces can help support goals related to climate resilience, social equity, mobility justice, and community health and well-being.

There is a growing focus on the importance of what's called "social infrastructure," which includes everything from affordable housing to libraries and public plazas. This idea has gained traction thanks to the hard work of community leaders, sociologists, landscape architects, urban planners and others who've shown how well-designed spaces can bring people together, reduce loneliness, and improve quality of life.

In addition, studies on how we interact in public spaces reveal that these areas play a key role in shaping our communities and the way we see ourselves. By focusing on social infrastructure, cities can create more inclusive spaces that make everyone feel welcome and encourage the cooperation needed for communities to thrive.

## Health

Your health largely depends on how you eat, breathe, and move. Do you have access to healthy food and clean air? Is it easy to walk or cycle without risking life and limb? You also need green space, which influences mental health and physical health, and reduces exposure to extreme heat. Our neighborhoods and the built environment have a major impact on our health and well-being ([U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)).

## Connection

Social connection begins with physical connection: the sidewalks, access ramps, and elements of the public right-of-way that give people the ability to safely walk, roll, or ride to a friend's house, to school, to work, to the park, to church. Public spaces hold significant potential for fostering social connections. Whether it's enjoying the shade of a tree, waiting for a bus with friends, or simply observing the bustling life around a park bench, these spaces are vital for nurturing relationships and a sense of belonging.

## Resilience

Cities cannot be climate-resilient without well-maintained public spaces. Green spaces and trees provide essential shade but require ongoing maintenance and wide, accessible sidewalks. Effective stormwater management requires thoughtful design to prevent flooding, protect infrastructure, and capture rainwater for beneficial use. Clean energy, through personal and public electric vehicles like cars, bikes, and buses, depends on a well-functioning public right-of-way and accessible charging stations. To encourage more people to use transit, we must improve access by fixing broken sidewalks and adding ramps; enhance safety with shade, shelter, and lighting; respect people's needs by providing public restrooms; and boost reliability with bus-only lanes.

## Equity

Public spaces are crucial for fostering equitable communities, but significant disparities in their distribution and quality persist. Factors of race, class, and gender create compounded barriers to accessing quality public spaces. For example, LA's low-income and communities of color experience disproportionate rates of severe injuries and fatalities from traffic collisions (LA's [Health Atlas](#)). Two-thirds of LA county's Black and Latino populations live in areas that have disproportionately less green coverage (UCLA-led [study](#)). LA's lower-income neighborhoods of color have the least access to adequate lighting at bus stops because the city has prioritized adding shelter to higher-income neighborhoods with more advertising potential (UCLA [study](#)).



# Take Action

After hearing directly from Angelenos, our next question is for everyone reading this report: What will it take for the city to meet the needs and provide investments to enrich and support all who call Los Angeles home?

Investment and management decisions about public space affect every other aspect of a city's functions. These elements are interconnected and critical to providing a quality life and ensuring a government that truly serves its people.

## What you can do at the city level:

- **Champion equitable investment:** Advocate for a citywide initiative that allocates resources to public spaces, ensuring all Angelenos have access to vibrant and safe parks, sidewalks, and other public spaces.
- **Support comprehensive public space reform:** Push for policy changes beyond quick fixes and address the systemic issues hindering the effectiveness and equity of LA's public spaces.
- **Advocate for public space investment:** Contact your elected officials to express support for increased funding for public spaces.

*Visit these places! Celebrate our shared spaces, and enjoy our common ground.*

## What you can do at your neighborhood level:

- **Get involved in community planning:** Participate in local planning processes to prioritize public spaces in development plans.
- **Support local businesses:** Patronize businesses near public spaces to contribute to their vitality and economic sustainability.
- **Share the report and collaborate with us:** Distribute the report to friends, family, and community organizations to raise awareness about the importance of public spaces.

