

**LOS ANGELES COVID-19 PANDEMIC
REFLECTIONS INITIATIVE
PROCESS EVALUATION REPORT
OCTOBER 2023**



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About Us:



See Change Institute (SCI) is a women-owned research consultancy devoted to studying and shaping behavior change programs for the greater good. We specialize in research, strategy, design, and evaluation of behavioral programs focused on the intersection of human and environmental health.



Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA's residents and visitors, and ensure LA's varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced.

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Executive Summary

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many cities may be considering how they can honor those who were on the frontline, remember the lives that were lost, and mobilize their citizens to continue rebuilding and recovering—and, if this should be done through a public memorial, whether now is the right time to create one. It was these three actions—honor, remember, mobilize—that formed the backbone of the City of Los Angeles COVID-19 Pandemic Reflections (CPR-LA) initiative, which built upon Mayor Garcetti’s *Strength & Love* movement to honor Angelenos’ experiences and empower people to move forward together.¹

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), in partnership with the Office of the Mayor, engaged See Change Institute (SCI) to “develop a process evaluation, community engagement strategy, and facilitate listening sessions to determine if and how the City should create a permanent COVID-19 Memorial, and garner community feedback on the form(s) and site(s) for a Memorial.”² This report outlines the CPR-LA initiatives and its results.

Methods

A key goal of the CPR-LA initiative was to engage Angelenos with diverse experiences and hear from as broad a swath of the Los Angeles population as possible. To meet this goal, our listening approach included a range of strategies, including listening sessions, community outreach, online surveys, and social media. Utilizing both in-person and online strategies and providing a variety of ways in which Angelenos could provide input allowed SCI to hear from residents in every City Council District.

Another primary goal was to hear from people in areas hardest hit by COVID-19 (as defined by the LA County Department of Public Health³) as well as special populations identified in our kickoff meetings, including frontline workers, senior citizens, people with disabilities, and the unhoused. To do so, we complemented our geography-based outreach with targeted outreach to community groups, organizations, and facilities that represented these specific communities.

The “listening” period of the initiative consisted of two phases: a pilot phase in November 2022, during which we tested our methods with project staff and partners and launched the survey, and a rollout phase from March through July 2023, during which we engaged in broad community outreach (as outlined above) and held the majority of our listening sessions. During this time, SCI collected input from a total of 1,213 Angelenos representing all 15 City Council Districts.

All of the listening strategies asked questions about how Angelenos experienced the pandemic, their thoughts on a potential memorial in LA, and the real-time impacts of CPR-LA itself. These responses and analysis findings are summarized below.

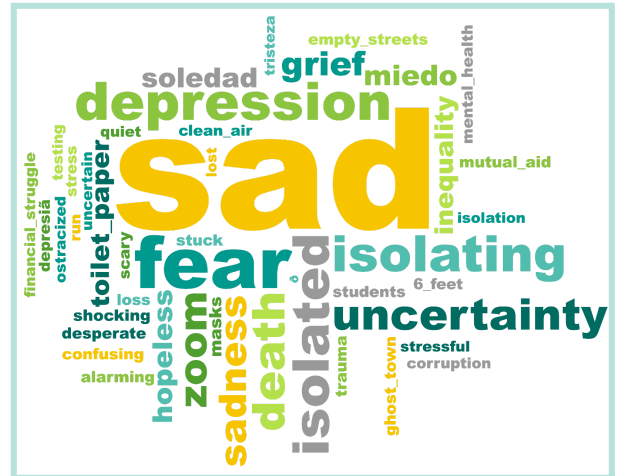
¹ [Strength and Love, the City of Angels’ Covid-19 Memorial](#). (2021). LACITY.GOV; City of Los Angeles.

² City of Los Angeles RFP (Request for Proposals) p. 3

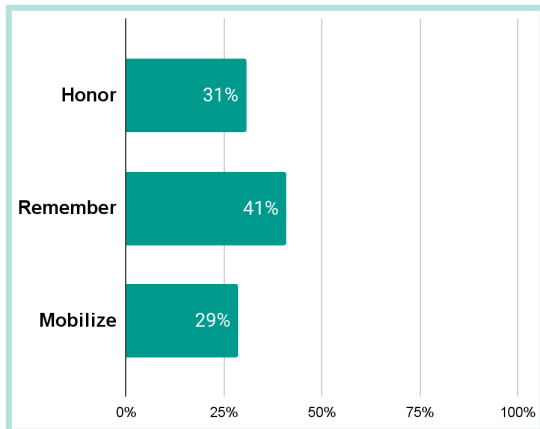
³ [County of Los Angeles Public Health COVID-19 Locations and Demographics](#)

Reflections on the Pandemic

The words that Angelenos associated with their COVID-19 pandemic experience were overwhelmingly characterized by sorrow, isolation and fear.⁴ The word “sad” was by far the most frequent word mentioned. Other key terms mentioned included “isolation”, “depression”, “uncertainty”, “fear”, and “death”. During listening sessions specifically, the dominant emotions were those of anxiety, uncertainty, fear, anger, frustration, and sadness.



Across listening methods, three recurring tensions emerged in participants’ reflections: (1) *personal experiences* of both connection and isolation; (2) *communal experiences* of both inequality and solidarity; and (3) *environmental experiences* of both peacefulness and distrust.



When survey respondents were asked to choose which of the three key themes of remember, honor, and mobilize resonated with them the most, “remember” (41%) was selected most often as the theme that encapsulates the Los Angeles COVID-19 pandemic experience, followed by “honor”, then “mobilize.” However, these differences were not significant and all three themes resonated with a large percentage of Angelenos.

Reflections on the Memorial

Should the City of LA create a COVID-19 Memorial?

The majority of respondents across all listening methods voiced support for the creation of a COVID-19 memorial in Los Angeles. Of those in support of a memorial, many generated ideas that went beyond the typical and more traditional forms of public memorials. A minority of participants voiced opposition to the idea of a COVID-19 memorial, many expressing a desire to move on from the pandemic without being reminded of it. This emerged in the verbal feedback we received, and it was also a key challenge in recruiting Angelenos to participate in the initiative in the first place.

Among the minority who were apprehensive about a memorial, financial concerns were common. Participants questioned whether the City should allocate funds for a memorial when they perceived more pressing needs and believed that money could be channeled into more meaningful avenues, such as direct assistance to those most impacted by the pandemic. Other proposed alternatives included enhancing parks and outdoor spaces; addressing LA’s homelessness crisis; and funding

⁴ Associated words were collected through Mentimeter software and in-person brainstorms. Word datasets were then analyzed through Voyant software.

healthcare as a way to honor the pandemic's frontline workers. Some participants also emphasized the importance of curbing the City's crime rate, focusing on infrastructural developments, and solving pervasive problems like food deserts to ensure access to necessary food for all. Others called for investment into education and public health campaigns. *Interestingly, many of these proposed alternatives also emerged as ideas for a functional memorial that could itself provide services and give back to the community, while also honoring those affected by the pandemic.*

What is the most appropriate form that a COVID-19 memorial could take?

Participants were imaginative and creative when envisioning a COVID-19 memorial in LA. Many preferred a memorial in a natural environment that would reflect life, time, respect, and connection. While some were keen on keeping nature-themed memorials devoid of digital influences, others saw the value in incorporating digital elements. Art, particularly “living” art, took center stage in these discussions. Participants floated ideas of sculptures, murals, and installations that could encapsulate the experiences of Angelenos during the pandemic. They also emphasized the importance of supporting artists from marginalized communities and the idea of incorporating fundraising to benefit healthcare workers and/or communities most impacted by the pandemic. These diverse views underscored a collective sentiment that memorializing COVID-19 should not be about constructing a monument, but rather about addressing the concerns of LA's citizenry.

