

# REMEMBERING WILLOWBROOK MONUMENTS AND THE FUTURE OF MEMORY



Mrs. Jenks, the first librarian at the first county library in Willowbrook in 1913 (County of Los Angeles Public Library)

# REMEMBERING **WILLOWBROOK** MONUMENTS AND THE FUTURE OF MEMORY

**PREPARED FOR:**

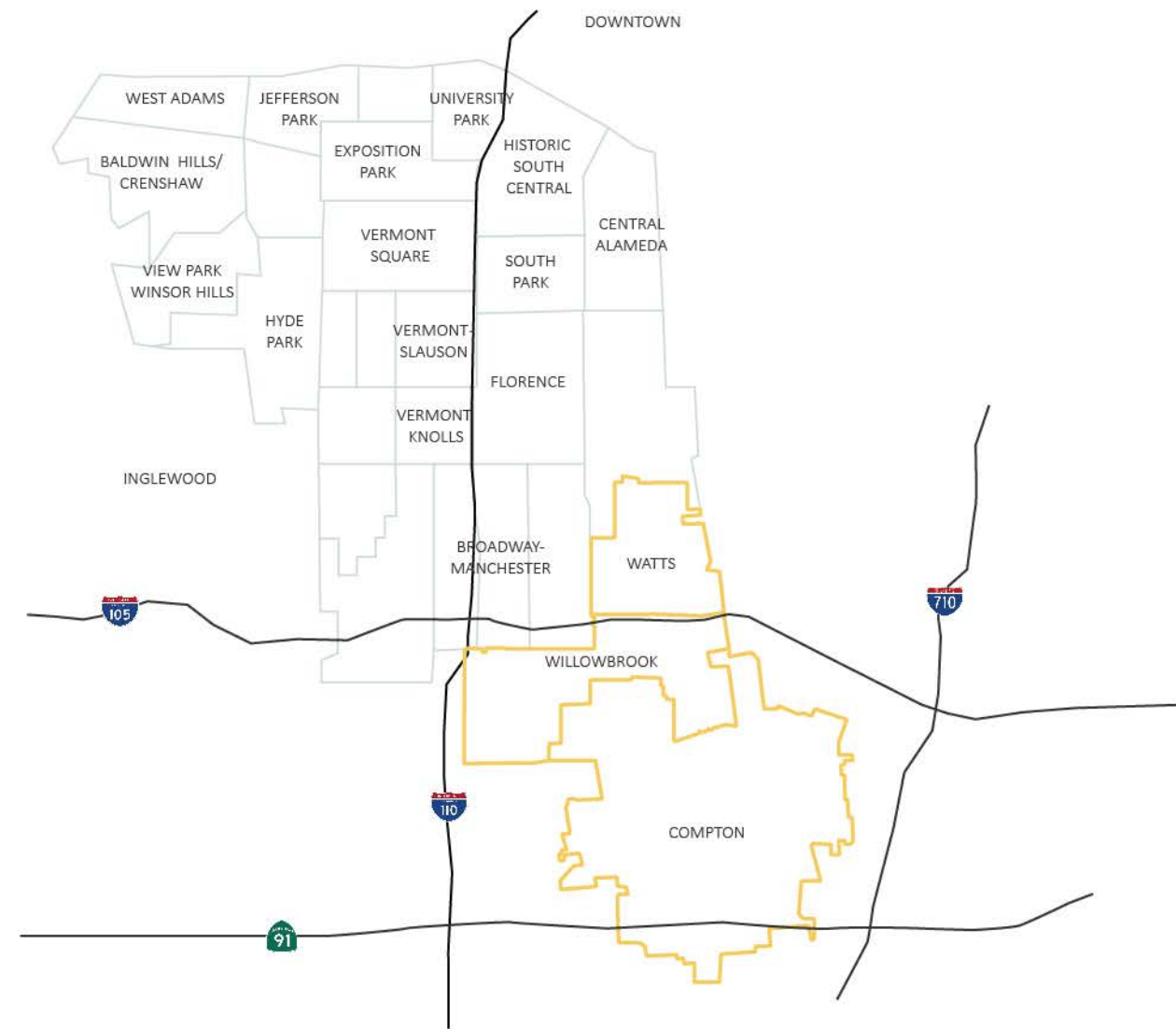
Willowbrook, an unincorporated  
community in Los Angeles County

**PREPARED BY:**

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The name Willowbrook refers to the historic willows and shallow brook that once  
separated this portion of land from the rest of the city.

# WILLOWBROOK AS 'GATEWAY' TO SOUTH LA



“We’re a gateway to greater Los Angeles. Willowbrook is a gateway from the Imperial light to the El Segundo light which is like a mile....from light to light..... A lot of people pass through our neighborhood. And there is a lot of relationships between the city of Compton, Watts, and Los Angeles. All our surrounding communities is really, really tight because so many people pass through us, and so many people’s families originated in the Watts-Willowbrook neighborhood...”

- Reginald Johnson, Willowbrook Community Members Story Circle, 2021

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# INTRODUCTION

FOR THREE WEEKS, twelve students and two professors from the USC School of Architecture immersed themselves in Willowbrook, CA as part of a course on monument-making and the future of memory and memorialization. Our research spanned ecology to community and cultural assets to specific histories and stories that make Willowbrook, Willowbrook. From this research, as well as a tour led by Reginald Johnson, a story circle with community members facilitated by LA Commons, and a community meeting held by Willowbrook Inclusion Network, our class identified potential memory interventions within the community that would be well-served through intentional and thoughtful design. In this document, we describe a five-part strategy for memory monuments in Willowbrook that we hope starts a discussion to chart a way forward: a community archive, a creative community corridor, Willowbrook monuments, Augmented Reality monuments and lastly, art programming along the highlighted corridor and at “Magic Johnson” park. Our goals for this five-part strategy focuses on community curation (i.e, the community controlling its own narrative), connection, visibility, and representation, as well as recognizable identity-building, situated within the framework of memory, memorialization and art.

Context for our proposals includes: Johnson’s desire for his 7-year-old son to know the faces behind the names of Willowbrook’s landmarks; art instruction for youth and creative visibility within Willowbrook; statements from some community members during the community meeting that ‘nobody knows who the community artists and writers are anymore’; the love that community members have for Willowbrook and shared during the story circle and community meeting; Johnson’s mention that people in the community do not know where important sites like the river walk are located; Willowbrook’s ecological and agricultural history; a desire to put forth a unique and individualized identity separate from but connected to Compton and Watts, and of course the path between Rosa Parks Metro Station and Magic Johnson park.

# REMEMBERING WILLOWBROOK FIVE-PART STRATEGY

## 1 COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

A digital infrastructure in partnership with the Willowbrook Library that actively collects and archives oral stories and histories from the Willowbrook Community

## 2 CREATIVE COMMUNITY CORRIDOR

An identifiable, art-forward corridor that follows 120th Street, directing both residents and visitors from the Rosa Parks Metro Station to “Magic” Johnson Park

## 3 WILLOWBROOK MONUMENTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR

Monuments constructed by and with community artists that celebrate the practice of assemblage art specific to this area will integrate artifacts evocative of community stories and memories of Willowbrook; these monuments will dually serve as shade structures at key locations including bus stops

## 4 AUGMENTED REALITY MONUMENTS

Physical monuments will be enhanced through augmented reality (AR) and mixed media (XR) experiences that bring the dynamic and evolving community archive into the physical fabric

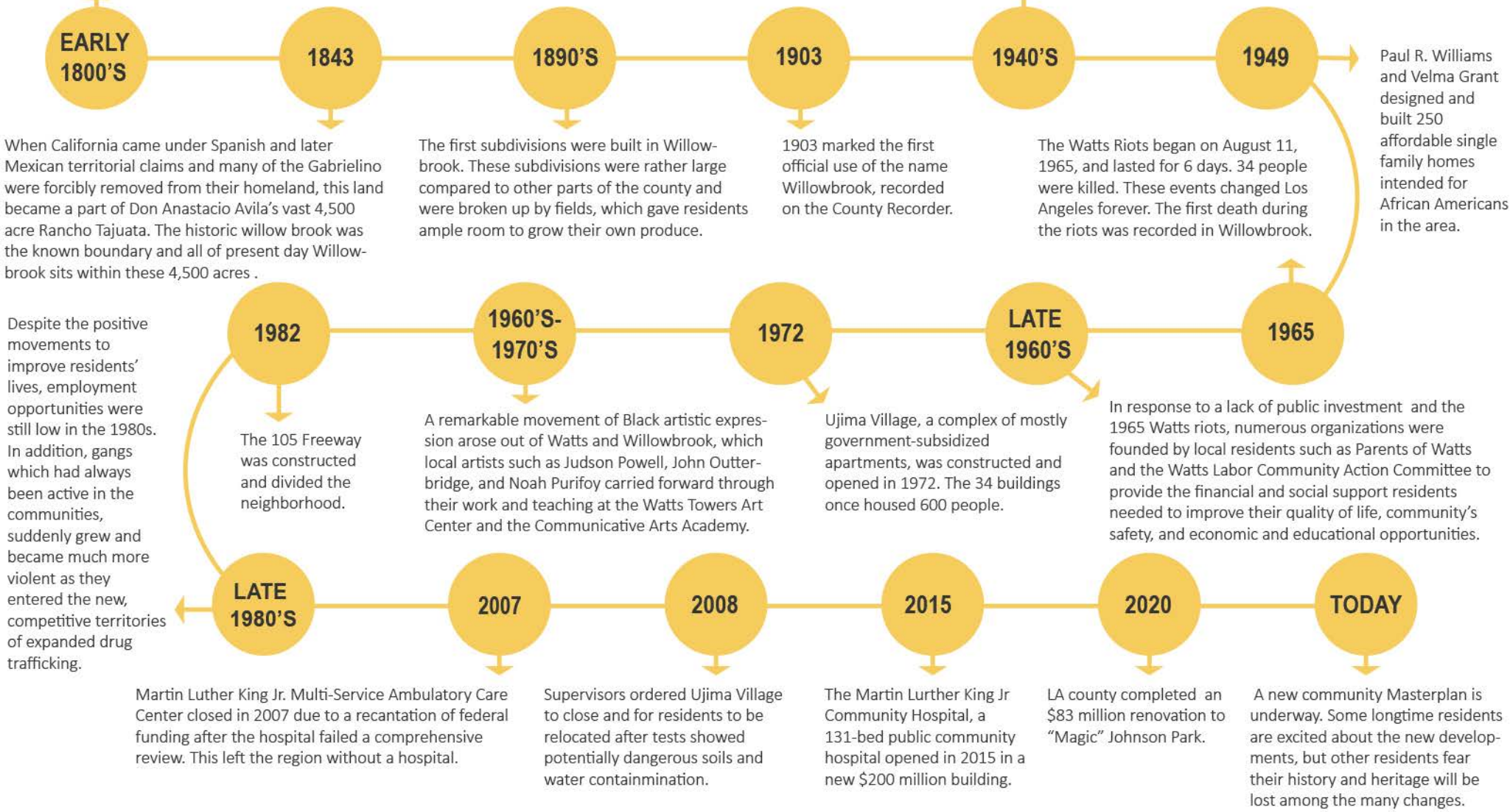
## 5 ART PROGRAMMING

Proposed art programming like the Art Hop in Willowbrook that activates spaces along the creative community corridor and in “Magic” Johnson Park

# WILLOWBROOK HISTORIES

Located in the historic floodplain of the Los Angeles basin, the region was the homeland of the Gabrielino Tongva People. Fed by a willow lined Compton Creek, the land was flat and marshy.