## What we are doing:

Investing in Place is leading a movement in Los Angeles to change the way Los Angeles budgets and plans for public space. We have called on city leaders to create a Capital Infrastructure Plan (CIP), which is a long-term budgeted plan that encompasses the entire public right-of-way, informed by residents and guided by a clear vision for the city's future. It's a roadmap for investing in and maintaining public space and infrastructure over time. Remarkably, Los Angeles is the only major U.S. city without such a plan.



## LA State Historic Park

“It’s a really nice place to relax. I go there for community events. I usually talk to folks there. It’s great to see the trees mature. I have a lot of good memories of it. Some of my dates with my fiancé have been there. It’s a green space in the city. One of the few that we have in the area.”



# Methodology

**We went to public spaces and talked to people. We also made the survey available online.**

We agree with this perspective from Project for Public Spaces' Nate Storring on the value of learning about public space while in public space: "Qualitative techniques can reveal the complex web of relationships that underpin public spaces," and a valuable way to do it is "systematically interviewing" people and "analyzing stakeholder insights" (from a [commentary](#) published by Brookings).

## In Person

We conducted 114 one-on-one interviews at citywide public events: 65 at CicLAmini in North Hollywood, 25 at the Congress of Neighborhood Councils, and 24 at HiFi Play Streets.

To encourage people to stop and talk with us at these events, we first invited them to play a game in which they chose which public space amenities they would prioritize, given a fictional limited budget. Two hundred and fifty-four people participated.

Each person was given six ping-pong balls, which they could "spend" any way they wanted (they could distribute them in any combination or even put all six in one container). Then, we asked if they would mind answering our survey questions about their favorite public spaces. We interviewed them and hand-wrote their answers ourselves.

## How Would You Allocate Money for Public Space?



## Online

We also offered an online version of the survey, and 82 respondents answered the questions online. In addition to promoting the survey through Investing in Place email and social channels, we presented it in person to those who attended the 2023 Congress of Neighborhood Councils at Los Angeles City Hall.

## Analysis

Most questions were open-ended and freeform in order to invite the most personal and individual responses possible. Many respondents gave more than one answer to a question. In those cases, we counted each answer separately, which is why the total number of answers in each section will vary. (For example: Someone might have given one location as their favorite, five activities they do there, and three reasons why it's special to them.)