Those who expressed resistance to creating a traditional COVID-19 memorial could have been diametrically opposed to those in support. However, our listening methods—particularly those that lent themselves to greater depth of data—revealed a more nuanced dialogue between these two viewpoints. Both shared a core conviction: that any memorial or commemorative effort should resonate with the living and that it should be able to respond to the shifting realities of COVID-19.

What would be the most appropriate timing of when the memorial can be created?

Some Angelenos expressed concerns regarding the timing of the proposed memorial. Several felt that such an initiative was premature; in their view, the pandemic's narrative was still unfolding, with daily deaths serving as a grim reminder. Others thought that controversies linked to the pandemic (e.g., masks, vaccines) have yet to be fully addressed, expressing apprehension about the potential disruptions a memorial might face, especially from Angelenos who might consider any acknowledgment of COVID-19 itself to be controversial. These concerns were further heightened by the City's economic challenges and other ongoing crises, particularly the housing crisis. Still others felt that it was already too late for a memorial—they were ready to move on from the pandemic and did not want to revisit the trauma as part of the process to create a memorial.

Where might the memorial be located?

As for location, there was a clear desire for the memorial to be disbursed, spread across various areas in LA in recognition of the diversity of COVID-19 experiences and in order for local areas to honor and commemorate in specific or unique ways. The idea of a mobile memorial was also popular, with many participants advocating for movable, adaptable, and roving memorials, ensuring accessibility to all and honoring the broad spectrum of communities and individuals in LA.

Reflections on the Process

SCI's process evaluation found that the CPR-LA initiative was successful in serving as a tool for Angelenos to begin the healing process—engaging Angelenos in these conversations was meaningful and needed. Of all the listening methods utilized, the listening sessions elicited the most supportive and thoughtful input, as participants were encouraged to go beyond simply weighing in on whether a memorial should be created, but also to share reflections, collaborate, and express creativity. Future opportunities to reflect and create would continue to benefit Angelenos still struggling to navigate their daily lives and grappling with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

SCI's listening sessions were carefully designed to engage participants and support them as they reflected on their collective COVID-19 pandemic experiences. The session protocol was designed in partnership with psychologists and experts in the fields of empathic curiosity, cultural humility, post-traumatic growth theory, and each session was run by a licensed clinician and trained facilitators. The framing of the listening sessions was intentionally forward-looking and collective, so as to allow the participants to see and connect with others in the room and provide a sense of shared purpose. The sessions then invited participants to delve into what they wanted to share about their personal experience, without any pressure to say something they were not comfortable sharing. The final activity provided participants with an opportunity to brainstorm and share their creative ideas for a memorial, thereby allowing them to channel and give an expressive form to their emotions. Ultimately, the structure of listening sessions successfully provided a constructive opportunity for participants.

Participants were overall very positive about their decision to take part in the listening sessions, and became invested in the initiative as a whole. The sessions had a notably positive impact on participants' emotional well-being and their engagement in collaborative efforts. In all, SCI was able to create a welcoming, safe, and reflective space for meaningful reflection around the lived experiences of COVID-19 for residents of LA.

Affordances of Listening Methods

SCI's process evaluation of the initiative revealed that each listening method afforded different abilities and insights. Specifically, each method—listening sessions, community outreach, online survey, and social media—lent itself to collecting a unique reach of participants, depth of engagement, ease of implementation, depth of data, and direct benefit to participants.

While findings regarding the affordances of these listening methods toward collaborative governance are preliminary, the successes of the CPR-LA initiative indicate the importance of reaching people in various ways to ensure democratic participation in public projects. Identifying and deploying a variety of methods, as we did with this initiative, is a promising tactic to ensure a balance of reaching and engaging as many people as possible in any initiative that aims to hear from the public.

Key Themes

Overall we recommend moving forward. Summarizing our findings, we've identified the following 10 key themes that depict the multifaceted experience of Angelenos during the pandemic and capture the many ways that COVID-19 impacted individuals and communities across LA.

<p>Social Impacts and Inequities</p> <p><i>"Profound inequities revealed." "Black and brown communities were and still are disproportionately affected".</i></p> <p>1</p>	<p>Personal & Emotional Struggles (e.g., isolation, sadness, and fear)</p> <p><i>"It was scary!" "The personal disconnect of human connection."</i></p> <p>2</p>
<p>Political and Governmental Responses (actions—or lack thereof—of elected officials)</p> <p><i>"Elected officials turned their backs on the people." "Mixed messages from State and Federal Governments."</i></p> <p>3</p>	<p>Public Health & Safety Protocols (e.g., masking, vaccinations, social distancing)</p> <p><i>"Masks were mandatory and how many people have died due to COVID-19" "La importancia de las vacunas. [The importance of vaccines.]"</i></p> <p>4</p>
<p>Economic & Work Impact (e.g. essential and remote workers)</p> <p><i>"Essential workers had no choice but to be at risk." "People have started Zooming more, not working in buildings."</i></p> <p>5</p>	<p>Acts of Kindness & Solidarity</p> <p><i>"There was suffering and isolation but also ... acts of kindness and solidarity." "Invest yourself in mutual aid to help others in your community."</i></p> <p>6</p>
<p>Cultural & Behavioral Shifts (e.g., social distancing, technological advancements)</p> <p><i>"The year that Zoom became a part of our culture". "No fun, no life, no way to really socialize."</i></p> <p>7</p>	<p>Death & Loss</p> <p><i>"So many people died. We learned nothing from the 1918 flu pandemic." "People died without having their loved ones at their bedside."</i></p> <p>8</p>
<p>Being Prepared & Looking Forward (preparedness for future crises)</p> <p><i>"Our infrastructure was not equipped, we need to do better for the future." "In 2040, it would be nice to say that we planned in advance for the next pandemic."</i></p> <p>9</p>	<p>Everyday Experiences (e.g., Zoom weddings, online shopping)</p> <p><i>"Zoom weddings are a thing." "Toilet paper-gate."</i></p> <p>10</p>

Recommendations

This research underscores the potential healing and commemorative functions of an LA COVID-19 memorial. To advance this initiative, SCI proposes the following short-, mid-, and long-term next steps as the City considers creating a permanent memorial:

Short-Term Recommendations (3-6 months):

1. Engage stakeholders to release and promote the CPR-LA findings
2. Create a space for continued pandemic reflections
3. Incorporate listening methods into other City initiatives
4. Integrate reflections into existing events

Mid-Term Recommendations (1-3 years):

1. Provide artistic funding opportunities
2. Create accessible remembrance initiatives

Long-Term Recommendations

1. Create a large-scale, permanent, City-wide memorial
2. Introduce a COVID-19 civic education program

Conclusion

The overall goals of the CPR-LA initiative were threefold:

1. **Engage** the Los Angeles community in thinking about and providing feedback on their thoughts for a COVID-19 pandemic memorial,
2. **Listen** to input from a wide variety of Angelenos via multiple channels (both in person and online) and with a focus on both geographic diversity and reaching special populations.
3. **Inform** future efforts by sharing findings and recommendations on both the idea of a COVID-19 memorial and the community engagement and listening process used for it.

As such, this report presented findings related to experiences with COVID-19, thoughts on a memorial, and reactions to the initiative itself.

The diverse experiences of Angelenos cannot be distilled into a singular narrative. Only by taking the time to listen closely can the scale and scope of their lived experiences be understood. In order to consider the creation of a memorial that will genuinely resonate with and honor the diversity of Los Angeles, the input gathered through these comprehensive methodologies and presented here, must inform how, where, why, and when a memorial is developed. Only in doing so can a future memorial do justice to the memories, sacrifices, and resilience of Angelenos during this time.