Subdivisions and suburban development increased rapidly after World War II. Willowbrook, however, suffered from a lack of public investment as white residents moved away and the region became predominantly Black and Latino communities.



Photos: County of Los Angeles Public Library (1909, 1913, 1929, 1965), James Ruebsamen (1986)

# AND PROMINENT FIGURES



**VELMA GRANT**  
REAL ESTATE AGENT, DEVELOPER OF CARVER MANOR NEIGHBORHOOD

Velma Grant was an African-American real estate agent who understood that demand for home would rise after WWII and wanted to provide more housing options locally. She purchased 50 acres and hired Paul R. Williams as architect, and together they developed 250 quality homes for the new neighborhood that she named Carver Manor.



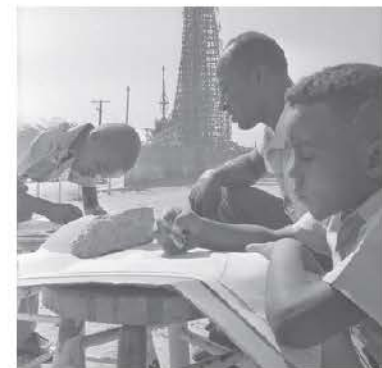
**PAUL REVERE WILLIAMS**  
ARCHITECT

Paul Williams was one of the first African-American architects practicing in the developing Los Angeles area. Among his many remarkable accomplishments, he was commissioned by Velma Grant to design the homes for the neighborhood of Carver Manor with the help of VA loans. Williams sought to create homes that were based on quality craftsmanship and included subtle design details to add charm and character that residents continue to enjoy to this day.



**MADAME A C BILBREW**  
MUSICIAN, POET, EDUCATOR

Madame A. C. Bilbrew was a celebrated musician and poet. She was an educator in the community of Willowbrook founding the Opportunity Workshop in 1963 as a cultural and education institution for residents. She was also a radio personality and became one of the first Black soloists to play on the radio.



**JUDSON POWELL**  
CO-FOUNDER OF THE WATTS TOWERS ART CENTER AND THE COMMUNICATIVE ARTS ACADEMY

Originally a musician by training, Judson Powell became fascinated with the use of art as a tool for education, and co-founded the Watts Towers Art Center and later the Communicative Arts Academy with fellow artists such as John Outterbridge which fostered and inspired the blooming local Black arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

## WILLOWBROOK MEMORIES

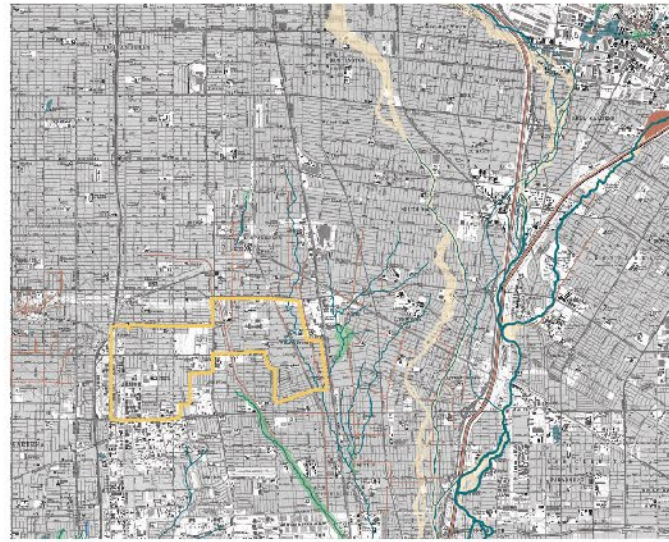
"I remember a time, prior to the '65 insurrection that the community was altogether different. I remember a Willowbrook that was a beautiful little jewel that connected to Compton, that was a part of South Central and a part of Watts. It was an area where you could freely walk in the streets. I used to walk from my house on 89th Street all the way to Compton where I used to work and was trained in photography. There were certain sounds that I remember: you would walk down the street and hear somebody playing Billie Holiday and the smells of fried chicken and on Sundays, you'd see people going to church. It was a beautiful community, but as things changed and the city evolved, it created issues that deprived people of certain rights after. After '65, a lot of things changed. To me, when it was predominantly an African American community, it had to survive so it had a strength. You had Black businesses, you had people who would exchange goods and services. After '65, a lot of that died."

- George Evans, Willowbrook Community Members Story Circle, 2021

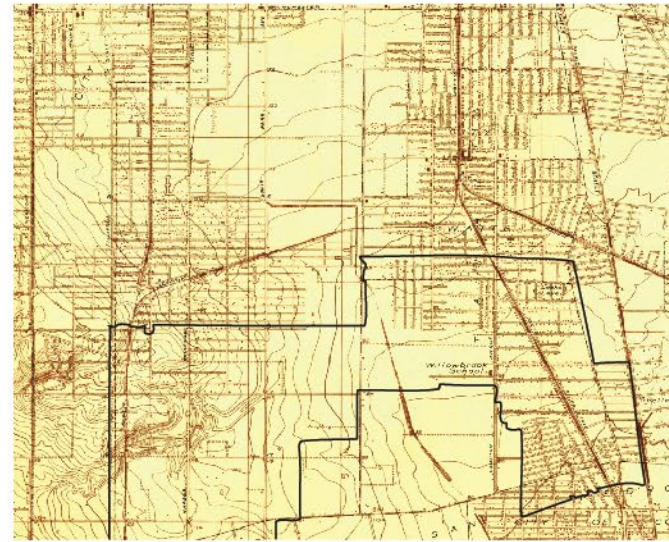
"I think we should also pay respect to our heritage around horticulture and food and land. That's a part of Willowbrook before other pieces came in... I remember when they came and cut all the trees down so the LAPD could fly their helicopters over and find people versus my earlier years when we had fruit trees. We could pull plums out of people's yards. It was a beautiful thing."

- Reginald Johnson, Willowbrook Community Members Story Circle, 2021

# WILLOWBROOK'S HISTORIC ECOLOGY



Historic Compton Creek Watershed in Relation to the Los Angeles River



A significant portion of Willowbrook remained undeveloped in 1924

Willowbrook was named after its landscape: widespread marshlands and willow thickets attributed to Compton Creek, a major tributary of the LA River. At one time, Compton Creek was a valuable water resource and a focal point of the agricultural settlements during the 1700's. Willows lined the now concrete clad creek, and the surrounding soil was very fertile. With development, however, the creek was sorely mistreated and the area was often used as a dumping ground. Ryan Millsap, a former professor at USC revealed, "I can state unequivocally [that Compton Creek] was, during the 1950s, the most polluted creek ever to be studied by the U.S. Department of the Interior."

## COMPTON CREEK THROUGH THE YEARS



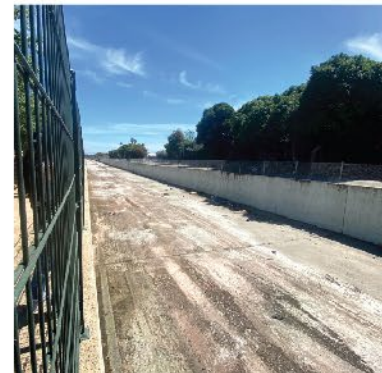
West Compton Blvd and Compton Creek, 1914



Compton Creek, 1947: still zoned for agriculture within Willowbrook



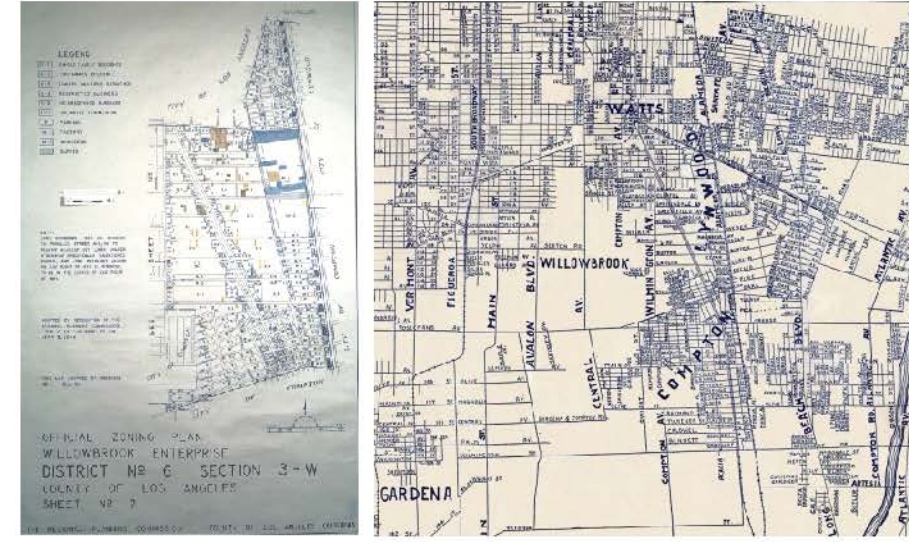
Alondra Boulevard Compton Creek Bridge, 1947



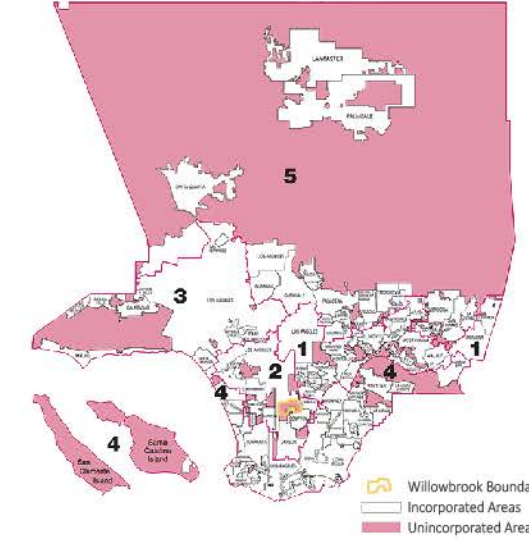
Compton Creek, today: many revitalization plans are currently underway

Photos and Maps: lacreekfreak.file; County of Los Angeles Public Library; USGS.gov; Online Archive of California

# AND ITS AGRICULTURAL LEGACY



The Official Willowbrook Zoning plan, 1948 (left) and The Los Angeles Street Index, 1928 (right). In proportion to Compton and Watts, the developed 300 ft. lots are much larger in Willowbrook



Willowbrook is an unincorporated area within Los Angeles County. Typically, zoning laws in unincorporated areas are more relaxed, allowing for more opportunities for farms and gardens

In the 1890's, the first subdivisions were built in Willowbrook. These subdivisions were rather large compared to other parts of the county and were broken up by expansive fields, which provided residents plenty of space to grow their own food. Much of land around these subdivisions remained undeveloped until after World War II. Many of the large 300-foot lots remain; some residents still have horses, cows, roosters, and chickens. In the last decade, residents have turned some of the remaining open fields into community gardens, continuing Willowbrook's long agricultural legacy.

