



30 YEARS OF BRINGING EQUITY TO THE EASTSIDE



EAST LA COMMUNITY CORPORATION
30 YEARS STRONGER TOGETHER

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30 YEARS

STRONGER TOGETHER

Dear Friends,

This booklet will guide you through 30 years of ELACC and thank all our dedicated sponsors for this year's Taste of Boyle Heights. We celebrate not only our community's vibrant culture, but also the strength and unity that have carried us through another challenging year. It is a tribute to the people who make Boyle Heights and East LA what they are. It is a reminder that even in difficult times, we continue to show up for one another.

Over the last year, we have seen how powerful our collective action can be. With your support, we have housed families, protected small businesses, empowered first-time homebuyers, and ensured thousands of residents have access to fresh food, resources, and community. These achievements belong to all of us.

Thank you for standing with ELACC and for continuing to believe in a future where everyone can live with dignity and opportunity.

With deep gratitude,

Monica Mejia
ELACC President & CEO



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

ELACC's 30th anniversary is a celebration of our shared values and our deep roots in the community. Coming together for the Taste of Boyle Heights and other events, we're reminded of what we're capable of when we work in partnership and lead with care. This past year, our neighborhoods have faced real challenges, but we've also seen real progress. Through housing, small business support, food access, and financial education, ELACC has helped thousands of families find stability and support.

None of this would be possible without your continued belief in our mission.

On behalf of our Board, thank you for being part of this journey. We look forward to building a more just and equitable future together.

Warmly,

Manuel Bernal
Chair, ELACC Board of Directors





THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

1995-2000

NEIGHBORS BUILDING NEIGHBORHOODS



ELACC began by organizing residents to make improvements to their community via beautification projects along sidewalks and home renovations in Boyle Heights. Thirty years ago, we were figuring it out as we went, working with families to regenerate their neighborhood block-by-block. Our founders were the first in decades to make that type of investment in our community.

In the 1990s, Boyle Heights was overwhelmed with empty lots and vacant homes that cast a shadow over a vibrant community. The City had overlooked and neglected the neighborhood for too long, but ELACC brought residents together to take community ownership and build a Boyle Heights *by* Boyle Heights. Together with neighbors and volunteers, we established a small block group on Pecan Street, part of our *Neighbors Building Neighborhoods*

initiative. We facilitated conversations about disinvestment, and residents began informing our work and leading change.

Pecan Street's transformation went beyond individual homes we acquired, restored, and sold. Every family on the block felt the impact from working cooperatively to improve and make new use of their shared public space. Low-income residents took control of their built environment through this work, breaking up cracked sidewalks and replacing uneven, crumbling concrete with new red brick pavers. The success of Pecan Street fueled our collective power and strengthened our belief that only through engaged resident leadership could we make positive change in Boyle Heights.



Four Latino activists create ELACC to address the critical need for accountable development on the Eastside



Begin block-by-block resident engagement in beautification efforts, develop an organizing structure

1995 ————— 1996

Build and rehabilitate first affordable homes on Clarence Street



Hold first ELACC Posada Comunitaria in Boyle Heights

1997 ————— 1998

Move into ELACC's first home at 530 S. Boyle Ave. in Boyle Heights



Sell first single family home to low-income family on Pecan Street

1998 ————— 1999

Work with community members to design and paint mural on Cesar Chavez for Catholic Charities



Maria Cabildo returns as Executive Director, leading ELACC for 15 years

Build first affordable single-family housing site with four homes on Pomeroy



2000 —————
Build Obregon Park, the first affordable condos in East Los Angeles



Renovate first affordable multi-family development project on Percy & Indiana



When I started, we were helping renters purchase the homes they were living in, and even after renovation, make mortgage payments that weren't any more than they were paying in rent. When we educate a community of renters, we can build a community within ourselves and bring pride to the neighborhood. We might not all be homeowners, but we share the dream of homeownership.

EDUARDO ESPINOZA
Former Staff



FAMILY RESILIENCY

2001-2005

OUR COMMUNITY, OUR CHOICES

The first few years of the new millennium marked a significant period of growth for ELACC. As we developed more human capital on the Eastside, we shifted from our block-by-block approach to larger-scale, issue-based organizing and developing high density tax-credit housing. We also began to focus on increasing resident capacity to engage in community planning. As a result, we launched our accountable development campaign, which led to the resident-developed Plan del Pueblo. The People's Plan has since guided the City's update to the Boyle Heights Community Plan.