Options from in person voting sessions



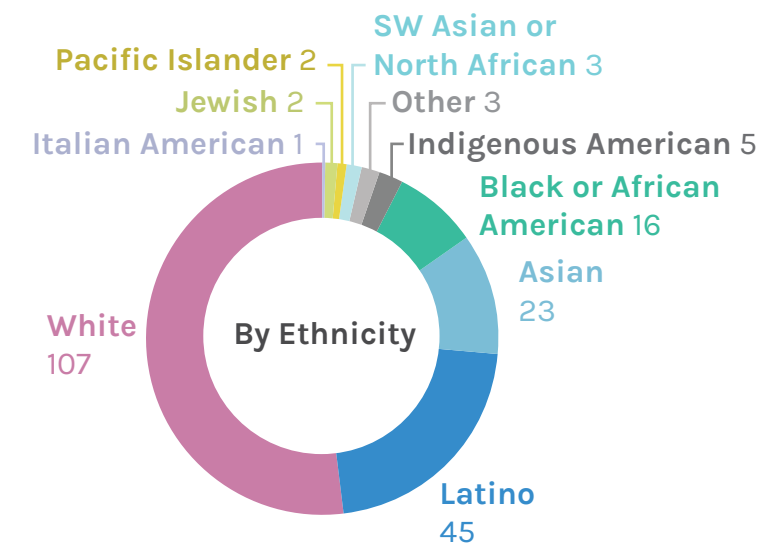
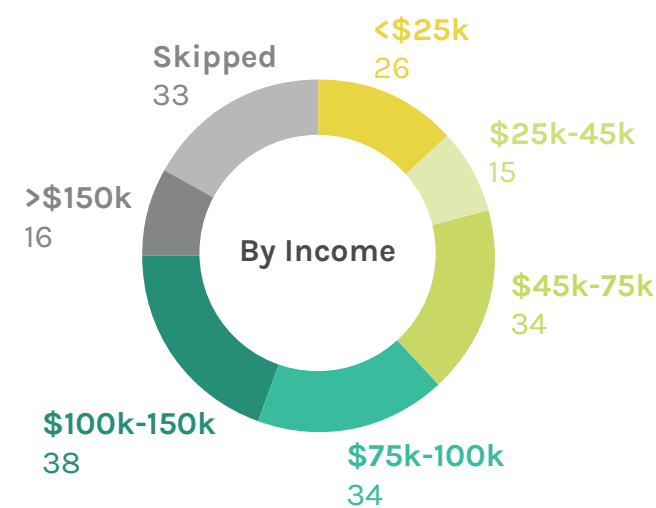
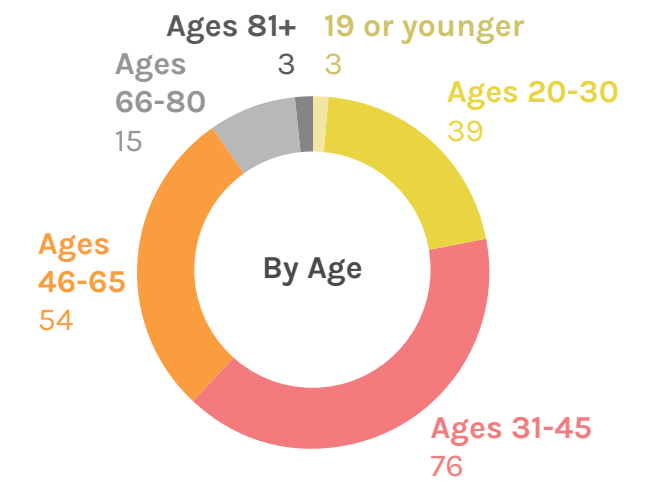
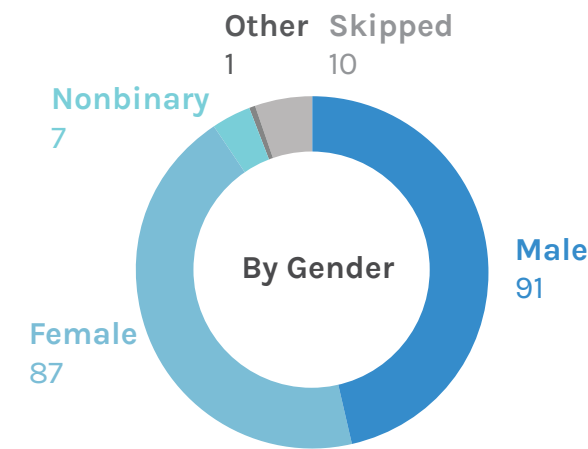
# Who Responded

## In our surveys and reports, our goal is to elevate the voices of Angelenos.

Similar to our approach in our 2022 report, [The Bus Stops Here](#), we focused our data collection on the people actively using and occupying these spaces. The asking and listening we did with the people we met in public spaces shaped our creation of this report. These ideas aren't just ours—they come from people who generously shared their time, opinions, and experiences with us.

More than half of the responses came from our interviews conducted one-on-one in the field, engaging in conversations with people about the places they love in LA. It was inspiring and fun, and it was built around connection. A city's public right-of-way serves many functions. It's essential that decision-makers hear directly from a diverse range of people who rely on these spaces, so they can make decisions that will meet the needs of all Angelenos.

We were glad to see a variety of incomes and ages, and a relative balance of genders, among our survey respondents. At the same time, we're continuously working to ensure our efforts reflect the voices of even more Angelenos—especially those without access to power and influence, yet who rely on public infrastructure and public space.



People could choose more than one ethnicity, and they had an option to write in their own answer.