## WILLOWBROOK COMMUNITY GARDENS



Rose Pickney at the Willowbrook Community Garden, which opened in October, 2014. This garden, among others in the area, are situated along the overhead power line corridor



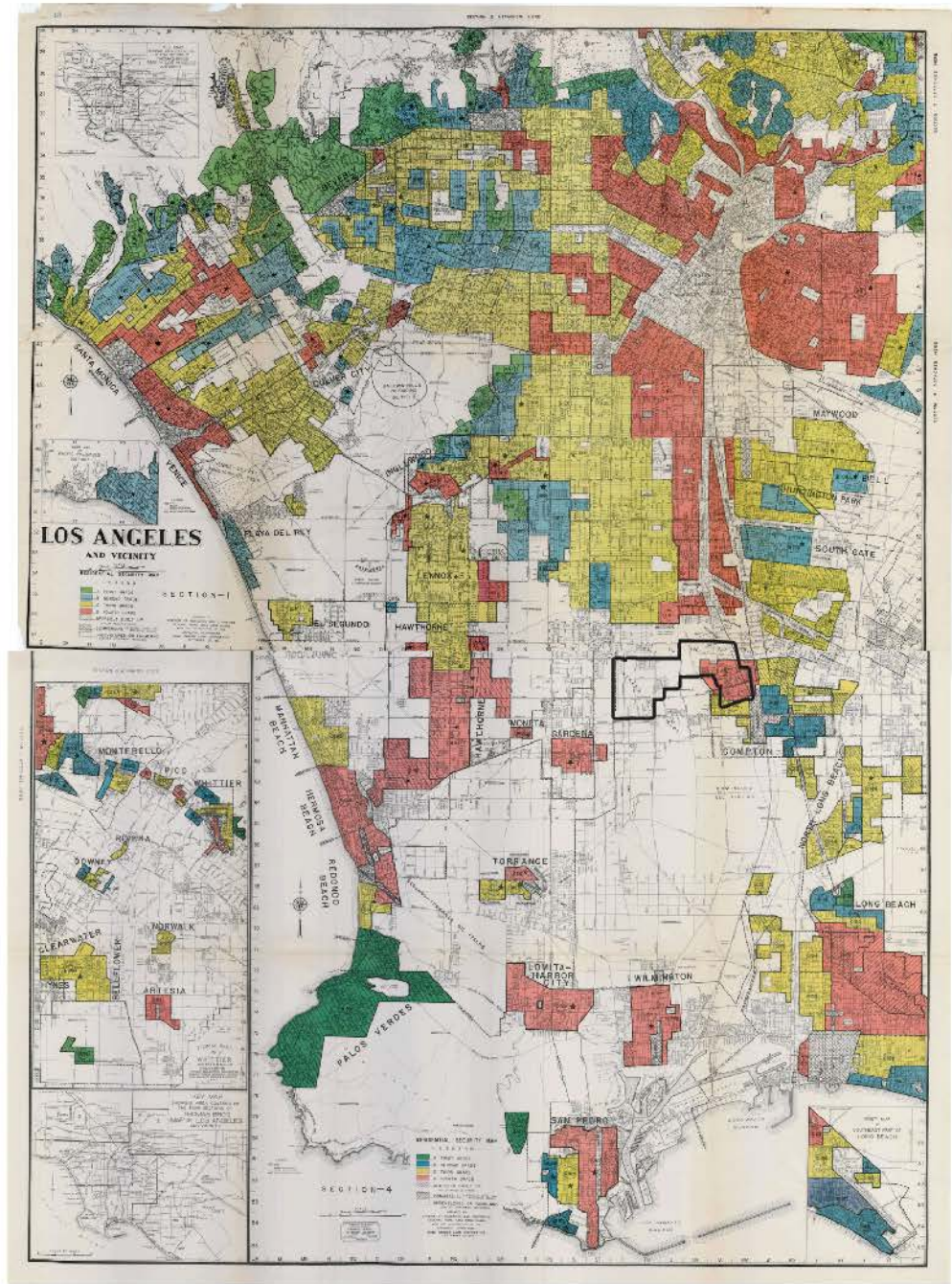
The Fellowship Garden of Love at Holmes on 118th and Holmes in Willowbrook opened in 2015



Photos: Online Archive of California; usgs.gov; lacounty.gov

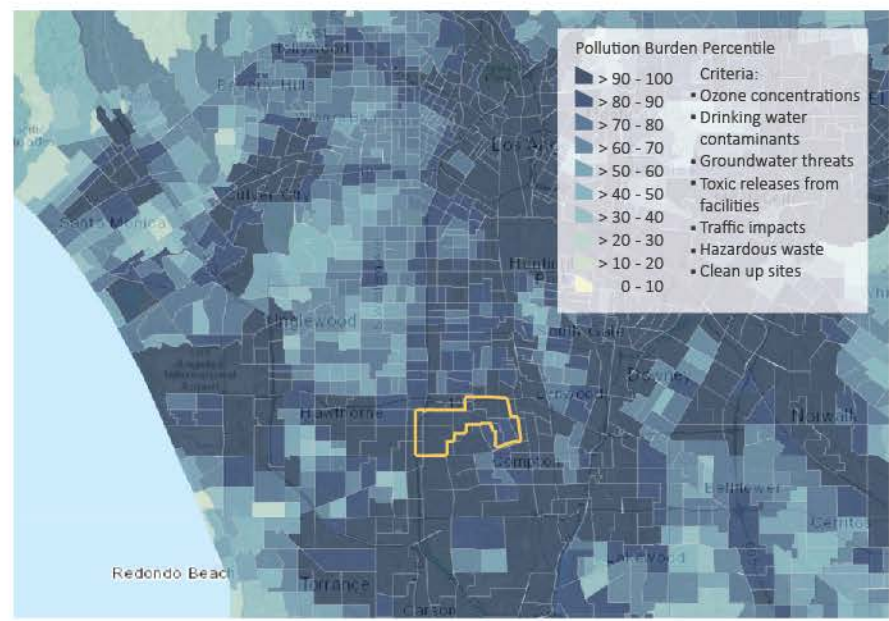
# UNEVEN GEOGRAPHIES AND THE LASTING IMPLICATIONS

# SPOTLIGHT // EARVIN "MAGIC" JOHNSON PARK



1939 HOLC "Redlining" Map of Los Angeles; in 1939, much of land within and surrounding Willowbrook was zoned for agriculture

Redlining originated in color coded maps created by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) in 1937 that defined property value of a given neighborhood. The maps were graded using four colors; red areas were deemed as "Hazardous." Following, lenders, government entities, and other services systematically used HOLC maps and definitions to decide lending, policies, and access in the practice known as redlining, which in many ways institutionalized racism through the denial of loans to people living in predominantly Black communities. The maps were based on assumptions about the community and were not accurate assessments of an individual's or household's ability to satisfy standard lending criteria. Since Black people were unwelcome in white neighborhoods, which frequently instituted racial restrictive covenants to keep them out, this policy effectively meant that Black people could not secure mortgage loans at all. At various times, this practice also affected other ethnic groups, including Latinos, Asians, and Jews. The assumptions in redlining resulted in a large increase in residential racial segregation and urban decay in the United States. Evident in the map below, which illustrates current pollution burdens experienced throughout Los Angeles, the lasting effects of redlining are rather significant; many designated red areas are overwhelmed with environmental burdens and the long term effects of systematic disinvestment. Communities including Willowbrook are burdened by this legacy.



The Pollution Burden experienced within the greater Los Angeles area and within Willowbrook; areas that were "redlined" are now some of the heaviest polluted areas in the city

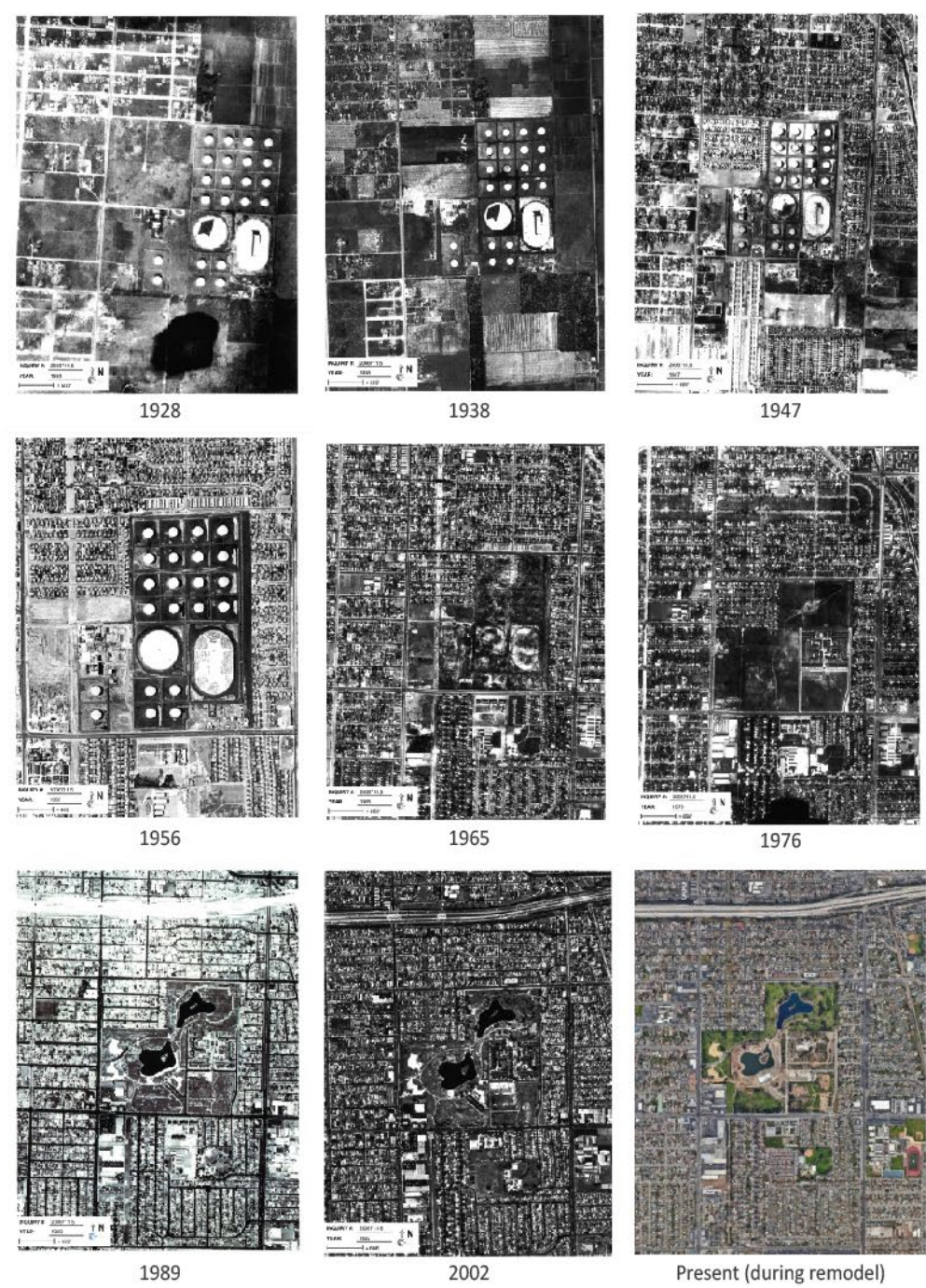
Maps: LaDale Winling; urbanoasis.org; kcet.org; CalEnviroScreen