Our landscape analysis at the time revealed that public and private investments had slated nearly \$2 billion in development for Boyle Heights, including the Metro Gold Line expansion, which would open three new stations

in the neighborhood. But we knew no one was changing the community's relationship to power. The investments, powered by outside financial capital and political will, were not intended to benefit existing residents.

We knew that first we needed to build stability for the most disenfranchised community members: low-income renters. As the neighborhood became more attractive to outside developers, Boyle Heights families were ignored and often subject to predatory financial practices when attempting to build assets, putting many households on the path to foreclosure. From this impending crisis, we began considering foreclosure prevention as a strategy to help families preserve the assets and wealth they worked hard to grow.



Community Wealth team begins helping Eastside renters become homeowners

Renovate Arco Iris from a neglected site to a 5-unit family home



Join the A-G Campaign, activating members to improve local public schools through mandatory college prep requirements

Finish work on Carmelita Homes, 3 detached condos that replaced a food processing plant next to a public park

Establish Los Angeles Works for Better Health with organizations citywide to increase job opportunities for improved income and wellbeing



Found *Comunidades Unidas de Boyle Heights* to impact plans for the Sears Building, transforming the relationship Eastside renters have with decision-makers



We collected opinions from the community before making decisions or identifying community needs during our efforts to create the Plan del Pueblo. One such need was affordable housing for working families. This is needed for a healthy life and a healthy community. One result of our efforts was Sol y Luna, which now provides housing for low-income families.

CARMEN FUENTES &
TERESA SOTO
Member Leaders

2001

2002

2003

2004

2005

ELACC Housing Counselors become HUD-Certified



Renovate Paseo del Sol into 7 family units



Open 49 new apartments at Lorena Terrace, with on-site childcare and tenant services



Finish work on Las Casitas, 39 detached condos



Complete Las Mariposas Apartments renovation, 21 units in 5 once vacant sites

Las Girasoles opens with 11 new family units





BUILDING POWER

2006-2010

THE PEOPLE'S PLAN

In 2006, community members launched work on Plan del Pueblo as a strategy to push back on gentrification; the issue they identified as the biggest threat to Boyle Heights residents. Through this work, members crafted a vision for a housing development that fit the character of 1st and Soto streets, a high-priority intersection. They intended for the project to minimize the possibility of displacement, designing Las Margaritas to be community-serving from the start.

Existing developments along the 1st Street Corridor were not connecting affordable housing to the new Gold Line station, which could have decreased ridership and cut services for transit-dependent residents. Further, critical rent-stabilized units were at risk of being lost on Cummings and Soto north of Cesar Chavez. On Cummings,



a property with six vacant bungalows caused problems for the community for years. The City was ready to demolish the site, and our goal was to preserve those buildings and experiment with different types of housing options to maintain and preserve the characteristics of our neighborhood.

With two Soto properties—one, a building in desperate need of repair, another, a vacant lot slated for market-rate condos—we transformed the sites into a three-building, transit-oriented development with 42 units of affordable family housing. We preserved the architectural integrity of the existing buildings and designed the third with a nod to the art deco style found up and down Soto Street. Our project increased the availability of family housing, built the right size for Boyle Heights.

Complete Kern Villa renovation with 49 units and on-site tenant services



Open Las Flores Apartments with 25 new affordable apartments and a childcare center

Formally initiate the Community Wealth department's Foreclosure Prevention Program

Launch Tenant Services department to offer more enrichment activities to ELACC tenants and directly address and advocate for tenancy concerns

Support launch of the Save Wyvernwood! Campaign to stop eviction of 6,000 residents and removal of 1,200 rent-stabilized units



Where we lived before, the owners would scold us if we cooked past certain hours, and sometimes they didn't pay for the utilities, and we had to bathe somewhere else. Any repairs on the unit my husband made out of his own pocket. I was diagnosed with cancer in that place, but I recovered in Lorena Terrace. Life makes a turn when you move to a better place—to a good, quality home.

BRIGIDIA GALICIA
ELACC Tenant

2006

Launch El Plan del Pueblo to inform the City's Community Plan for Boyle Heights



2007

Begin organizing Boyle Heights street vendors to address concerns about police harassment and excessive fining



2008

2009

Join Right to the City Alliance, a national effort to respond to gentrification and halt the displacement of marginalized urban communities

Community Wealth begins offering free tax preparation to low-income families



2010

Activate tenant leadership committee to inform ELACC on resident needs and guide program strategy and activities

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SIDEWALKS & CORRIDORS

2011-2015

LEGALIZING #STREETVENDORS



Two decades after our founding, you could see ELACC's influence across Boyle Heights. From the historic renovation of the Boyle Hotel-Cummings Block to the fight to save Wyvernwood Garden Apartments, ELACC was driving development by us, with us, and for us. But if local families did not earn a living wage and unjust policies pushed workers into the shadows of the informal economy, we could not realize an equitable Boyle Heights.