The CPR-LA initiative as a process demonstrated the power of art and community to effect healing and progress in the aftermath of collective trauma. The innovative techniques used in this initiative break new ground in the field of participatory governance and show promise for effective use in future City initiatives. This multi-method approach has much to teach us about collaborative governance; the lessons learned through this initiative can inform city governments as they engage with, and listen to, their constituents. Only by understanding and acknowledging the vast diversity of experiences, giving them voice and ensuring they are heard and remembered, can we hope to build more inclusive, resilient, and equitable futures for all Angelenos.

Introduction

About the COVID-19 Pandemic Reflections Initiative

The COVID-19 pandemic was (and is) an unprecedented global crisis that has left long-lasting impacts in its wake. It presents an opportunity for public agencies to honor the efforts of those on the frontline, remember lives lost, and mobilize to rebuild and recover. These three tasks—honor, remember, and mobilize—form the backbone of the City of Los Angeles COVID-19 Pandemic Reflections initiative (CPR-LA), which built upon Mayor Garcetti’s *Strength & Love* movement to honor Angelenos’ experiences and empower people to move forward together.⁵

Memorials play a crucial role in commemorating lost lives, acknowledging significant traumas, fostering collective healing, and providing spaces for reflection and remembrance.⁶ As one of the hardest-hit US regions during the first three years of the COVID-19 pandemic,⁷ the City of Los Angeles (LA) certainly has plenty to memorialize. With a population of almost four million, spanning almost 500 square miles, and home to people from more than 140 countries speaking more than 220 languages, LA cannot be treated as a monolith with singular wants or needs.⁸

LA’s scale and diversity is a key consideration in approaching efforts to commemorate key events that inform, influence, and shape the lives of its residents., Summarizing the LA Civic Memory Working Group, authors of the *Past Due Report* provocatively asked:⁹

“So how can Los Angeles move past the ways in which its infrastructural ambition, mirroring its civic one, tended to seek the regional, macro scale at the expense of the local? How can the city that so often trampled on community memory reconnect with histories of Los Angeles that are smaller, less predictable, and less subject to top-down or social control?”

Responding to this, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) hired See Change Institute (SCI) to develop a process evaluation and community engagement strategy to uncover how Angelenos think the City might move forward with creating a permanent COVID-19 memorial. The resulting initiative, CPR-LA, included a series of listening sessions, in-person and online community outreach, and a citywide survey that, together, aimed to inform the City’s future decision.

This report presents SCI’s methodology, findings, and recommendations following the successful implementation of the CPR-LA initiative. It addresses the following questions:

- What is the most appropriate **form** that a COVID-19 memorial could take?
- What **additional purposes** do Angelenos think such a memorial could serve?
- What would be the **most appropriate timing** of when the memorial can be created?
- Where might the memorial be **located**?
- What is the public’s understanding of the themes of **Honor, Remember, and Mobilize**?
- What is the role of a memorial in helping Angelenos **deal with individual / collective trauma**?

⁵ [Strength and Love, the City of Angels’ Covid-19 Memorial](#). (2021). LACITY.GOV; City of Los Angeles.

⁶ David Charles Sloane, “Death everywhere” in *Heritage of Death*: Routledge: New York. 2017.

⁷ [COVID-19 United States Cases by County](#). (2023). Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center; Johns Hopkins University.

⁸ [Facts About Los Angeles](#). (2023). Discover Los Angeles.

⁹ [Past Due: Report and Recommendations of the Los Angeles Mayor’s Office Civic Memory Working Group](#). (2021). Civic Memory LA; Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West.

Guiding Principles

The pandemic has had a “profound effect on all aspects of society, including mental health and physical health.”¹⁰ As such, we approached this research as community engagement process with the goal of establishing community buy-in and holding space for Angelenos to participate, learn from others, and provide unique perspectives on a COVID-19 memorial, all while recognizing that they may be experiencing ongoing personal and collective trauma from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taking a geo-specific and historically-rooted approach, the authors of the *Past Due Report*¹¹ advocated for a “get out of the way approach” and asked, “*Is the City of Los Angeles listening long and deeply enough to the needs coming from its communities, and understanding well enough the way those communities make use of civic memory?*” The authors further noted that while “*policies and procedures for initiating, revisiting, and taking down memorials are important... so too is knowing that memorialization with no municipal oversight must always be encouraged.*”¹² The authors further encourage the “*the public installation of structures, performances, or other creative or material works that address this region’s past in ways and forms that actively challenge not just myths and languid triumphalism but also the mere comfort of forgetting.*”¹³ Understanding how the Angelenos experienced COVID-19, and how they would like to remember this challenging time, should be the first step in exploring how the City may memorialize the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, our methodological approach was informed by the following guiding principles:

Civic Imagination and Civic Memory

Drawing on the work of the Civic Imagination Project, we define civic imagination as the practice of visualizing any social change that supports us in the movement towards a better world.¹⁴ Civic imagination is rooted in our collective ability to understand ourselves as civic agents capable of enacting change as we navigate imaginative possibilities with others. Civic memory roots the work of the civic imagination by reminding us that there is always more than one narrative of the past and that memorials remind “some of us not of triumph, but of pain.”¹⁵

Empathic Curiosity

We ground our work in empathic curiosity—imagining and seeking to understand the particular perspective of another person—rather than sympathetic identification, which is a broad emotional reaction and identification with a type of experience, and involves no curiosity to learn about others’ individual experiences in detail.

¹⁰ Holmes E, O’Connor R, Perry H, Tracey I, Wessley S, Arseneault L, et al. (2020). [Multidisciplinary research priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic: a call for action for mental health science](#). *The Lancet*; 7(6):547-560.

¹¹ [Past Due: Report and Recommendations of the Los Angeles Mayor’s Office Civic Memory Working Group](#). (2021). Civic Memory LA; Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West.

¹² Ibid. p. 13

¹³ Ibid. p. 6

¹⁴ Jenkins, H., Peters-Lazaro, G., & Shresthova, S. (Eds.). (2020). [Popular culture and the civic imagination: case studies of creative social change](#). NYU Press.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 6

Cultural Humility

“Cultural humility is a process of self-reflection and discovery in order to build honest and trustworthy relationships.”¹⁶ Our listening methods strove to develop honest, open, and trusting relationships amongst participants and the facilitators, which ensured open dialogue in which everyone sought to better understand the perspectives, experiences, and values of others.

Post-Traumatic Growth Theory

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) theory explains the type of transformation and growth that can occur following a traumatic experience or event. The theory holds that people who have experienced trauma and adversity, such as with COVID-19, can undergo positive growth thereafter.¹⁷ For many, the pandemic has resulted in significant psychological struggle that may still be ongoing, and this initiative was designed with this ongoing struggle in mind.

Transmedia Approaches to Research

Transmedia refers to the technique of sharing content across multiple platforms and formats using current and traditional media¹⁸. Taking a transmedia approach to research offers the opportunity to reach a broader and more diverse audience. By spreading the narrative or research inquiry across multiple platforms—for example, in-person gatherings, events, social media, and surveys—one can reach diverse respondents while eliciting a range of insights. This approach leads to a richer diversity of responses, multiple opportunities for meaningful participation, and a more comprehensive understanding of the subject at hand.

These guiding principles were crucial in shaping our research direction. Taking an informed approach to exploring the possibility of a COVID-19 memorial in Los Angeles was pivotal in ensuring that our research not only gathered in-depth insights but also genuinely met people where they were. Recognizing the challenging nature of our research subject, it was essential that we approached participants with sensitivity and respect. By prioritizing methodologies that were meaningful and relevant to the participants, we were able to foster a more engaging and empathetic research environment. This, in turn, ensured that while participants felt valued and understood, the data we gleaned was richer and more informative, providing invaluable insights for the broader objectives of the project.