Phase 1A, an \$83-million renovation of Earvin "Magic" Johnson park was completed in February, 2021. Along with the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital, this park is considered to be one of Willowbrook's greatest assets. "Magic" Johnson Park, however, was not always the beautiful park that it is today. General Petroleum Company purchased the site in 1923 and ExxonMobil Oil Corporation operated the "tank farm" until 1963. According to the California State Water Resources Control Board, "site facilities included twenty-two 80,000 barrel above-ground storage tanks; two concrete-lined crude oil reservoirs, and equipment to pump and circulate the petroleum products to, from, and throughout the facility." Between 1962 and 1964, evident in the chronological aerial photographs (right), the "tank farm" was dismantled and removed, and the property was subsequently sold to the DeLay Land Company. In 1987, the state transferred ownership of the property to the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation.

On the same site, construction of the Ujima Village Apartment Complex began in the 1970's and opened in 1972 despite a limited environmental investigation revealing contaminated soils associated with petroleum products beneath the planned development. At the time, the Housing Authority (HUD) decided that the contaminated soils would not pose a significant health risk for the residents. In 2006 and 2008, subsequent testing, however, reconfirmed the presence of chemicals in the soil as well as in the groundwater, which set off County alarms. Molly Hennessy-Fisk of the LA times wrote, "Citing that contamination, county supervisors... declared [Ujima Village] blighted and gave tenants 90 days to relocate before the buildings are demolished" (2009). By 2012, the site was entirely vacant, and construction of Phase 1B of the master plan, which will incorporate this land, the former Ujima Village, into the park, is currently underway.

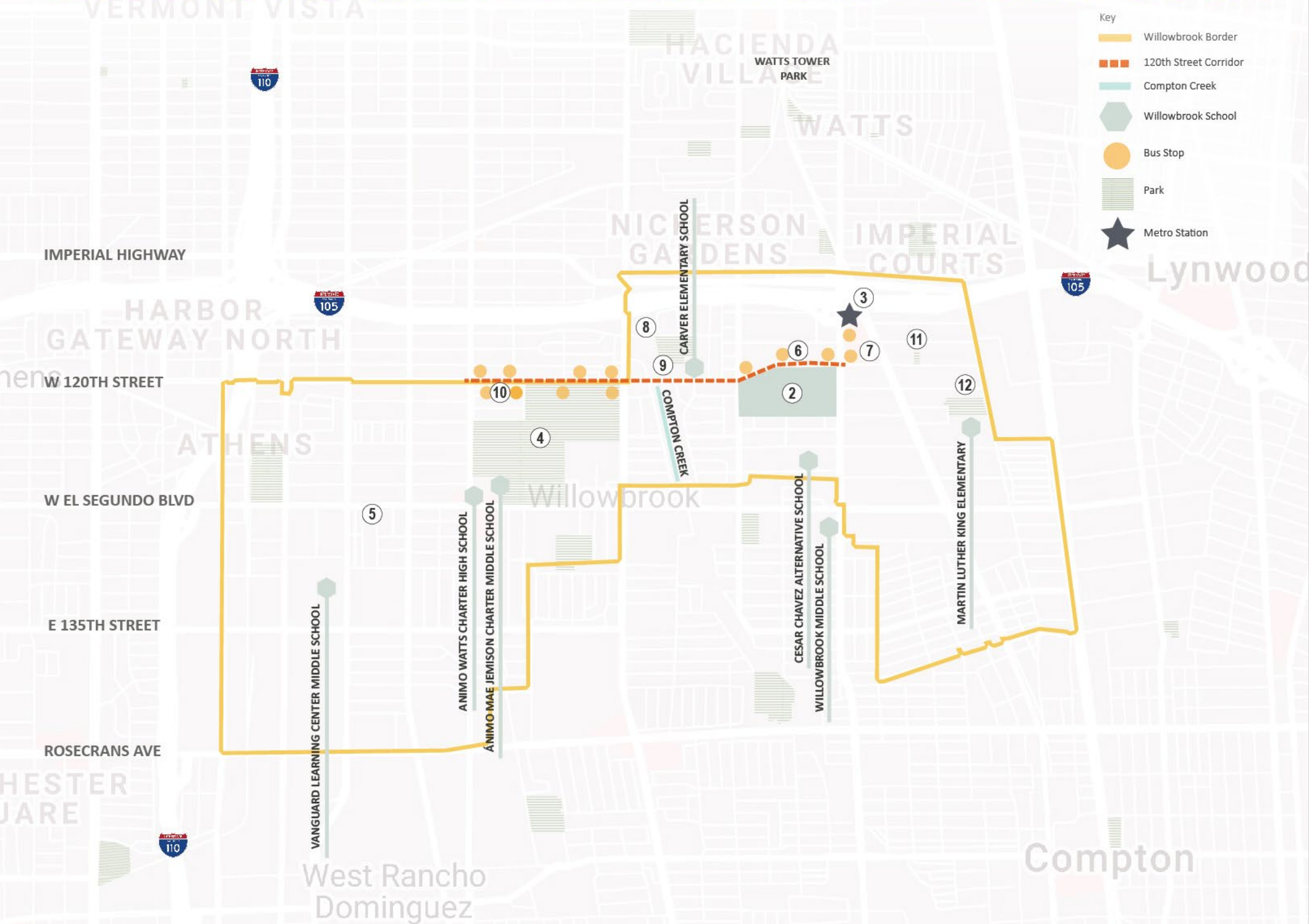


In 1937, current day "Magic" Johnson park was a "General Petroleum Tank Farm" (left); in 1948, the future "Magic" Johnson park is zoned as M-1 and M-4, Factory and Heavy Industrial (right)

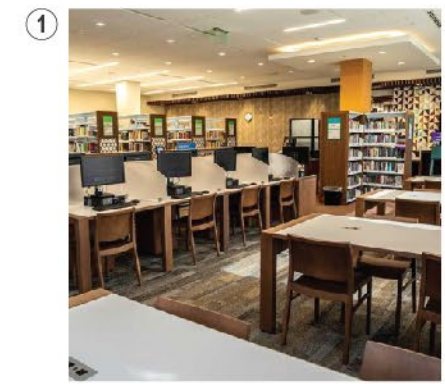


Photos and maps: USGS.gov (1937) ; California State Water Resources Control Board (1928, 1938, 1947, 1956, 1965, 1976, 1989, 2002); Google Earth (present)

# SIGNIFICANT SITES AND ASSETS IN WILLOWBROOK



- Key
- Willowbrook Border
  - 120th Street Corridor
  - Compton Creek
  - Willowbrook School
  - Bus Stop
  - Park
  - ★ Metro Station



Willowbrook Library



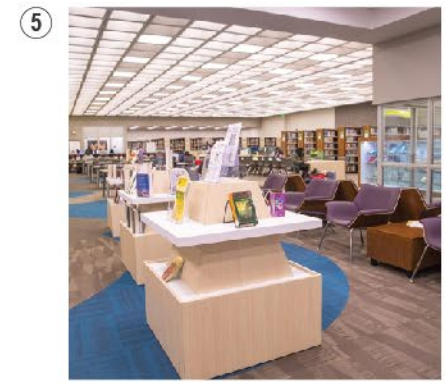
Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital



Rosa Parks Metro Station



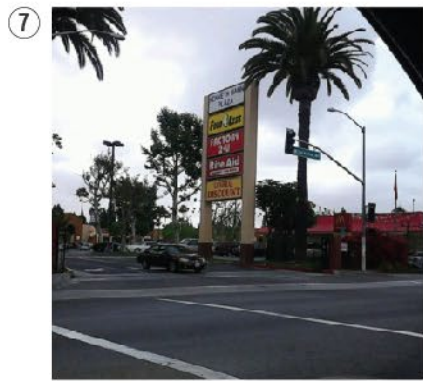
"Magic" Johnson Park



AC Bilbrew Library



Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science



Kenneth Hahn Plaza



George Washington Carver Park



Watts-Willowbrook Boys & Girls Club



Willowbrook Community Garden



Faith and Hope Park



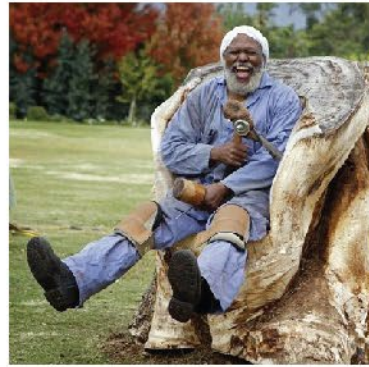
Mona Park

**PLUS MANY MORE**



# WILLOWBROOK COMMUNITY ARTISTS

# AND WILLOWBROOK COMMUNITY LEADERS



**CHARLES DICKSON**  
ARTIST

"There are places you can go for fame and what have you that aren't necessarily that healthy for one's personality. And I've always understood, for some reason, that is O.K. to have an ego but its not too healthy to prop yourself in a position of greatness and grandeur where you forget who you are or where your gift comes from. So I try to share what I have."



**GEORGE EVANS**  
ARTIST, EDUCATOR

Committed to cultivating the next generation of young artists, George Evans formed the Youth Art Team in South L.A. in the 1990s and taught at Los Angeles Trade Technical College for two decades as a dedicated educator. The artist drew upon his decades of experience as a professor to conduct a series of arts workshops... with local high school students."  
-Heidi Zeller



**ALICE 'SWEET ALICE' HARRIS**  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PARENTS OF WATTS

Sweet Alice, as she is widely known, founded the organization Parents of Watts out of her own home in response to the pain and violence of the Watts Riots of 1965. Today the organization is run out of 8 different local residences providing resources, guidance, and training to help her fellow community members and particularly children and young adults access a better education, jobs, and an overall better quality of life.