Our work added a new dimension to fight displacement and connect working-class residents to power structures during this time. Through organizing, we became acutely aware that City land-use policy was keeping thousands of street vendors on the margins of the economy, operating in fear of police harassment, excessive fines, and confiscation of equipment and supplies. Boyle Heights residents had led us to realize our vision, and now it was time

to support them and their families. The *Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign* was born.

With over 3,500 members city-wide and a coalition that eventually mobilized upwards of 70 organizations, the campaign changed systems to create better opportunities for low-income families, strengthened the economy, and increased nutrition access to food-insecure communities. ELACC and our partners respected the path street vendors take to generate income and provide for their families—entrepreneurs who have built their own grassroots economy but need support to grow it. So, in our 20th year, we primed up to pass legislation through the City Council that would eventually legalize street vending and send us on a path to building a more inclusive local economy.



Co-Found Alliance for Community Transit Los Angeles (ACT-LA)

Increase food security by launching the Mobile Food Pantry

Support passage of the Homeowner's Bill of Rights



Lead 500+ residents through Union Station to demand right of return for residents displaced by rail development, community control of Metro-owned land, and 1 million restored bus hours

Help establish the 1st Street Community Businesses to fortify the commercial corridor against gentrification



Co-found Renters Day LA and pass 3 renter protection policies

Become stewards of Casa del Mexicano, an Eastside cultural landmark



Open Guy Gabladon Apartments, 35 permanent supportive housing units for homeless veterans

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

Open Las Margaritas with 42 affordable apartments, a site identified via community engagement in El Plan del Pueblo



Through *Right to the City*, win principle reduction for families facing foreclosure crisis in Fannie Mae's California portfolio

Ensure Metro recognizes a Community Advisory Committee for all new developments along the Gold Line

Restore and open the hist Boyle Hotel-Cummings Block, with 51 new affordable apartments, a mariachi cultural center, & 4 retail spaces



Secure City Council motion to jump-start LA's first citywide vending program



Maria Cabildo steps down as President, Isela Gracian takes on leadership

Open Sol y Luna--a site identified in the *Plan del Pueblo*--and Whittier Place, homes for young low-income families



For them to tell me to stop vending would be like them telling me to stop living. I just can't. They see us as a burden, but what they don't see is what we contribute and the struggle we go through day in and day out. Before ELACC, we didn't have anyone to back us up as street vendors. Now, we have a movement fighting for justice and for a future for our families.

CARIDAD VASQUEZ
Vendor Leader

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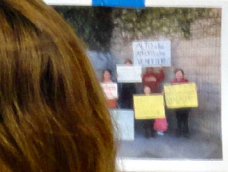
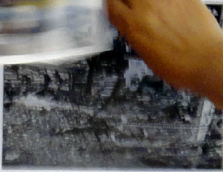
A NEW ECONOMY

2016-2020

Plan Comunitario
de Boyle Heights
(Plan del Pueblo)

Beneficios
Comunitarios de
METRO

Legalizando la
Venta Ambulante



INNOVATING WORK AND HOME

With change in leadership came changes to our structure and programmatic priorities. We began to think differently about how we support residents with securing and remaining in their homes. We expanded our scope to uplift and advance our community's cultural contributions and built more interconnectedness by infusing our work with traditional arts and cultural practices and advancing our economic justice work with emerging and established entrepreneurs.

In 2018, ELACC secured an acquisition subsidy to purchase three small, vacant lots and launched a community land trust (CLT), *Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre*. Between 2018-2019, a group of committed Boyle Heights residents incorporated the CLT, centering on sustainable community stewardship of the land. The CLT now provides more opportunities for affordable home and businesses ownership, and space to

build social capital with neighbors. And while we had been organizing small businesses and street vendors for a decade, our commitment to economic development took on new dimensions.



In 2018, ELACC and the Los Angeles Street Vendor Campaign secured significant success when LA City Council passed a sidewalk vending ordinance, the LA County Board of Supervisors voted to work on a countywide ordinance, and Governor Brown signed SB946, prohibiting sidewalk vending regulation unless they also established a pathway for legalization. And ELACC, in partnership with Inclusive Action for the City and Little Tokyo Service Center, acquired five commercial properties to launch *Community Owned Real Estate* (CORE). Over the next few years, we continued expanding our work with entrepreneurs to build a more just economy and small business ecosystem in Boyle Heights.