¹⁶ Yeager, K. A., & Bauer-Wu, S. (2013). [Cultural humility: essential foundation for clinical researchers](#). *Applied nursing research: ANR*, 26(4), 251–256.

¹⁷ Tedeschi R, Shakespeare-Finch J, Taku K, and Calhoun L. (2018). [Post-traumatic growth: theory, research, and applications. 1st edition](#).

¹⁸ Jenkins, Henry. (2007). [Transmedia Storytelling 101](#). Pop Junctions.

Listening Strategies and Sample

To achieve our goal of engaging Angelenos with diverse experiences, our listening approach included the following strategies: (1) Listening Sessions, (2) Community Outreach, (3) Online Survey, and (4) Social Media. By utilizing both in-person and online strategies and providing a variety of ways in which Angelenos could provide input, we achieved our goal of hearing from residents in each council district. We focused on including people in the regions that were hardest hit by COVID-19 as defined by the LA County Department of Public Health¹⁹ as well as special populations identified in our kickoff meetings, including frontline workers, senior citizens, disabled people, and the unhoused. The rest of this section outlines our methods in detail.

Overall, we collected input from a total of 1,213 Angelenos across all 15 council districts. Table 1 outlines how many people we heard from in each council district.

Table 1. CPR-LA Sample by method and council district

Council District	# of Participants				Total
	Listening Session	Community Outreach	Survey	Social Media	
CD 1 (East / Northeast LA)	16	22	24	3	65
CD 2 (Southeast San Fernando Valley)	9	13	17	0	39
CD 3 (Southwest San Fernando Valley)	8	29	42	12	91
CD 4 (Mid-City / Hollywood Hills area)	2	11	49	9	71
CD 5 (West LA, Inland)	3	13	47	23	86
CD 6 (Central San Fernando Valley)	5	4	11	0	20
CD 7 (Northeast San Fernando Valley)	1	0	21	0	22
CD 8 (South Central LA)	6	3	27	21	57
CD 9 (Southeast LA)	10	2	11	0	23
CD 10 (Mid-City / Baldwin Hills area)	19	6	14	0	39
CD 11 (West LA, Coastal)	7	16	23	13	59
CD 12 (Northeast San Fernando Valley)	6	5	22	16	49
CD 13 (Hollywood area)	0	8	25	0	33
CD 14 (Downtown, East / Northeast LA)	13	2	26	21	62
CD 15 (Harbor Area)	21	11	51	3	86
Unspecified Location	N/A	1	N/A	413	414
Total	126	146	410	534	1216

Each listening strategy is described further below.

¹⁹ [County of Los Angeles Public Health COVID-19 Locations and Demographics](#)

Listening Sessions

Listening sessions were our most comprehensive listening strategy and formed the cornerstone of our overall approach. The protocol was designed by Dr. Sangita Shresthova. Its structure and design drew heavily on practice-based approaches that Dr. Shresthova designed with the late Gabriel Peters-Lazaro, detailed in *Practicing Futures: A Civic Imagination Action Handbook*²⁰.

The protocol consisted of three activities to elucidate sentiments related to both the COVID-19 pandemic as well as a potential memorial, and to provide an opportunity for collective healing:

Activity #1 asked participants three questions designed to understand their emotions and experiences in LA during the pandemic:

1. *What are some words that come to mind when you think about your Los Angeles experience with COVID-19?*
2. *What would you want the people of 2040 to know about what we experienced?*
3. *Is there a particular story, event, experience that happened in our city that you would want the people of 2040 to remember?*

Activity #2 was a reflective exercise during which participants considered the question:

“Imagine you have a window or other portal that allows you to look back to a different time - see it like a movie. Now imagine that you (that is, you today) can look back at a particular moment or event during the COVID-19 pandemic. What time/moment would you look to? What do you know now that you may not have known then?”

Activity #3 was a creative design exercise during which participants reflected on what was shared previously and used that to illustrate, visually or verbally, an LA COVID-19 memorial that would represent their pandemic experience (Figure 1). After they completed their designs, facilitators asked why their design felt important or meaningful. To ensure consistency across responses, we asked participants to imagine five distinct aspects of their memorial:

1. *What form would it take?*
2. *What would we remember through it?*
3. *Who would its audience be?*
4. *What would it be called?*
5. *Where in the City would it be located?*

The full listening session protocol is available upon request.

Figure 1. Angelenos participating in the design challenge (Listening Session, Downtown LA)



²⁰ Peters-Lazaro, G., & Shresthova, S. (2020). *Practicing futures: a civic imagination action handbook*. Peter Lang.

We utilized a variety of methods to advertise and recruit for the listening sessions, including:

- Press release from Mayor Garcetti's office
- Landing page on the DCA website
- Newsletters from council district offices
- Outreach via community groups and neighborhood councils
- Social media marketing
- Physical canvassing around Los Angeles
- Word of mouth

A comprehensive communication strategy was employed in partnership with our community partners, ensuring information about the listening sessions was widely disseminated. Sample recruitment materials are included in [Appendix A](#).

We facilitated 15 listening sessions between November 2022 and July 2023. Three were conducted online and the rest in person around the City (see [Appendix B](#)). Listening sessions were facilitated by Dr. Tiffany Grimes—a clinical psychologist with expertise in mindfulness-based approaches—and Johnathan Figueroa, M.S., a trained public health scholar with expertise in local community engagement. Both facilitators were trained in our listening methods by Dr. Shresthova.

Listening sessions were conducted both in-person and online. Sessions lasted 60-90 minutes, depending on the number of attendees and the vigor of the discussion generated through community interactions. Throughout the listening sessions, participants were encouraged to connect with one another and build off of each others' responses.

At the end of each session, attendees filled out a survey with their demographic information, including their zip code, years living in LA, race, ethnicity, and age. Here is a summary of who participated based on this information collected:

- A total of 125 Angelenos, representing 14 out of 15 council districts (all except CD 13), participated in a listening session.
- The majority of listening session attendees (86%) reported living in LA for 20+ years, with another 11% living in LA for 12-20 years and 4% for fewer than 12 years.
- About two thirds of attendees (64%) identified as women.
- One third (33%) of participants were between the ages of 18-35 years old, with 40% between ages 36-55 and 27% over age 55.
- Roughly half of attendees (54%) speak English at home and a third (33%) speak Spanish; other languages include Italian, Arabic, and Mandarin.
- Of attendees who reported their race, 35% identified as white; 30% as Black; 8% as American Indian or Alaskan Native; and 3% Asian or Asian American. A small majority (55%) were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. Compared against the 2020 LA Census,²¹ our sample shows a higher representation of respondents identifying as Black (+22%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (+7%), white (+6%), and Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin (+5%), and a lower percentage identified as Asian or Asian American (-9%).

²¹ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Los Angeles city, California](#). (2020).

Community Outreach

Two strategies were designed to engage people in environments where they may be willing to speak with our team about a memorial: neighborhood council meetings and community events.

Neighborhood Council Meetings

Neighborhood councils were identified as a key partner in connecting with the widespread LA community. The CPR-LA initiative provided councils with a way to allow interested Angelenos to share their input on a memorial and to help constituents process their COVID-19 experiences.

We contacted all 99 LA neighborhood councils, requesting that they (1) add us to an upcoming meeting agenda so we could share the initiative with their communities and collect input, (2) promote any upcoming listening sessions in their area, and (3) promote our online survey.

From this outreach, we were added to 25 agendas for meetings between March and July 2023, including at least one per council district, where we collected input from 108 Angelenos out of 413 total attendees. Of these meetings, 12 took place in a hardest-hit area. An additional eight neighborhood councils agreed to promote the initiative on their social media.