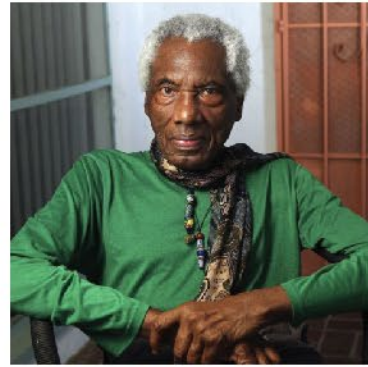
**REGINALD JOHNSON**  
FOUNDER OF THE WILLOWBROOK INCLUSION NETWORK

Reginald Johnson founded the Willowbrook Inclusion Network in 2017 to help provide the resources residents needed, particularly men and boys of color, to improve their access to economic and educational opportunities, and to steer the community towards a more sustainable future. A major goal behind WIN is to ensure residents have a say over how their community is shaped.



**CECIL FERGUSON**  
ARTIST, ART CURATOR, TRADITION BEARER

Over many years Ferguson rose through the ranks to become a highly influential art curator at LACMA effectively promoting the inclusion of African American history and arts. He co-founded the Black Arts Council, worked on several exhibits that highlighted African American works of art that traveled the world, and supported the work of local black artists.



**JOHN OUTERBRIDGE**  
ARTIST

"Art has the audacity to be anything it needs to be at any given time."  
-John Outterbridge

"In high school, even before high school, people told me that I was an artist, and that's something that I never questioned."  
-John Outterbridge



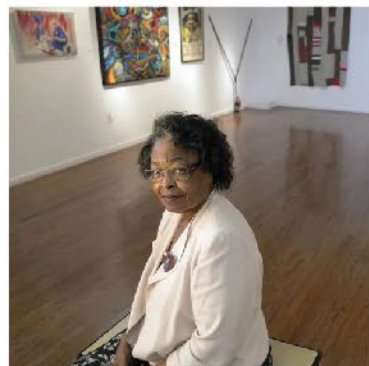
**PASTOR DELORES GLASS**  
ACTIVIST, PASTOR OF FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Glass has been providing much valued spiritual support for the community as well as providing aid to the community through the Concerned Citizens of Willowbrook who provide support and a food drive to citizens through the church. Pastor Glass has also acted as a strong advocate and activist for her neighbors to ensure that their concerns are voiced around how their community is changed.



**ARTURO YBARRA**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WATTS CENTURY LATINO ORGANIZATION

In co-founding and directing the Watts Century Latino Organization, Arturo has worked hard to empower the local Latino community and to bridge the gap between the Latino and African American communities. In collaboration with the Watts Labor Community Action Committee they host the annual Cinco de Mayo celebration.



**ROSIE HOOKS**  
ARTIST, DIRECTOR OF WATTS TOWERS ART CENTER

"I think she has a real understanding of art and community art in all of its different facets.... She understands and is sensitive to the needs of the community. She's also sensitive to the artists' needs. She's able to navigate different circles and somehow make it all work."  
-Rogelio Acevedo



**DOMINIQUE MOODY**  
ARTIST

"When I assemble this eclectic mix into multilayered constructions, I make visible my dreams, memories and visions. In conjunction to my introspective muse, my works also reflect the social challenges of our times."  
- Dominique Moody



**RANDY HUGHES**  
PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF THE FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Randy Hughes has dedicated many years of his life serving and directing the Friends and Neighbors Community Association (FNCA). FNCA provides financial resources and services to residents, has helped to stem gang violence and disputes, engaged in public safety and beautification projects, fostered public events, among many other things.

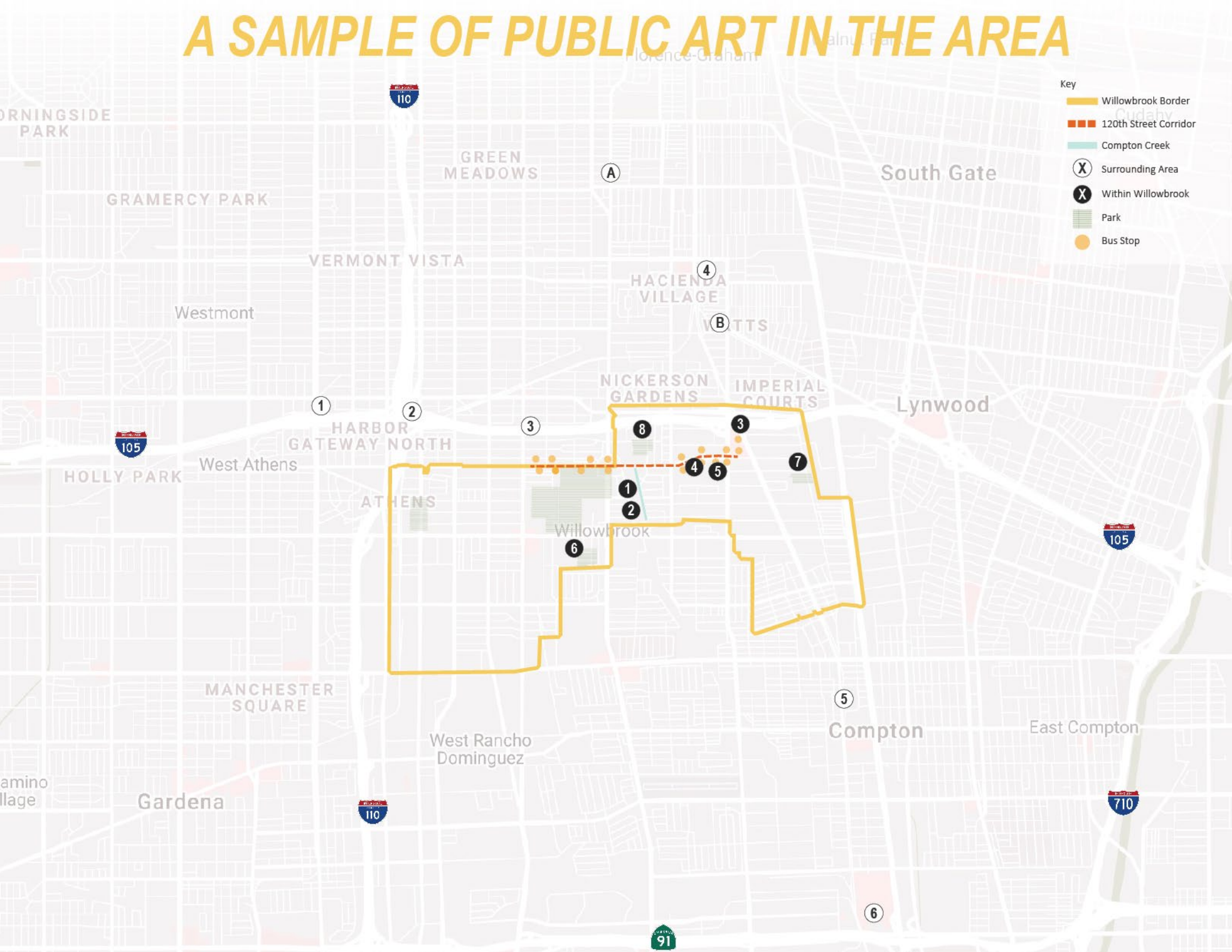


**MINISTER SINETTA FARLEY**  
FOUNDER OF RESTORATION DIVERSION SERVICES

Minister Sinetta Farley founded the Restoration Diversion Services in 2009 to help victims of sex trafficking in Compton find the help, support, and resources they need to escape the streets and build a new life.

**PLUS MANY MORE PAST AND PRESENT**

# A SAMPLE OF PUBLIC ART IN THE AREA



# WITHIN WILLOWBROOK

- 1 "Art Rise," Dominique Moody (with Other Artists)
- 2 "Art Rise," Dominique Moody (with Other Artists)
- 3 "Second Line," Jamex and Einar De la Torre
- 4 "Pieces Together," Lawrence Argent
- 5 "Endless Miles," Rob Levy
- 6 "Aquatic Endeavors," Robin Strayhorn
- 7 "Sea Dream," Dakota Warren
- 8 "Ocean Journey," Matt Doolin and Paul Doolin

# SURROUNDING AREA

- 1 "Real Green," Kim Yasuda
- 2 "Locus: City Imprints," Steve Appleton
- 3 "Bridge of Culture," Staley Wilson
- 4 "Symbols of Unity," Charles Dickson
- 5 "Compton: Past, Present and Future," Eva Cockcroft
- 6 "Blue Line Oasis," Lynn Aldrich
- A Watts Art Gallery
- B Watts Towers

PLUS MANY MORE

*REMEMBERING* **WILLOWBROOK**  
**FIVE-PART STRATEGY**

# REMEMBERING WILLOWBROOK STRATEGY 1

## COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

Monuments reflect and legitimize historical narratives that draw from, and are contextualized by, the archival body. In Willowbrook, decades of disinvestment and what historian Kelly Lytle Hernandez calls "archival silences," elide the histories that community members carry in their memories and stories. Using an open-source digital platform such as ESRI or BiblioBoard, we propose a digital "rebel archive," which would contain written accounts, oral histories, and photographs donated by long and short-term Willowbrook residents.

Who owns the archive? Willowbrook's residents are the producers and owners of this archive. Through a series of "community collection" events (similar to a Wiki-thon), residents are invited to contribute stories and artifacts to the archive and curate the larger narrative. Building the archival infrastructure and collections require both technical assistance (provided by a metadata archivist, potentially from LA County Libraries or from USC Libraries as a university partnership) and community organizing and leadership development (facilitated by LA Commons or WIN).

What does the archive look like? Digitized artifacts will be accessible in a catalog with accompanying narratives from the residents who submitted the item. Sub-collections of items will be organized thematically. Each item will also be geolocated, based on provenance and historical significance, on an interactive map of Willowbrook. Objects could be coded with keywords to increase accessibility. Eventually, the archive could embed or link to other archival material about Willowbrook housed in formal institutions.

This digital archive infrastructure is intended to be malleable, reactive, and democratic. Its content can be as intimate and personal, or as broad and "historical" as residents see fit. Residents' agency over their narratives is embedded into the archive; metadata for each object contains the voice of a resident that contextualizes it within their personal geography and history.

## COMMUNITY ARCHIVES // PRECEDENTS



### STORYCORPS

Story Corps began in 2003 in a booth in Grand Central Station. "StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world. [They] do this to remind one another of our shared humanity, to strengthen and build the connections between people, to teach the value of listening, and to weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that everyone's story matters. At the same time, [they] are creating an invaluable archive for future generations."