Open Cielito Lindo, a transit oriented site with 50 units for low-income families across from the Soto Gold Line Station



ELACC and the LASVC win a sidewalk permitting program in LA and help pass decriminilization statewide through SB956



After 14 years, Isela Gracian transitions from ELACC and Monica Mejia becomes President & CEO

Co-founder, Manuel Bernal, returns to ELACC as a member of the Board



2016

Through ACT-LA, mobilize for Measure JJJ, paving the way for Metro's Transit Oriented Communities program

2017



2018



Support community members to launch first land trust on the Eastside, Fideicomiso Comunitario Tierra Libre (FCTL).

2019

ELACC, with Inclusive Action for the City, Genesis LA, and Little Tokyo Service Center, launch Community Owned Real Estate (CORE) to help entrepreneurs own commercial property on the Eastside

2020



With LASVC partners, launch Street Vendor Relief Fund for micro-entrepreneurs impacted by Covid-19 social distancing orders

Sun Valley Senior Apartments opens its doors, ELACC's largest project for veterans to date, with 96 units for low-income seniors

I used to have to think about where we were going to go park our car and make sure that it was safe to sleep. Every day my boys would ask me, "Where are we sleeping tonight?" And every day I had to comfort them and ask them to be patient— that mommy would find a place to sleep. Now we feel peace and tranquility and the boys are happier.

DUNIA
ELACC Tenant

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BUILDING STRENGTH

2021-2025

RESILIENCY TO REGENERATION

Over the last five years, ELACC and community members have recovered from tremendous losses. Boyle Heights suffered disproportionately during the pandemic, with many workers financially set back years from their forced time away from wage-earning activities. Street vendors, domestic workers, and other low-income earners unable to perform their jobs remotely fell behind on rent, missed debt payments, and needed help to feed their families.

In the middle of the pandemic's first year, ELACC endured a devastating fire at the *Nuevo Amanecer* construction site. From there, we continued to face many uncertainties. 2020 had brought unforeseen, and at times, overwhelming challenges. But in the wake of difficult transitions, ELACC found strength and

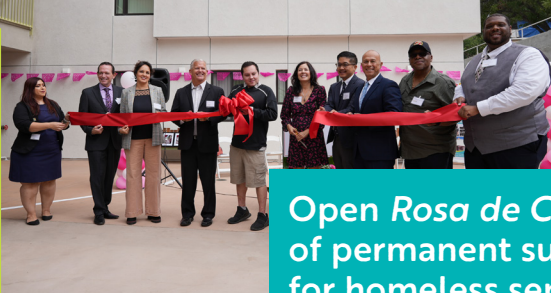
resiliency in community and forged new opportunities to extend its reach.



In the years since, Community Wealth and Asset Management teams have pivoted and expanded their scopes to provide more services to emerging entrepreneurs and small neighborhood businesses. Real Estate grew the pipeline and opened three new affordable housing sites that now provide stable homes to nearly 200 households. And ELACC is leading the way to a cleaner, safer environment for East-side families through its investment in strategies to decrease building emissions and improve air quality. And in partnership with local farmers, we are nourishing our bodies, our soil, and developing new generational knowledge of traditional cultural practices.



Initiate process of decarbonizing ELACC's multi-family sites to decrease emissions and create healthier homes



Open Rosa de Castilla, 85 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless senior veterans and low-income families



Rebuilding after a fire, open El Nuevo Amanecer in East LA, 61 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless senior veterans

Begin offering free ADU 101 workshops to help LMI homeowners create housing opportunities for Eastside renters



ELACC helped us create Campos de Cultivo Comunitario LLC, a business where we could teach, grow, and give back. We're not just growing vegetables; we're growing community and passing down knowledge. ELACC is the support that makes our projects and our impact possible. Fight for your vision in helping the community because it can become possible.

J. Guadalupe Hernandez
Campos de Cultivo

2021

2022

With project partners, win JPMorgan Chase's Advancing Cities competition for work on the Open Air Economy, supporting women of color micro-entrepreneurs

Receive LA REPAIR grant, offering cash assistance and eviction prevention services to 300 low-income Eastside families

Finished first decarbonization project at Lorena Terrace

2023

2024

2025

Support the urban farmer collective, Campos de Cultivo, to start growing food and passing on traditional knowledge at Lorena Terrace



Open Los Lirios, 50 affordable transit-oriented units for LMI families next to the Soto Gold Line stop

With Campos de Cultivo, officially open community garden at Lorena Terrace



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