At the meetings, we provided a brief overview of CPR-LA, then asked for input. For consistency between strategies, we asked the same questions from the listening session design activity. While the structure of these meetings precluded us from collecting individual demographics, we broke down participants based on the council district in which meetings were located (Table 2).

Table 2. Neighborhood council outreach by council district

Council District	# of Meetings	# Attendees	# Participants
CD 1 (East / Northeast LA)	1	8	5
CD 2 (Southeast San Fernando Valley)	2	21	6
CD 3 (Southwest San Fernando Valley)	3	67	24
CD 4 (Mid-City / Hollywood Hills area)	1	30	11
CD 5 (West LA, Inland)	4	67	13
CD 6 (Central San Fernando Valley)	2	28	9
CD 7 (Northeast San Fernando Valley)	1	21	0
CD 8 (South Central LA)	1	17	3
CD 9 (Southeast LA)	1	19	2
CD 10 (Mid-City / Baldwin Hills area)	1	23	6
CD 11 (West LA, Coastal)	1	29	8
CD 12 (Northeast San Fernando Valley)	1	11	0
CD 13 (Hollywood area)	2	18	8
CD 14 (Downtown, East / Northeast LA)	1	4	2
CD 15 (Harbor Area)	3	50	11

Community Events

In addition to neighborhood council meetings, we also tabled at relevant community events, canvassed at neighborhood farmers' markets, and added a few closed listening sessions for specific communities who felt less comfortable sharing at an open session.

We attended a total of 13 community events at which we collected input from 36 Angelenos (Figure 2). We targeted events that were focused on the arts and/or community building, as these themes were most aligned with the goals of the initiative. Although we could not collect demographic information from these participants, we were able to capture their voices and opinions and include them in our findings.

Figure 2. Community outreach at an arts event (Lincoln Heights)



Online Survey

While the listening sessions and community outreach allowed us to achieve a certain depth of input from Angelenos, we realized that such synchronous data collection would only reach a small fraction of the City. We therefore designed an online survey that could be distributed via multiple platforms (e.g., newsletters, social media, QR codes) to socialize the ideas and goals of the initiative and to collect input from a wider breadth of Angelenos.

We designed an online survey to be distributed broadly and collect input from a wider breadth of Angelenos. This survey had three primary goals:

1. Enquire from Angelenos on their COVID-19 experiences and provide a place for them to reflect, vent and detail the impacts of the disease—perhaps for the first time.
2. Collect data about Angelenos' ability to connect their own and collective experiences with COVID-19 to public art that can serve to honor these experiences.
3. Collect specific details about the most relevant content and location of the memorial that is reflective of all other information collected through the survey.

We disseminated the survey in two ways:

1. **Community Promotion:** The survey was distributed through online outreach, in-person events, and word of mouth. Sample materials for this promotion are included in [Appendix A](#).
2. **Professional Survey Panel:** We also worked with a panel provider to recruit a representative sample of survey participants. We sought to balance broad representation across Los Angeles with an oversample in zip codes that were hardest by the pandemic. Toward the end of the listening phase, we re-contacted the panel to recruit an additional sample in zip codes that were underrepresented in our other listening methods.

The survey was 23 questions long and included the following sections:

1. Individual experiences during the pandemic
2. Input regarding a COVID-19 memorial
3. Demographics (e.g., zip code, race, age)
4. Opportunity to share additional thoughts

The full survey instrument is available upon request.

A total of 410 Angelenos participated in the online survey; 46 found it organically (e.g., through social media, the DCA website, or word of mouth), and the other 364 respondents were recruited via a panel provider. We aimed for an representative spread of participants across all council districts (Table 3).

Table 3. Survey respondents by council district

Council District	# of Respondents	% of Total
CD 1 (East / Northeast LA)	24	6%
CD 2 (Southeast San Fernando Valley)	17	4%
CD 3 (Southwest San Fernando Valley)	42	10%
CD 4 (Mid-City / Hollywood Hills area)	49	12%
CD 5 (West LA, Inland)	47	11%
CD 6 (Central San Fernando Valley)	11	3%
CD 7 (Northeast San Fernando Valley)	21	5%
CD 8 (South Central LA)	27	7%
CD 9 (Southeast LA)	11	3%
CD 10 (Mid-City / Baldwin Hills area)	14	3%
CD 11 (West LA, Coastal)	23	6%
CD 12 (Northeast San Fernando Valley)	22	5%
CD 13 (Hollywood area)	25	6%
CD 14 (Downtown, East / Northeast LA)	26	6%
CD 15 (Harbor Area)	51	12%

Here is a summary of who participated based on this information collected:

- Over half of survey participants (64%) reported living in LA for at least 20 years, with 12% living in LA for 12-20 years, 13% for 6-11 years, and 12% for five years or less.
- A small majority of survey participants (60%) identified as men.
- A quarter of participants (25%) were over age 55, a third (32%) were between the ages of 36-55, and the rest (40%) were ages 18-35.
- Of respondents who reported their race, over half (58%) identified as white; 17% identified as Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander; and 12% identified as Black or African American. A little under a third of the sample (29%) were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.

Social Media as Research

Finally, we designed, shared, and tracked a series of social media posts to engage residents who were less likely to respond to a survey or participate in a synchronous listening method. We worked with community organizations and DCA to post questions related to an LA memorial and solicited asynchronous feedback on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, and NextDoor. Sample posts are included in [Appendix A](#).

A total of 69 posts were made by a range of community partners, including::

- Community organizations (e.g., Imagine LA, Disability Community Resource Center)
- Local interest groups (e.g., Mission Hills Activity, Community, and Lifestyle Group)
- Local subreddits (e.g., r/LosAngeles, r/AskLosAngeles)
- Neighborhood Councils (e.g. Historic Highland Park Neighborhood Council)
- Individuals (e.g., SCI staff, public figures)
- City-affiliated groups (e.g., Department of Cultural Affairs, Exposition Park Library).

The total reach across all memorial-related posts was 1,112,985 (based on members/followers). The posts garnered a total of 384 reactions (e.g., likes, upvotes) and 150 comments. While most of the groups are city-wide and unable to be broken down by council district, some local groups and neighborhood councils could be categorized (Table 4).

Table 4. Social media as research by council district

Council District	# Posts	# Members / Followers	# Reactions	# Comments
CD 1 (East / Northeast LA)	5	19,864	3	0
CD 2 (Southeast San Fernando Valley)	3	7,873	0	0
CD 3 (Southwest San Fernando Valley)	6	5,072	12	0
CD 4 (Mid-City / Hollywood Hills area)	4	8,597	3	6
CD 5 (West LA, Inland)	4	6,949	15	8
CD 6 (Central San Fernando Valley)	0	0	0	0
CD 7 (Northeast San Fernando Valley)	3	20,714	0	0
CD 8 (South Central LA)	1	977	20	1
CD 9 (Southeast LA)	0	0	0	0
CD 10 (Mid-City / Baldwin Hills area)	0	0	0	0
CD 11 (West LA, Coastal)	3	4,931	3	10
CD 12 (Northeast San Fernando Valley)	9	33,838	6	10
CD 13 (Hollywood area)	2	5,163	0	0
CD 14 (Downtown, East / Northeast LA)	2	11,684	18	3
CD 15 (Harbor Area)	7	11,970	3	0
Unspecified Location	20	975,353	301	112

Reflections on the LA COVID-19 Experience

In addition to providing context for a COVID-19 memorial, the listening sessions aimed to support a process of healing and sharing among participants. At the beginning of each session, we asked participants to share their COVID-19 experiences. The prompts we developed invited participants to reflect on what they experienced as individuals and as members of their respective communities. We also asked them to explore how they would like Angelenos in the future to look back at these pandemic. Intentionally forward-looking, the focus of these sessions surfaced the salient, resonant, and shareable dimensions of people’s experiences, allowing them both to connect with others and to process their individual experiences.