Naomi Ishisaka

### SHELF LIFE

"The Shelf Life Community Story Project records oral histories with current and former residents of Seattle's Central District neighborhood. We believe community stories and neighborhood histories can change the way we think about community- what it means to have it and what it means to lose it. We hope the stories we're recording can influence conversations about change and shift the way this city imagines its future."

# BUILDING A COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

## 1 STEP ONE

In partnership with USC Libraries and the Willowbrook Library, establish a department for the Willowbrook Community Archives devoted to receiving and recording resident's stories and Willowbrook histories and then preserving, digitizing, and geolocating them.

## 2 STEP TWO

Develop a user-friendly, digital database with search engine capabilities and a location map with significant locations noted in resident's stories and Willowbrook histories.

## 3 STEP THREE

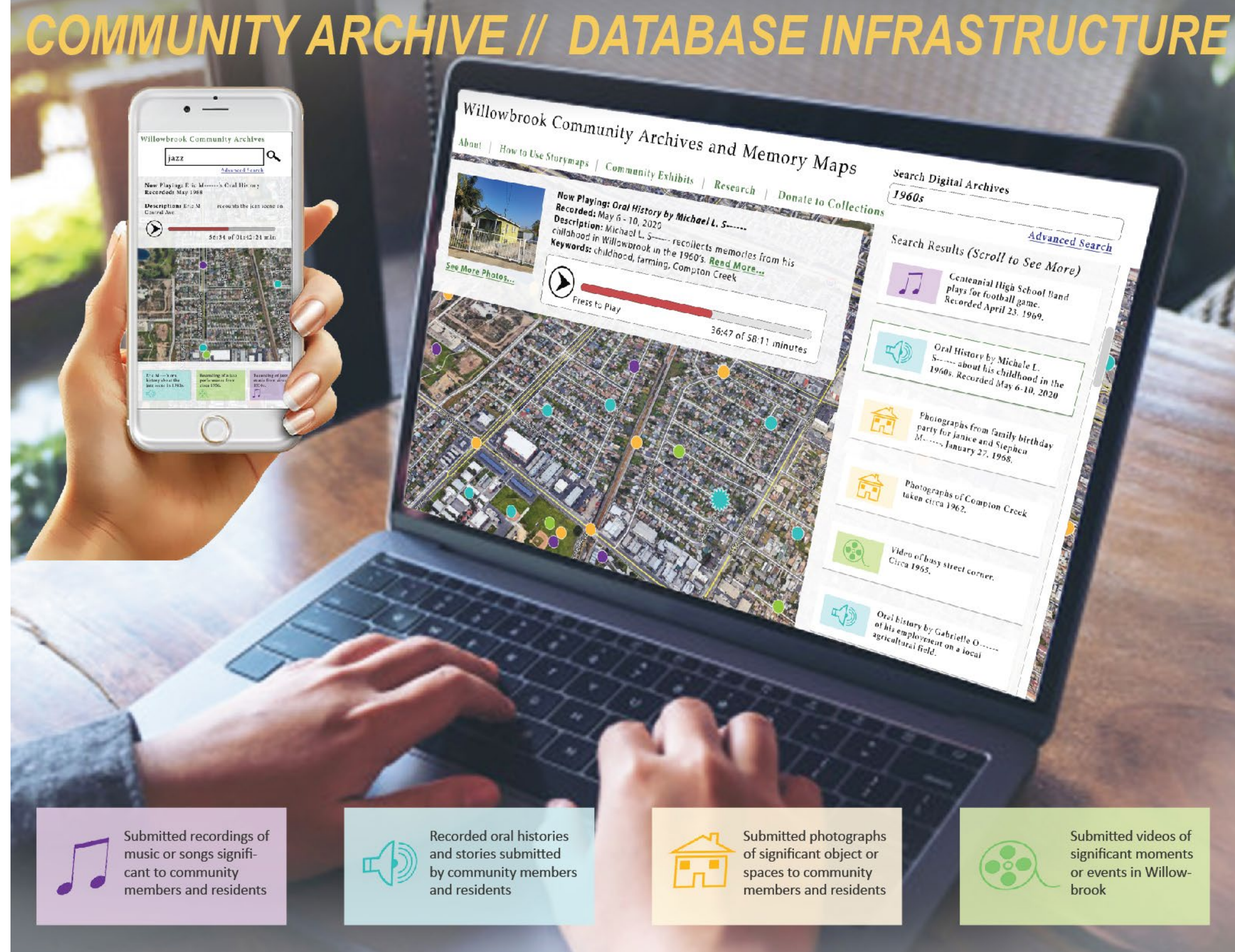
Provide professional training opportunities for residents in archives, GIS, art conservation and other related fields so that residents can find new career opportunities and engage directly with the care of the archives.

## 4 STEP FOUR

With the help of organizations such as WIN or LACommons, the archival department will host story and artifact collection events within the community.

## 5 STEP FIVE

The objects and oral histories contributed will be photographed or digitized and will be incorporated into digital collections, which viewers can learn more about by visiting the archives website and database. Through this archive, Willowbrook residents' stories and histories will be recognized and preserved.



Submitted recordings of music or songs significant to community members and residents



Recorded oral histories and stories submitted by community members and residents



Submitted photographs of significant object or spaces to community members and residents



Submitted videos of significant moments or events in Willowbrook

# REMEMBERING WILLOWBROOK STRATEGY 2

## A CREATIVE COMMUNITY CORRIDOR

Strategy Two focuses on highlighting the procession between Rosa Parks Metro Station and “Magic” Johnson Park while curating a wayfinding experience for visitors, community members and residents alike. Already somewhat activated through existing murals and monuments along 120th Street, this strategy will bring art, memory and monuments to the forefront while creating an unique identity for Willowbrook. Reginald Johnson stated during the Willowbrook Community Members Story Circle (May, 2021), “We want to highlight this corridor. There’s been a lot of really traumatic things... that have happened along that route. I want to raise the vibration of the area, really do something good for the area and change the energy around that.”

# HIGHLIGHTED CORRIDORS // PRECEDENTS



### LEIMERT PARK VILLAGE

The Leimert Park station, on the Los Angeles Metro light rail Crenshaw/LAX Line, is slated to open in 2022. Los Angeles Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas stated, “It takes a village to get a train to stop in Leimert Park. In other words, we did it together.” The station’s approval from the city brought a new wave of investment, development and excitement into the neighborhood, the center of a contemporary Black arts scene in Los Angeles. A proposed redesign of two city owned parking lots at 4300 Degnan Blvd. and 3416 West 43rd St. is currently underway. Leimert Park Village sent out surveys to residents and businesses to better gage the village’s needs.



A render of the new metro station at Leimert Park



4300 Degnan Blvd. and 3416 West 43rd St.



### DESTINATION CRENSHAW

“[They] are stamping Crenshaw Boulevard, the spine of Los Angeles’ Black community, with a transformative infrastructure project that will boost [their] community through economic development, job creation, and environmental healing, while elevating Black art and culture. When completed, Destination Crenshaw will be the place to experience the most dynamic expression of Black American culture in the United States. A 1.3-mile stretch of Crenshaw Boulevard will be transformed from an area that has long deserved economic investment and strategic urban planning, into a thriving commercial corridor linked by architecturally stunning community spaces and pocket parks, hundreds of newly planted trees, and over 100 commissioned works of art.”



Supporters and Marqueece Harris-Dawson after the Metro Board granted Destination Crenshaw \$15 million



A render of the future Sankofa Park

# ALONG THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY CORRIDOR



- Key
- Willowbrook Border
  - 120th Street Corridor
  - Compton Creek
  - New Initiatives
  - Existing Public Art Spaces
  - Park
  - Bus Stop



## WILLOWBROOK MONUMENTS ALONG THE CORRIDOR

Strategy three introduces the physical monuments to the corridor or primary spine through Willowbrook- Rosa Parks Metro Station to “Magic” Johnson Park. Most primarily, the monuments celebrate the history and active presents of assemblage art in the area. Clearly the Watts Towers is a primary symbol of such accretional art but this mode of found-object sculptural collage is practiced by some of the area’s most renowned artists, including Noah Purifoy, co-founder of the Watts Towers Arts Center and likely best known for his sculptural assemblage using charred objects and wreckage from the Watts Rebellion in 1965- a monument itself, memorializing the Rebellion and the systemic failures that led to the uprisings. John Outerbridge, Charles Dickson and Dominique Moody are all artists working in this mode, as well as Willowbrook community members using the vernacular practice of found object assemblage, including “Bernardo” featured in the “Willowbrook is...” report (<http://rostenwoo.biz/index.php/willowbrook>) who used the stones removed to construct the dividing 105 freeway to construct the landscape around his home.

Using this cultural form of art practice specific to this area, USC School of Architecture hopes to design structures with community artists that can accommodate forms of assemblage that evoke the histories and currencies of Willowbrook. While we have identified critical moments along this corridor including the container food court and the parks, we thought the bus stops offered ideal opportunities to make the structures both useful for shade and capture the attention of those waiting for their buses.

## ASSEMBLAGE ART BY COMMUNITY ARTISTS

### DOMINIQUE MOODY



“A Healing Home” (2014)



“Sweat Equity” (2005)



“Nomad” (2015)

### CHARLES DICKSON



“Serve it Up” (2011)



“Backfire”



“Bongo, Congo: Mobilization of the Spirit” (1989)

### NOAH PURIFOY (1917-2004)



“Ode to Frank Gehry” (1999)



“From the Point of View of the Little People” (1994)

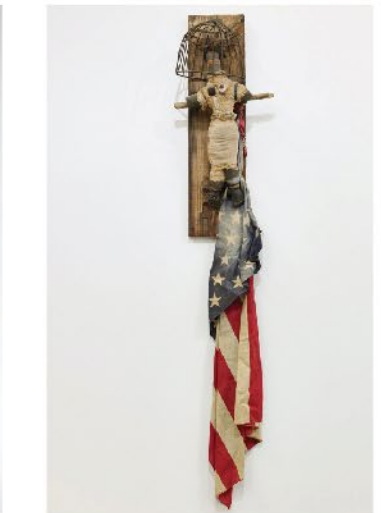


“Sir Watts II” (1996)

### JOHN OUTERBRIDGE (1933-2020)



“Broken Dance” from the “Ethnic Heritage” Series (1978-1982)



“Deja Vu-Do” from the “Ethnic Heritage” Series (1979-1992)





# WILLOWBROOK MONUMENTS // BUS INFRASTRUCTURES

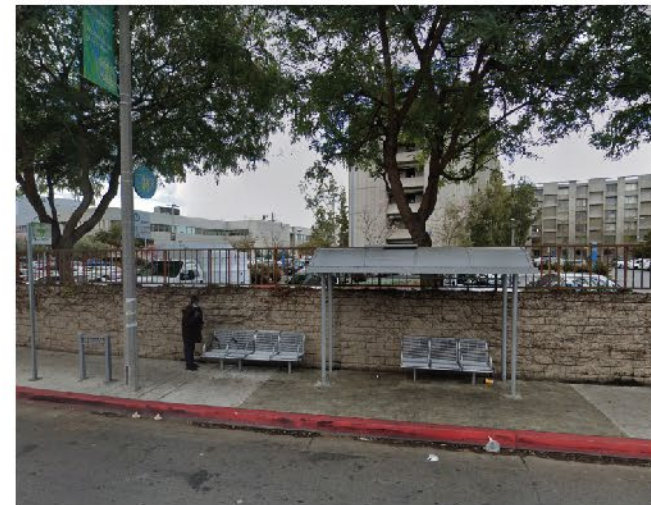
Sculptural Canopy "Monument" creating identity along 120th Street while providing shade along bus route

Wall of canopy structure constructed with found materials from the neighborhood providing a visual and textural assemblage of artifacts celebrating the artistic form of local artists

Seating around the canopy structures to provide for those waiting for the bus



# STRATEGY 3



WILLOWBROOK'S CURRENT BUS STOPS

## WHY THE BUS STOP?

Strategy three rethinks and redesigns the Willowbrook bus stops along the 120th street corridor running from the Rosa Parks Metro Station to "Magic" Johnson park. The goal to strategy three is three-fold: the first is to provide commuters with a more comfortable waiting experience for the bus, the second is to provide a glimpse into who Willowbrook is with a focus on identity building and the third is to highlight and activate the well-used 120th street corridor.