# Full List of Favorite Places

**The sheer number and variety of different places mentioned shows how vast Los Angeles is.**

There are clear standouts: Griffith Park and the Los Angeles River Greenway were each named by 17 people. The votes for the LA River Greenway can be broken into two categories: 14 people named it and specified the areas around Elysian Valley, Frogtown, or Cypress Park, while three people mentioned the LA River in its entirety. The Los Angeles State Historic Park was the second most cited favorite place.

This chart shows places that were named more than once. But the long list of places named just once (on the next page) highlights the fact that Los Angeles truly is a collection of many smaller neighborhoods with their own unique shared spaces.

## Places Named More Than Once as a Favorite



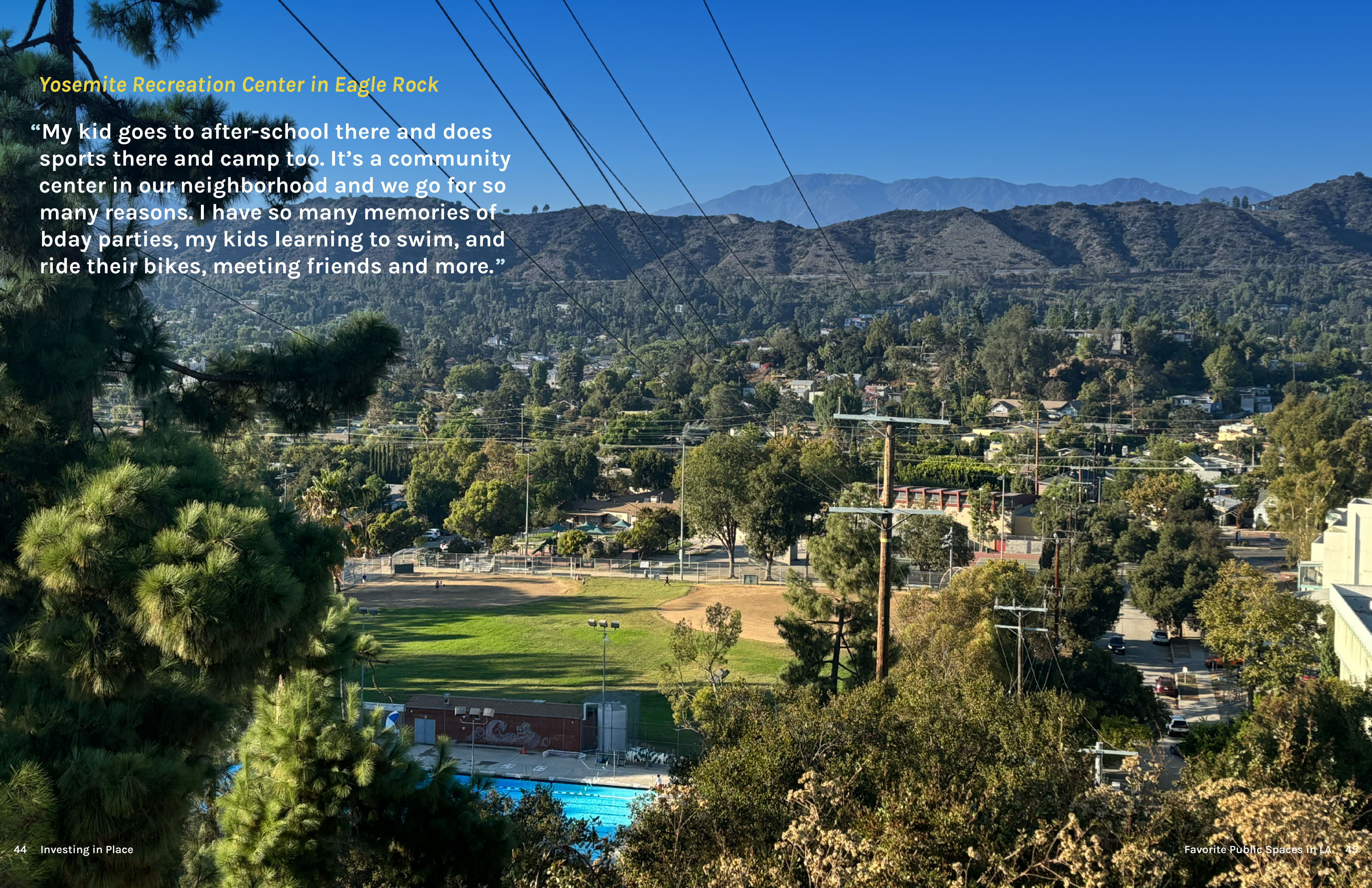


**Additional favorite places, each mentioned once:**

- 39th St. between Buckingham and Denker
- Amelia Earhart Park
- Arroyo Seco bike path
- Balboa Park
- Baldwin Hills Park
- Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook
- Ballona Creek bike path
- Beach
- Boyle Heights—3rd & Hoover
- Boyle Heights 1st Street
- Cabrillo Beach Jetty
- Central Library DTLA (outside)
- Cesar Chavez Park
- Chandler Park
- Coloring Book Plaza
- Courtyard at Sylvan and Van Nuys
- Culver Blvd bike path
- Culver City Expo Line station
- Culver Steps
- Cypress Park neighborhood
- De Longpre Park
- Dodger Stadium
- El Pueblo de Los Angeles monument
- El Sereno
- Elephant Hill Open Space
- Elysian Disc Golf
- Euclid Park
- Flat Top
- Frogtown
- Gladys Park in Skid Row
- Granada Hills along White Oak Ave (historic cedar trees)
- Grand Central Market
- Grand Hope Park DTLA
- Grand Park
- Griffith Observatory
- Griffith Park East Observatory Trail
- Grove
- Guatemalan Night Market
- Highland Park Gold Line station