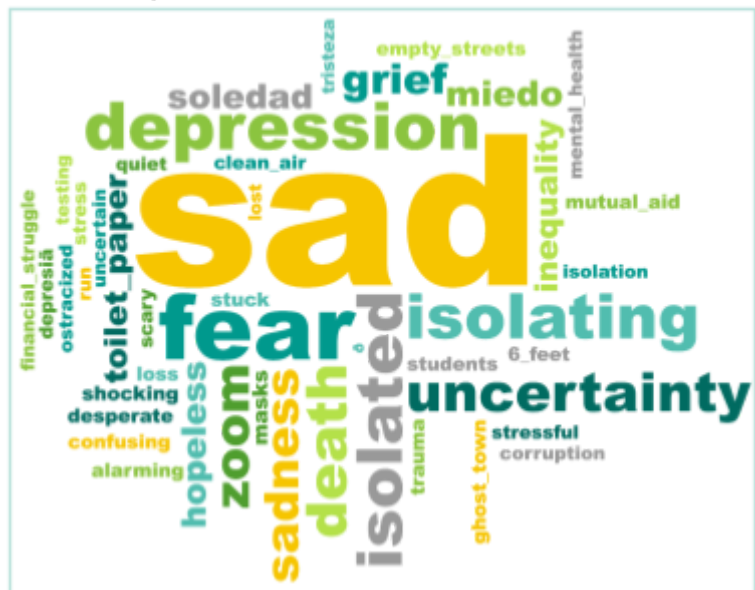
General Reflections and Responses

The words our respondents associated with their lived experience of the COVID-19 pandemic in LA were overwhelmingly filled with sorrow, isolation and fear (Figure 3)²². The word “sad” was by far the most frequent word that participants associated with COVID-19 in the City. Other strongly resonant words included “isolation,” “depression,” “uncertainty,” “fear,” and “death.” The word “zoom” also came up regularly in this context, which is significant when placed in dialogue with the personal and community dichotomies we observed and detail below.

The emotions that participants associated with the pandemic in our listening sessions were similarly overwhelmingly negative. Dominant feelings were anxiety, uncertainty, fear, anger, frustration, and sadness.

We also observed a pervasive sense of loss in individuals’ reflections on their experiences. The valence—or the extent of positivity or negativity—of this loss differed between communities, neighborhoods, and individuals, with marginalized and lower-income communities more directly impacted by the pandemic. It became evident that sessions hosted in areas or communities that were particularly affected by COVID-19, whether due to the socioeconomic makeup of the area or the demographic identity of the community therein, typically recalled and shared more trauma related to death and loss than those hosted in communities with more wealth and resources.

Figure 3. Word cloud depicting top associations with the COVID-19 pandemic



²² Associated words were collected through mentimeter and in-person brainstorming. Word datasets were then analyzed through Voyant.

One participant at the Los Angeles Poverty Department listening session (which was attended in large part by unhoused Angelenos and members of the LA Skid Row community), reflected on how the stress of their day-to-day lives was exacerbated by the intense trauma of the pandemic and the impact of being under-resourced and feeling forgotten:

I think we were all so stressed in terms of our capacity to continue. It didn't take much to just burst that window of resilience that we had. It just took a little more to break the camel's back. People were maybe more edgy and more easily vulnerable, and became even more vulnerable from there. It's like a cycle of vulnerability, of trauma that begets trauma, violence that begets violence, that begets poverty that begets violence. To me, it was a real look at how violent society became in terms of our focus. And the ultimate violence is being left with no resources.

- Listening Session, Downtown Los Angeles

By contrast, an participant at a session hosted at coworking space The Kinn, where most attendees were young adults or middle-aged professionals living on the more affluent westside of LA during the pandemic, expressed more of a sense of separation from its worst impacts and feelings of guilt when reflecting on the relative ease of their pandemic experience:

My experience with COVID-19 was that it lasted so long and it changed so much. And then I think about my experience and the global experience, and that intermixing of how comfortable I was and I was watching [other things happening in the world], and that dissonance of feeling really like, other than unease and some inconvenience, it wasn't bad. And there was some guilt associated with it because you're watching this thing happen, and not that you want to go to there, but it's just like unease that lasted a long time, and then this unknown...is it over?

Listening Session, Venice

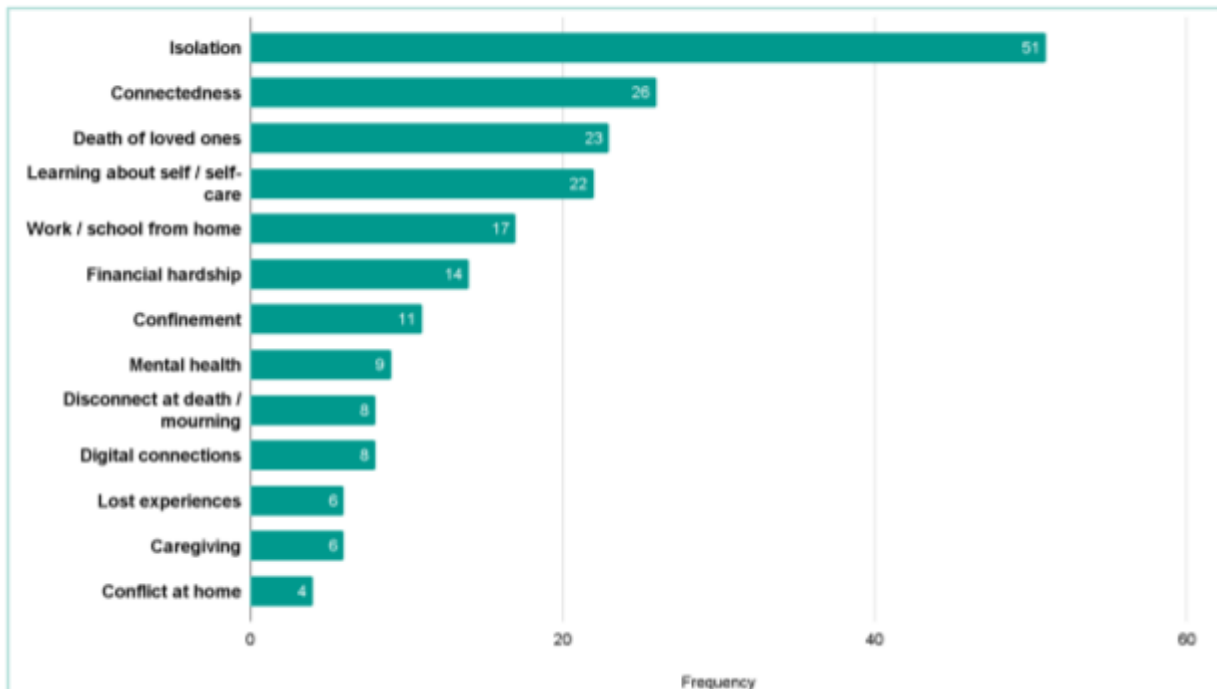
Alongside these expressions of trauma and hardship, there were still some (albeit very thin) silver linings or bright spots shared by participants. Feelings of hope emerged in most sessions, as well as some positive feelings attached to self-learning and a sense of solidarity and collective action for some. These will be explored further in the following sections.

Indeed, a deeper investigation of participants' shared experiences reveals a more nuanced picture. When reflecting on their individual experiences, participants held feelings of both isolation and connection; when reflecting on their communal experiences, they balanced both a sense of solidarity and an awareness of misinformation and distrust.