We imagine the bus stop as a meeting place- a place for waiting, but also for gathering. Each bus stop will be designed by community artists and members, unified by stories and histories of Willowbrook and rooted in assemblage art, a pillar in the community. The following pages show examples of precedents similar to proposed strategy as well as sampling of assemblage art from the community members and artists.

# RETHINKING THE BUS STOP // PRECEDENTS

## LOS ANGELES METRO STATIONS



"Compton: Past, Present and Future" (1995) by Eva Cockcroft



"South Central Suite: Slauson Serenade, South Central Codex" (1995) by East Los Streetscapers

## SOVIET BUS STOPS



## MILWAUKEE BUS STOPS



"Wisconsin Wildflowers" (2019) by Nellie Gehrig



"28 ZIP Codes, 1 City" (2019) by Dominic Inouye



"The Future's So Bright" (2019) by Libby Olbrantz



"Chaos Emerald" (2019) by Dré Black

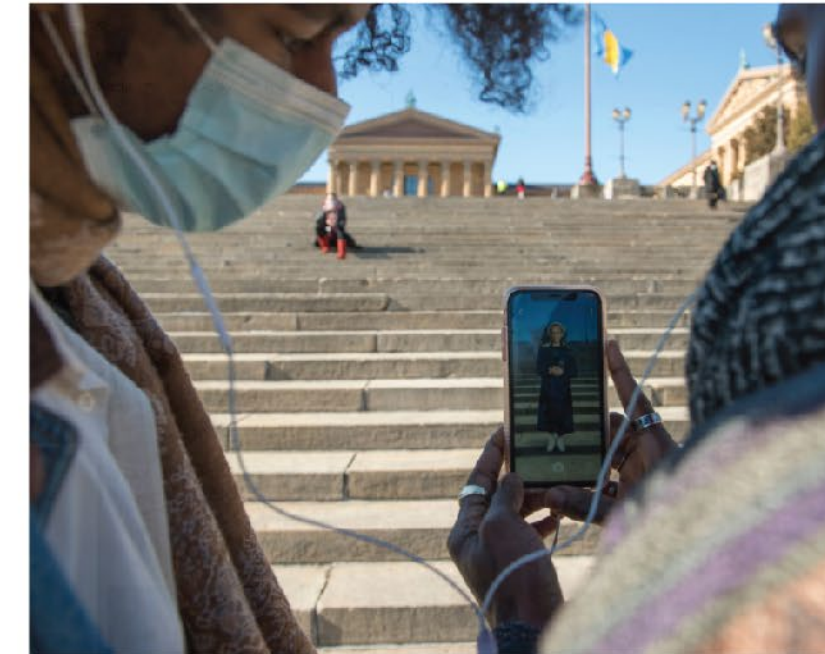


"I'd never seen such a variety of creative expression applied to a public structures before," say Christopher Herwig who spent twelve years photographing these unique structures. "The designers pushed the limits of their imaginations. They did not hold back and sometimes, maybe, even they went too far!"

# AUGMENTED REALITY MONUMENTS

The physical monuments will be enhanced through augmented reality (AR) and mixed media (XR) experiences that bring the dynamic and evolving community archive into the physical fabric. They will provide augmented experiences of community stories in situ and build on LACMA's Snapchat AR Monuments already activated in "Magic" Johnson Park (Spring/Summer 2021). The Willowbrook Art Hop will provide a test run for deploying these mixed media methods along the 120th Street corridor and/or the Compton Creek.

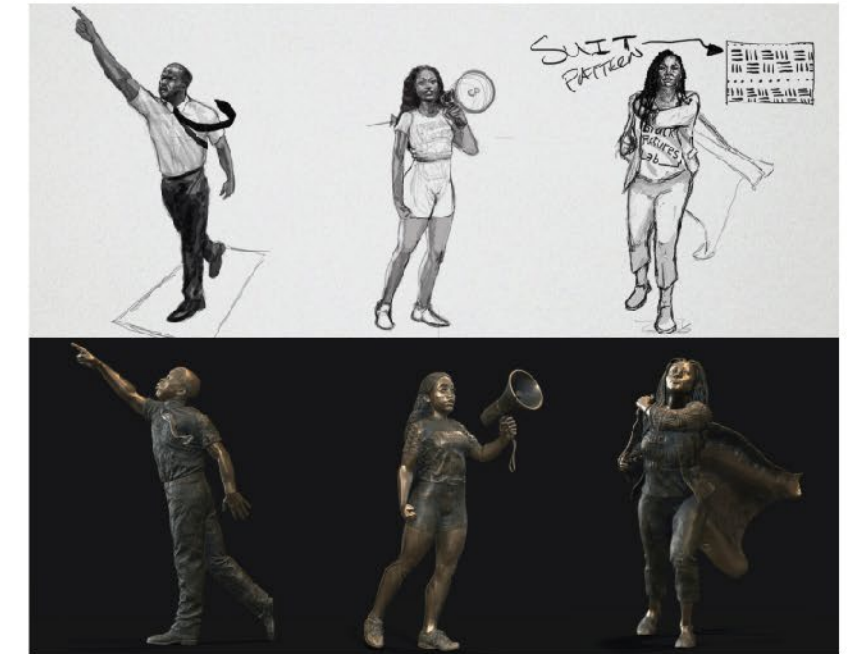
## AR MONUMENTS // PRECEDENTS



**MONUMENT LAB**

"Humans are compelled to reach back into our past to remember the shared moments that define us... When one person's facts can be another person's fiction, hindsight and history often fail to offer the clarity of vision we seek." Augmented Reality lets us confront this truth head on. This project is based in Philadelphia .

"Monument Lab's new augmented reality app OverTime is a "public art and technology platform designed to allow users to dig deeper into the people, places, and stories that compose a city." These vital elements of Philly's place-based history are intentionally left open and interactive, alive with the purpose of public engagement, collective input, and revision. OverTime does not rely on the indelible, untested words of one-sided history books or the fallible memories and false accounts of a few privileged colonizers. The diverse people, places, and stories of OverTime not only define a more inclusive view of Philly's past, but also shape and inform the city's present and possible tomorrows—for the people, by the people."



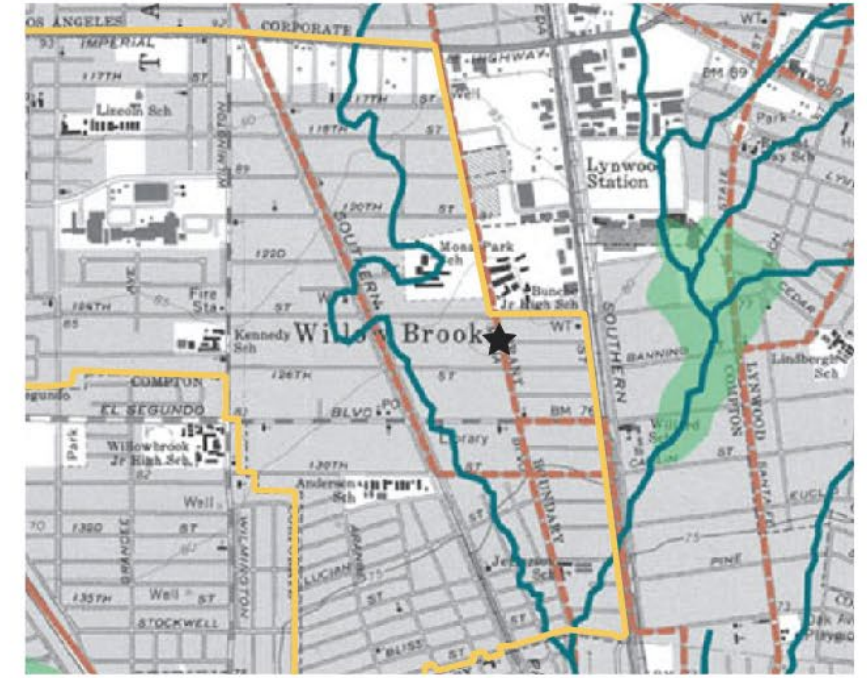
**THE PEDESTAL PROJECT**

"Contentious statues have been torn down all across America, leaving behind empty pedestals in their wake. It's time to place new symbols in their stead. The Pedestal Project is born of the vision to repurpose these ill-conceived pedestals by using technology to help people choose the statues that should go up on them. Statues of people who have dedicated their lives to fighting for justice and equality. So that beacons of hope and progress can stand where symbols of hate, oppression and inequality once stood. And that people everywhere can have an active voice in the movement for racial justice." The artist is Spencer Evans, a figurative draftsman, painter and sculptor.