- Highland Park Recreation Center & Arroyo Seco library
- Hollenbeck Park
- Inglewood in Mar Vista—between Venice and National
- John Ferraro Soccer Fields
- Johnny Carson Park in Burbank
- Kyoto Garden
- Lafayette Park
- Lake Balboa Park
- Larchmont Village
- Leimert Park Village—43rd and Degnan Blvd
- Library plazas: Silver Lake, Benjamin Franklin, Los Feliz
- Limekiln Park
- Los Angeles Convention Center and Crypto Arena (area in front)
- Los Feliz—Ambrose and Hillhurst, used to be a bench there
- Los Feliz—Griffith Park/East Hollywood
- Los Feliz—Hillhurst & Franklin Avenues
- Los Feliz—North Vermont Ave
- Madison Ave Park
- Magic Johnson Park
- Magnolia Park on Magnolia Blvd., the Toluca Lake area
- Marina Del Rey—bike path
- Marina Del Rey—Oxford Triangle
- Marvin Braude Trail
- Melrose Ave (near Fairfax)
- Melrose Place parklet
- Museum of Art
- North Hollywood Red Line station
- Northridge West
- O'Melveny Park
- Pacific Ave bridge over Ballona Creek Channel
- Palms Park
- Pan Pacific Park
- Pershing Square in DTLA
- Poinsettia Park
- Porch (my own porch: Mar Vista Washington & Beethoven)
- Reynier Park
- Rosecrans Recreation Center
- Runyon Canyon Park
- Santa Monica Airport Observation Deck
- Santa Monica Beach
- Santa Monica Ocean Blvd cliff park
- Shakespeare Bridge
- Shatto Park
- Sherman Way from Glade to Lindley
- Sidewalk stretch (Colorado/Caspar)
- South Central parks
- Stocker Corridor Trail
- Studio City Main Street area
- Sunset Blvd in Echo Park
- Sunset Triangle Plaza
- Taylor Yard Bridge
- Ted Watkins Park
- Thai Town
- Tujunga Park
- Tujunga Greenbelt
- Union Station
- Union Station lobby where the public piano is
- Van Nuys Blvd, from Van Nuys to Panorama City
- Van Nuys Park
- Van Nuys/Sherman Oaks Park
- Ventura Blvd—in Studio City/NoHo
- Westside Bike Path (Santa Monica to Venice)
- Westwood Park
- Whittier Narrows
- Wilshire Blvd (the whole street)
- Yosemite Recreation Center