Personal Experiences of Connection and Isolation

The listening sessions provided attendees with the opportunity to observe and hold seemingly contradictory feelings and experiences in dialogue with each other. These dialogues between potentially opposing experiences helped participants explore the middle ground of their own COVID-19 experience. One such example is the joint feeling of isolation and connection that emerged when personal experiences were coded and aggregated (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Personal experiences of COVID-19 in LA



Isolation

On a personal level, participants focused on the sense of isolation they felt and many spoke about **“being alone and isolated”** (Listening Session, Lincoln Heights). As one healthcare worker shared, *“oh my God. This is the loneliest I’ve ever been in my life”* (Listening Session, Venice). In another session, a healthcare worker reflected on how isolating the experience was for their peers:

At the same time that [healthcare workers] were being praised, we were being segregated. We would go out in the street in our uniforms and take the bus to work and people would scatter, like we were the ones that were sick, passing it along. But we were just as scared as they were. - Listening Session, Lincoln Heights

While isolation was a crucial experience of most, if not all, Angelenos, this theme appeared particularly salient during listening sessions and community outreach that occurred in areas that were hardest hit by the pandemic. For many, this isolation was exacerbated by a shared sense of time lost to the pandemic. Participants spoke of grief around, for example, lost senior years and lonely weddings. As one participant summarized, *“we are never going to get those years back”* (Listening Session, Exposition Park).

The inability to grieve with others and be with the loved ones when they passed away was an especially profound impact of the pandemic. Stories of losing loved ones to the illness, and of being unable to be with those loved ones when they passed away or with family and friends during periods of mourning, were told most frequently by individuals located in the hardest hit areas of the City. Participants were often relieved to have the opportunity to share these stories.



I have--had--an aunt. She was... in her 70s or 80s already. She had lung problems, she was wearing oxygen all the time. Out of nowhere, she got COVID and went to the hospital. One of her oldest sons, he was in his 50s maybe, he was fine, out of nowhere literally like a week later, he went to the hospital. She died, and as we were burying her, putting her down in the ground, they called us from the hospital - he just died. So we lost two persons, pretty much in the same week.

Listening Session, Watts



My father passed away from COVID. He had to go to the hospital. They weren't going to keep him at the hospital because they were only going to take people who they thought could survive. [But then they did.] I didn't know what to do. I was like, I can't not see my dad before he passes. I got put into PPE and at least I got to be with my dad before he passed. After that, I had to go and quarantine in a hotel by myself. Then they called me later and they told me my father was about to pass away. I got to say something through the phone before he passed.

Listening Session, Lincoln Heights

The individual who told this second story later shared with the group that this had been the first time they had spoken about her experience losing their father two years previously. Other attendees were able to provide comfort in the form of similar experiences and words of validation.

For some participants COVID-19 led to conflict at home as the pandemic put pressure on personal relationships. As a participant at a coffee shop in Hollywood shared, their strained relationship that was forced to continue past the time when it would have ended because of pandemic lockdown measures. At one listening session, a non-binary participant shared with us that they were forced to stay in the closet at home, with no foreseeable end in sight:

I had to pass [present as cisgender] with the family I lived with, and I was upset that I wouldn't be able to escape to college in-person [as I had previously counted on]"

- Listening Session, Exposition Park

Mental health also was a key concern during the pandemic. These concerns surfaced in multiple ways and through diverse situations that included stress related to providing and caring for loved ones, dealing with financial hardship, and grappling with trauma experienced as a frontline worker:

There's many [healthcare] workers that are so burned out that I've worked with since...I've been doing this for three years. Started literally the day they shut the City down... A lot of people quit because they couldn't handle the mental aspects of it. It, like, eats you. So they need to focus a lot more on mental health options because a lot of good people, if they're not losing their jobs, they're quitting in droves because they have no outlet to express the feelings and the thoughts that they have.

- Listening Session, Lincoln Heights

Participants with children in the home also reflected on the emergence of remote learning and having children at home as central to their COVID-19 experience, as schools closed down, initially for a short time and “*followed by increasingly longer periods of closure*” (Listening Session, Exposition Park). One Angeleno shared that having her two children at home during the pandemic was “*a completely life-changing type of situation*” (Neighborhood Council Meeting, Cypress Park).

Connection

While holding these feelings of isolation, some participants shared that they were able to connect with others in new ways. As one Angeleno noted:

There's some good things that came out of it...despite the separation that we incurred from families and day-to-day life, I think we came together in certain ways through technology...and we came very close to people [like] family and friends that we may have been drifting away from because we cared deeply for their wellbeing and their welfare.

- Neighborhood Council Meeting, Sherman Oaks

This sentiment was echoed by another participant at a listening session when a participant noted that they became “*closer with colleagues than ever*” and experienced a period of “*personal growth, professional growth*” (Listening Session, Venice). For another participant, the pandemic was in some ways an “*an amazing experience of being able to evaluate how we were looking at life*” (Listening Session, Lincoln Heights). Another shared a very similar observation when they noted:

In terms of work, I have a different attitude about commitment. I still want to do a good job, but there's only so much I want to give personally to my work.

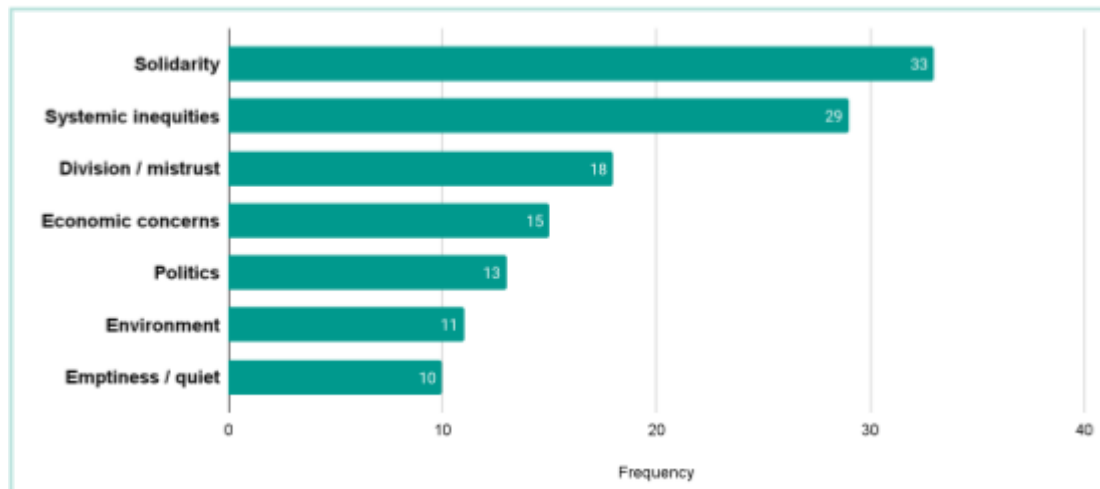
- Farmers Market, Mar Vista

In general, participants concluded that the pandemic brought experiences that were “**good and bad, either divided or connected**” (Listening Session, Venice). It is important to note that feelings of connectedness (and especially digital connectedness) were less frequently shared by Angelenos who lived in areas hardest hit by the pandemic.

Communal Experiences of Systemic Inequalities and Solidarity

In addition to reflecting on their own personal experiences during the pandemic, participants were asked to consider experiences that were unique or specific to their own communities. In this reflection, another dialogue emerged between two different outcomes of the pandemic: exacerbation of systemic inequalities and feelings of solidarity (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Community experiences of COVID-19 in LA



Systemic Inequalities

Participants noted that pervasive systemic inequalities were exacerbated leading to a situation where **“the suffering was unequal and divided along lives of race, class, access, politics”** (Community Art Event, Chinatown). This individual elaborated on the disastrous effects of this inequity: *“every person lost was a tragedy. We did not have to lose so many lives.”* Another Angeleno noted that the pandemic led to a cycle in which *“vulnerable populations became even more vulnerable, and through this, shed a spotlight on the economic disparities that continue, even now as we’re not out of it all yet”* (Neighborhood Council Meeting, Canoga Park).

