



Frequently Asked Questions June 6, 2016

What is SLATE-Z?

The South Los Angeles Transit Empowerment Zone (SLATE-Z) refers a specific area of South L.A. where a coalition of elected officials, public agencies, community-based organizations, schools, universities, and business associations are working together to revitalize the area by moving residents to economic opportunity.

Where does SLATE-Z work?

SLATE-Z includes portions of Vernon-Central, South Park, Florence, Exposition Park, Vermont Square, Leimert Park, and Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw.

How was the map drawn?

The map follows along major transit lines that come into and through South LA in order to capitalize on revitalization opportunities related to transit-oriented development and education, training, and job opportunities accessible to residents via transit. The boundaries were also drawn in an effort to capture the ethnic diversity present in South Los Angeles and include the high schools most in need.

Who lives in SLATE-Z?

There are 197,539 residents in our area, according to Census statistics (2011 American Community Survey data). 45.6% of these residents live in poverty, or approximately over 90,000 residents. 94% of our residents are people of color – primarily Latino (71%) and African-American (17%). There is a large immigrant population – 43% of our residents are foreign-born, and approximately 17% are undocumented.

What are the goals of the SLATE-Z partnership?

1. Move South LA residents into living wage jobs
2. Increase economic activity in South LA by investing in businesses, entrepreneurs, & community-oriented infrastructure
3. Prepare South LA students for good careers – by guaranteeing support in high school and college to connect to career pathways and complete certificates and degrees
4. Reduce violent crime in South LA by improving services for youth leadership development, gang-intervention, support for youth and adults re-entering the community from incarceration, and community engagement
5. Make it safer and more affordable for residents to move around through public transit and on our streets

These goals are accomplished through the development and implementation of collective impact strategies by public, private, and non-profit partners and resident engagement.

How did the partnership form?

In Fall 2014, a new and sweeping partnership of elected representatives, leaders from nonprofit organizations, schools, government agencies, business associations, and labor unions came together to develop an application for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's second Promise Zone competition. The application submitted in this round solidified the partnership.

Though a designation was not received, SLATE-Z grew stronger over the next year. The coalition successfully advocated for changes to the Promise Zone criteria that disadvantaged communities like South Los Angeles, expanded our roster of partners, focused our goals, strategies, and activities, and conducted outreach to residents.

After the Promise Zone application was submitted, the coalition – under the leadership of Supervisor and Chair of the Metro Board Mark-Ridley Thomas and Mayor Garcetti – worked together to advocate for expanded access to discounted fares for college students. On May 26th, the Metro Board unanimously adopted the Universal Pass program, which creates partnerships with schools to deliver easy access to discounted fares for students taking more than 8 units per semester.

What is a Promise Zone?

Promise Zone is a federal program created by President Obama through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 2012. The goal of the program is to address challenges in geographic areas of deep and persistent poverty.

Promise Zones are designated through a very competitive national process each year, and there are 9 cities that already became Promise Zones. The 2016 competition is the third of its kind where 5 additional cities received this designation.

Once an area is designated a Promise Zone, the local government and organizations working to serve that area receive extra assistance from the federal government to improve the quality of life for residents. This includes technical assistance and preference for in competitions for federal funding to serve the community.

What cities already have Promise Zones?

First round designations announced in January 2014 included: Los Angeles, CA, Philadelphia, PA, and San Antonio, TX.

Second round designations announced in April 2015 included: Camden, NJ, Hartford, CT, Indianapolis, IN, Minneapolis, MN, Sacramento, CA, and St. Louis, MO.

In the third round, 9 Promise Zone designations were announced by HUD on June 6, 2016. In addition to South Los Angeles, Atlanta, Georgia; Nashville, Tennessee; Evanston, Indiana; San Diego, California; and Southwest Florida Regional Planning Commission were awarded Urban Promise Zone designations, the rural designation was awarded to Puerto Rico, and tribal designations to Spokane Tribe of Indians, Washington and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, Rolette County, North Dakota.

Why did SLATE-Z apply for a Promise Zone? Wasn't there already one in Los Angeles?

The existing Promise Zone covers parts of Hollywood, East Hollywood, Koreatown, Westlake and Pico-Union. SLATE-Z worked to bring a second Promise Zone to Los Angeles to fight poverty in neighborhoods in South Los Angeles, given the needs in the community. The issues within SLATE-Z are deep-rooted and require substantial financial investments specifically in South LA.

While the coalition has always been committed to collectively pursuing our goals with or without designation – as evidenced by the recent transit policy victory – the technical assistance from HUD, access to additional federal resources, and the interest from other donors that a Promise Zone designation brings will significantly strengthen our efforts to serve the community.

Why a place-based approach? (Why doesn't the map cover all of South Los Angeles)?

The neighborhood you grow up and live in affects many areas of your life. It can impact your chances of graduating high school or get a college degree. How much education you can get impacts your ability to get jobs that pay wages that support your family. The goal of this effort is to ensure that everyone has equal access to opportunity, and to do that, we need to revitalize South Los Angeles for the residents that live here.

SLATE-Z is focused on this area is for two reasons. First, the coalition prioritized obtaining federal Promise Zone designation, which requires we define a contiguous geographic area with less than 200,000 residents in order to focus our work. Second, because our programs focus around transit, we selected for the area closest to and around the rail lines.

Because we know residents move throughout the city and often go to school, work, or other places in neighborhoods other than where they live, it is the coalition's desire that we leverage the resources in SLATE-Z to benefit as many South Los Angeles residents as we can. Our partners serve areas both within and outside of our map boundaries, and we see this as another way to bring the collective impact strategies and resources to parts of South LA outside of the SLATE-Z.

Who are the partners involved?

SLATE-Z has 54 formal partner agencies and organizations. See the full list of partners attached.

Who is coordinating the efforts?

Los Angeles Trade Technical College (LATTC) – the oldest public two-year college in the Los Angeles Community College District – serves as the lead agency and houses backbone staff. LA's Promise serves as the fiscal agent for the initiative, and oversees the SLATE-Z Director, supported by a two-year grant from the Disney Foundation. SLATE-Z will be coordinating closely with HUD and the Office of Mayor Garcetti as the Promise Zone is implemented in South LA.

Who are SLATE-Z's funders?

SLATE-Z has received support in the past from the Weingart Foundation and the California Endowment. LA n Sync provided support for SLATE-Z's third round Promise Zone application process, and the Roy and Patricia Disney Foundation provides support for a full-time director to organize partners and facilitate the design and execution of collective impact projects.

What is the role of residents in the Promise Zone Application?

Residents living in SLATE-Z will have a variety of opportunities to give input into programs, be involved in various campaigns, and help oversee the progress of the Promise Zone. During the planning process, we asked residents to help prioritize the programs the implementing organizations have come up with, and provide feedback on our strategies. Our resident engagement lead agency, Community Coalition, is holding a People Power Convention at Southwest College on June 24th to continue to engage residents in our coalition's work.

I'm really interested in SLATE-Z and/or the Promise Zone. How can I get more involved?

The coalition will be moving towards implementation phase in close coordination with HUD and the Office of Mayor Garcetti. Please stay tuned to our website (slatez.org) for coalition convenings and community events.