## Yosemite Recreation Center in Eagle Rock

“My kid goes to after-school there and does sports there and camp too. It’s a community center in our neighborhood and we go for so many reasons. I have so many memories of bday parties, my kids learning to swim, and ride their bikes, meeting friends and more.”



# About Investing in Place

Investing in Place is dedicated to leveraging public space in Los Angeles to enhance the quality of life for all Angelenos. We're an independent voice in LA politics, leading a movement to improve the way the city budgets and plans for LA's sidewalks, streets, and public spaces.

The City of Los Angeles has no overarching plan for budgeting and maintaining public space. To change that, we need more people to understand the vital role of a well-maintained public right-of-way, the gaps in how LA manages that space, and the opportunities for leveraging public space to improve quality of life.

Help support independent accountability for LA's public space by donating to the work of Investing in Place.

## Acknowledgments

A heartfelt thank you to the 196 people who shared their favorite spaces with us and to everyone who contributed to this report.

**Investing in Place:** Jessica Meaney and Kim Perez

**Place and Page:** Colleen Corcoran and Tiffanie Tran

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At CicLAvia - South LA



# Appendix A: Complete Survey Instrument

## Question 1:

What is one of your favorite places in LA's public realm? It could be a favorite neighborhood, a block, a particular stretch of sidewalk, a bike lane or path, a hiking path, a street vending zone, or simply a bench that gives you a great place to sit and watch the activity of your neighborhood.

## Question 2:

What neighborhood is it in? What are the nearest cross streets? Please provide enough detail so we can map it.

## Question 3:

What originally caught your attention about this particular space?

## Question 4:

Why do you spend time there, and for what purpose? For a quiet moment, for people-watching, to feel the energy of the city, to feel connected to others, etc.

## Question 5:

Why is it special to you?

## Question 6:

How often do you visit this place?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every Few Months
- Yearly
- Other: .....

## Question 7:

How do you usually get there?

- Walk
- Wheelchair
- Bus
- Bike
- Drive
- Scoot/Skate
- Other: .....

## Question 8:

We want to get a good mix of public spaces from around the city. What's a public space you love in a different neighborhood? (These are the additional places listed in Appendix B. We did not include them in the analysis of the favorites named in Q1.)

## Tell us about yourself

Who we are shapes our perspectives and experiences. Help us ensure we reflect that in our work.

## Question 9:

How do you like to describe yourself? (Student, advocate, policymaker, professional, artist, business owner, parent, etc.)

## Question 10:

Do you hold an elected office? If so, which one?

## Question 11:

What is your zip code?

## Question 12:

What is your housing status?

- Rent
- Own
- Unhoused
- Other
- Skip this question

## Question 13:

Age

- Under 20
- 20-30
- 31-45
- 46-65
- 66-80
- 81+
- Other: .....

## Question 14:

Ethnicity (check all that apply)

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Latino
- Indigenous American
- Pacific Islander
- Southwest Asian or North African
- White
- Other
- Skip this question

## Question 15:

Gender

- Female
- Male
- Nonbinary
- Skip this question

## Question 16:

Income Range

- Under \$25,000
- Between \$25,000 - \$45,000
- Between \$45,000 - \$75,000
- Between \$75,000 - \$100,000
- Over \$100,000
- Skip this question

## Do we have permission to quote any of your responses?

- Yes.
- Yes, you can use my answers but not my name. Please share my answers anonymously.
- No.

# Appendix B: More Spaces Angelenos Love

It's not enough to just celebrate the favorites. We also wondered what other places people enjoy. So, in a follow-up question, we asked if there were any additional beloved public places they wanted to shout out.