# AUGMENTED REALITY MONUMENTS



Historic Compton Creek Water Shed

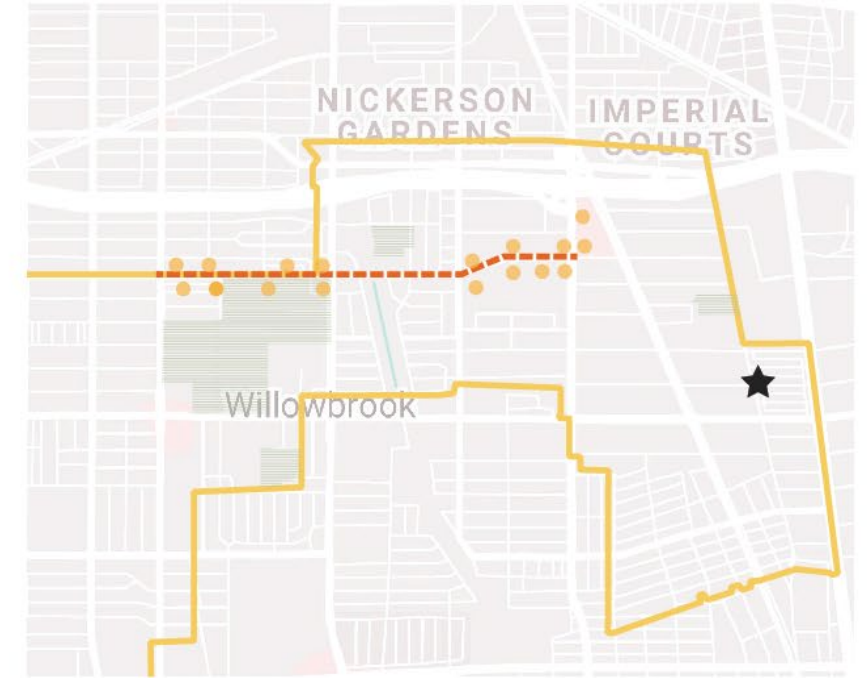


Historic Compton Creek Water Shed, Magnified

## WILLOWBROOK HISTORIES AND AUGMENTED REALITY

"Willows and a slow, shallow brook distinguished this portion of the Los Angeles plain long before it was given the name "Willowbrook." **A lone-standing streamside willow tree near the present intersection of 125th Street and Mona Boulevard was an original rancho boundary marker in the 1840s.** Willowbrook was probably named after the willows that grew around the many springs that watered the area prior to extensive agricultural and suburban development, beginning in the late 1800s" (<http://thewinzone.net/>)

This render depicts the lone-standing willow tree next to a brook displayed on top of the present day intersection of 125th Street and Mona Blvd. The historic watershed of Compton Creek (seen above) corroborate this memory.



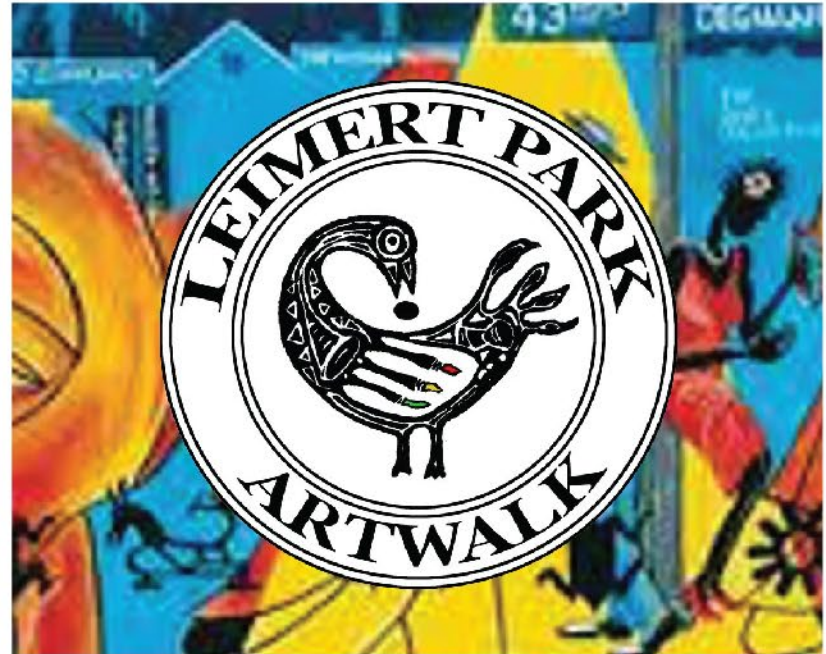
Intersection of 125th Street and Mona Blvd in Relationship to Proposed Corridor

- KEY
- Willowbrook Border
  - Compton Creek
  - 120th Street Corridor
  - Park
  - ★ Present Day Intersection of 125th Street and Mona Blvd
  - Bus Stop

## REMEMBERING WILLOWBROOK STRATEGY 5

### ART ACTIVATION

Art activation is a longer term strategy for sustained programming and activation along the Willowbrook art+memory corridor and in Magic Johnson Park. Taking cues from other art walks and programming throughout South Los Angeles and the county, the hope is this sustained programming could be developed in partnership with LACMA and USC Arts in Action. Like the Willowbrook Art Hop, the intention is to celebrate local memory, artists, culture, dance, cuisine and community and, ideally, these events would provide collective opportunities for collecting stories for the “Rebel Archive” described in Strategy One.



#### LEIMERT PARK ART WALK

“Leimert Park Village has a long history of being the center of African American arts and culture. The village is inviting the public on the last Sunday of each month to share a day of art exhibitions, music, fashion, food, drumming, spoken word, and local shopping. Throughout the day, cultural spaces, artist studios, and storefronts will also have offerings ranging from free computer seminars and specialty vendors to film screenings, youth theater performances, and live bands.”



Leimert Park Artwalk, March 2014



Leimert Park Artwalk, March 2020



#### COMPTON ART WALK

“The Compton Art Walk’s monthly festival offers a platform for artist and businesses of L.A. County to collaborate, network and showcase their talents and hard work while driving economic support to the City of Compton. The unique characteristics about the Compton Art Walk is the opportunity it gives participants of our programs to volunteer, participate and assist in every aspect of the festival from planning and marketing all the way to execution.

Compton Art Walk’s founding goal is to establish a historic platform through authentic experiences that provides former, present, and future residents the opportunity to support and show pride for their city’s rich heritage of musical and artistic talent.”



Compton Art Walk, 2019



Compton Art Walk, 2019

# COMMUNITY EVENT CALENDAR

## JANUARY

## FEBRUARY

## MARCH

## APRIL

- The Willowbrook Community Garden's Annual Spring Festival
- St. Lawrence of Brindisi Carnival

## MAY

## JUNE

## JULY

## AUGUST

- Cinco de Mayo Celebration (Watts)
- South Central L.A. Food Festival
- Strawberry Park Days Fiesta

- Holly J. Mitchell Juneteenth Celebration & Resource Fair
- Watts-Willowbrook Youth Symphony Mid-Year Recital
- Juneteenth Celebrations
- ★ LA Beer Week Beer Festival
- ◆ Compton PRIDE Festival

- Watts Summer Festival
- Annual Gardena Jazz Festival
- ◆ Back to School Giveaway

## SEPTEMBER

## OCTOBER

## NOVEMBER

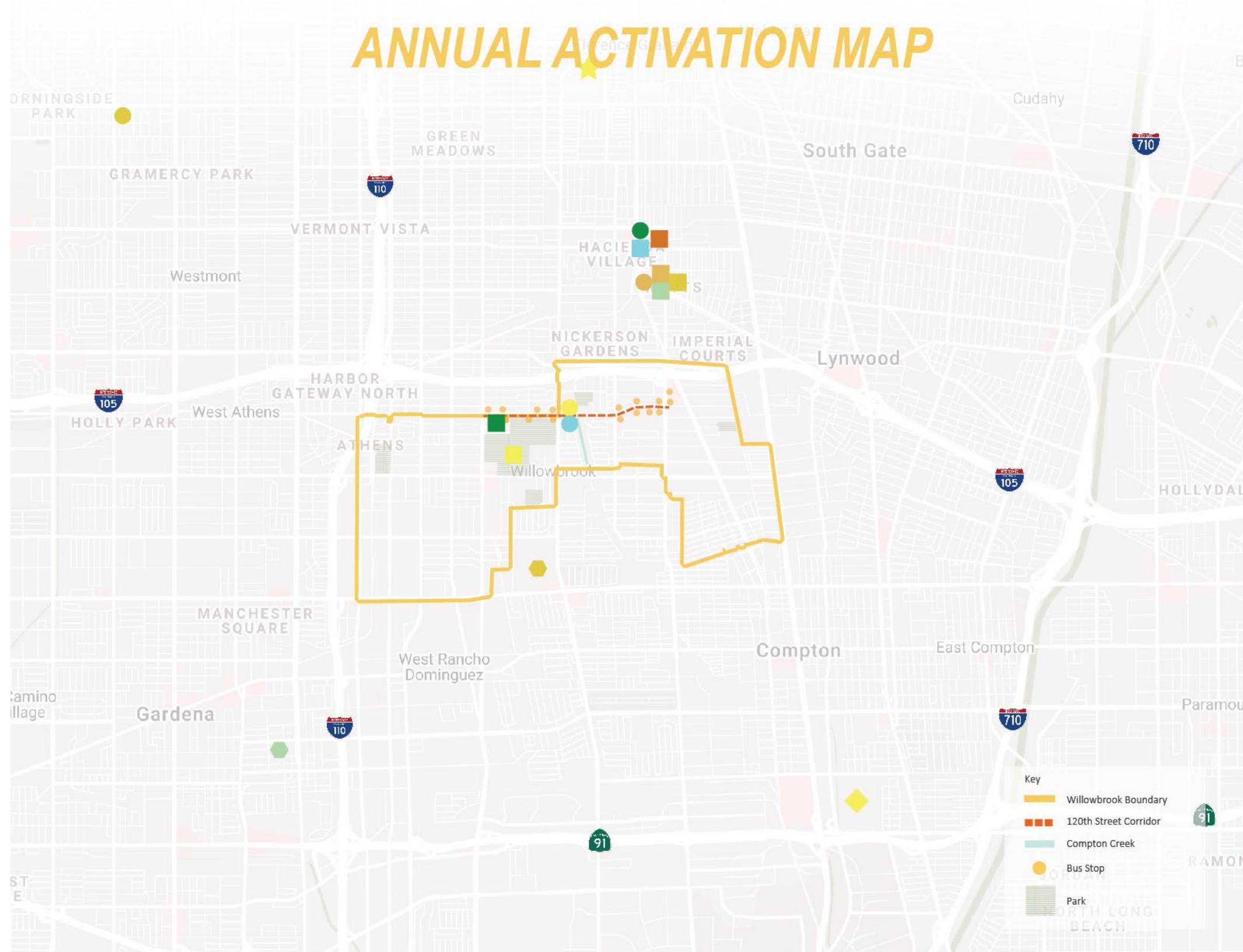
## DECEMBER

- Simon Rodia Watts Towers Annual Jazz Festival
- Watts Towers Day of the Drum Festival

- St. Lawrence of Brindisi Carnival

- Watts-Willowbrook Christmas Parade
- Watts-Willowbrook Youth Symphony Christmas Holiday Recital

# ANNUAL ACTIVATION MAP



- Key**
- Willowbrook Boundary
  - - - 120th Street Corridor
  - Compton Creek
  - Bus Stop
  - Park

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