Again, many people named places outside the city of LA or even places that aren't public. Also, once again, the sheer number of additional places (66 more!) underscores just how much Los Angeles and surrounding areas have to offer.

## Even MORE Great Spaces

- 3rd Street Promenade
- Angeles National Forest
- Arts District/ Little Tokyo
- Audubon Center at Debs Park
- Beeman Park
- Beverly Hills City Hall Park
- Biddy Mason Memorial Park
- Broadway downtown for the historic buildings
- Burton Chace Park
- Central Library
- Chinatown plazas
- City Hall observation deck
- Downtown Glendale
- DTLA protected bike Spring and Main network
- Echo Park Farmers Market
- Elyria Canyon Park
- Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve
- Garment District pedestrian streets
- Glendale Narrows
- Goose Egg Park
- Grevillea Art Park
- Griffith Park helipad
- Griffith Park Soccer Field
- Hollywood Farmers Market
- Hotchkiss Park
- Huntington Library/ Gardens
- Kid's school in Mt. Washington
- Korean Friendship Bell and the whole park space up there (San Pedro)
- LA Eco-Village
- LACC area and LACC swap meet
- Lankershim Blvd.
- Lincoln & Manchester (my favorite library is nearby)
- Lincoln Heights
- Little Ethiopia
- Little Tokyo Japanese Village Plaza
- Magnolia Blvd in Burbank
- Medians on Huntington Drive
- Metro Orange Line
- Mulholland Drive
- Newbury Park
- Park by Ahmanson
- Park to Playa Trail
- Parks in Boyle Heights
- Plummer Park
- San Gabriel Mountains
- Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area
- Santa Monica Mountains
- Sherman Oaks Galleria
- Silver Lake (in general)
- Silver Lake Painted Stairwells
- Stoner Park
- Summer jazz nights outside of LACMA
- Sunset Blvd/ Silver Lake
- Sunset Junction
- The Balboa Path
- The mini park in South Pasadena by the train station
- The secret garden atop Disney Concert Hall in DTLA
- The Venice Beach Boardwalk
- Topanga Park
- Tujunga Canyon
- UCLA
- Valley Village
- Valley Village Park
- Venice Blvd in Mar Vista
- Ventura Blvd— Studio City
- Verdugos

# Appendix C: Sources

## Source Citations for the LA City Stats

- 3.898 million people: [U.S. Census](#)
- 468 square miles: LA's Almanac\*
- 35% of the population speaks Spanish at home: American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 five-year estimate; [LA City Planning, Household and Family Characteristics](#)
- 38% of people in LA are foreign-born: [New America Economy and LA Chamber of Commerce New Americans in Los Angeles | Population Growth and Language, 2017](#)
- 41k people unhoused: Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority 2022\*
- 63% are renters: American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 five-year estimate; [LA City Planning, Housing Units](#)
- 50k street vendors: Chief Legislative Report, 2014\*
- 28% of developed land is streets: City of Los Angeles 2015 Mobility Plan\*
- 13% of the land is parks: [Trust for Public Land 2024 ParkScore Index](#)

- 16,000 acres of parkland at 559 park sites: [City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks, retrieved 08/21/24](#)
- 9k miles of sidewalks: 2021 LA City Controller Audit\*
- 621k street trees: TreeKeeper 8, 2023\*
- 61,503 intersections: Geohub 2023\*
- 220,735 street lights: LA Open Data 2023\*
- 92 miles of hiking trails: [City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks, retrieved 08/21/24](#)
- 1,250 miles of alleys: 2021 Bureau of Street Services Strategic Plan\*
- 5 parklets: Geohub 2018\*
- 4 pedestrian plazas: Geohub 2018\*
- 210k vacant sidewalk tree wells: City Forest Officers, 2023\*

\*Included in Investing in Place: [We've Got LA's Number](#)