One listening session host shared a disturbing story of the pandemic experience in a low-resourced, and hard-hit by the pandemic, area of East LA:

Something that was just shared with me at another public event, because I've been talking about this [listening session] for a week... one of the things that happened in Lincoln Heights is that they blocked off Broadway, they blocked off Avenue 26. They blocked off our community streets and put up hazard signs.... because our [COVID-19] rates were so high and it must have been early before vaccines were made available. We were in lockdown mode. - Listening Session, Lincoln Heights

This individual added that they (and others in the room) were *“so offended”* and wondered *“if they did that in West LA?”* Another person noted that, having lived in West LA for part of the pandemic, they indeed had never *“seen anything like that”* in that relatively well-resourced area of LA.

At another event, an Angeleno noted that a “*huge subset of people whose jobs were classified as essential were told to keep working during the deadliest pandemic any of us have seen in our lifetimes*” (Neighborhood Council Meeting, Sherman Oaks). While this was happening, this individual also noted that the pandemic period brought “*record profits for a lot of companies ...[even as] cost of living skyrocketed*” and more people lost their homes.

For some participants, these systemic inequities were only partially addressed by the government, and participants repeatedly identified government support (or lack thereof) during the pandemic as a key dimension of their experience.

Solidarity

After expressing frustration with the government’s handling of the pandemic, one Angeleno noted that some areas where they believed things were done right, including LA Unified School District (LAUSD distributing food to families; the eviction moratorium; and access to free public transportation (Neighborhood Council Meeting, Sherman Oaks). Noting these successes, another individual expressed the need to hold in our minds “*who we couldn’t help and what we lacked*” as well (Community Art Event, Chinatown).

Figure 6. Is there a particular story, experience, or event that you would like the people of 2040 to remember?



Figure 7. What would you want the people of 2040 to know about what we experienced?



Several participants noted that the pandemic brought important moments of solidarity with the “*affirming aspect of having one thing that we all shared,*” a feeling that arose “*every time we stood together for rolls or toilet paper and took notice that we were not alone in our fear*” (Community Art Event, Chinatown). This focus on solidarity echoed when we analyzed the words most commonly mentioned during the parts of our listening sessions during which participants described their LA pandemic experience and discussed what they would want to share with future generations (Figures 6 and 7).

Environmental Experiences of Peacefulness and Distrust

A final dialogue between conflicting experiences emerged when recalling the physical experience of LA during the pandemic: that of a clean and quiet city with an air of misinformation and distrust.

Peaceful Environment

Participants recalled the transformation that the City of Los Angeles underwent during the pandemic. One used words like “eerie”, “quiet”, and “contemplative” to describe an LA they had “never seen” (Community Art Event, Chinatown). One Angeleno described LA’s environment:

I remember that the air was clean, and there was a moment where people really felt unified in the experience together and there was a sort of, like, dissolving of all of the walls that I feel like we have as Angelenos. Because we are quite a segmented city, you know, so that felt real. It just felt different. Felt like a different LA.

- Farmers Market, Mar Vista

Other participants shared similar memories of a city where the air was uncharacteristically clean, and people had the opportunity to spend time outdoors enjoying nature.

Misinformation / Distrust

Participants juxtaposed this peaceful experience with a broader atmosphere of mistrust rooted in political polarization and unreliable information circulating through social media. These discussions were often punctuated with mentions of President Trump’s handling of the pandemic, President Biden’s election, the murder of George Floyd, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

One participant noted that a lot of families didn’t believe in the pandemic at first:

They were just out and about doing their own thing without protection, without using sanitizer, without using a mask, because at the beginning they thought it was fake. And, they continue to think it was fake. - Listening Session, Watts

Indeed, many participants across different age groups experienced the COVID-19 pandemic as politically divisive, as evidenced by this college student’s observation:

Workers and students themselves became political. I feel as though there was push back towards government institutions. Also during this time I feel like my generation [Gen Z] became inherently political. My generation felt as though we had to organize ourselves to stop the injustices that the pandemic displayed for all to see.

- Listening Session, Exposition Park

Overall, participants shared lessons they learned during the pandemic that resulted in lasting changes for themselves and their communities. For many, the pandemic shed light on systemic inequities and accelerated important conversations. Profoundly sad and stressful moments filled with loss also demonstrated that local communities could come together to fill gaps, even as they acknowledged the City’s efforts to step up and help those in need. As one participant summarized: “COVID broke us down, but we got up stronger” (Listening Session, Watts).

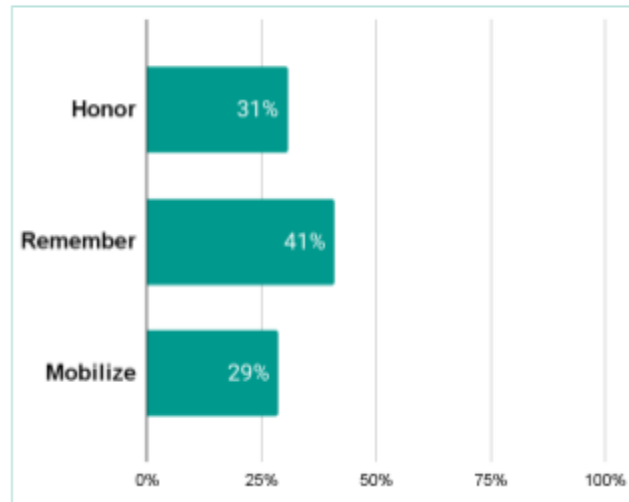
Initiative themes of Honor, Remember, and Mobilize

The CPR–LA initiative grew out of Mayor Garcetti’s *Strength & Love* movement, whose core tenets were to “honor those who held our city together, including first responders, essential workers, small businesses owners, community organizations, caregivers, neighbors, and families; remember those we have lost due to the pandemic; and mobilize to give back to our communities, and work together to build an even more united, supportive and resilient city.”²³

We presented survey participants with these three themes—honor, remember, and mobilize—and asked them to choose which one(s) resonated with them the most. “Remember” (41%) was selected most often as the theme that encapsulates the Los Angeles COVID-19 pandemic experience, followed by “Honor” and “Mobilize” (Figure 8).

Those who resonated most with the theme “remember” shared explanations.

Figure 8. *Strength & Love* themes that resonated most with survey respondents (select all that apply).



Remember. We lost so much during the Pandemic. Our livelihood. Small business crumbled while big corporations made money. People lost family members. People lived in fear. We had riots. The city was in shambles. Now the aftermath everyone is struggling financially. People still in fear.

Survey, Lincoln Heights



Remember. I want this to be something humans can look at and be inspired by in order to remind us to keep each other safe for future world events like this.

Survey, Chinatown

It is important to note that 32% of respondents who selected “Remember” also selected “Honor” and “Mobilize.” These themes seem to exist within the same emotional space among Angelenos.



All of them, it’s difficult to choose. We need something that honors and remembers those who were lost or worked diligently to care for those who were sick. But we also need something that allows people to come together and think back on that time of our lives while also feeling good in the present day, and hopeful for the future.

- Survey, Palms

²³ [Strength and Love. the City of Angels’ Covid-19 Memorial](#). (2021). LACITY.GOV; City of Los Angeles.

Reflections on a Los Angeles COVID-19 Memorial

Memorial Interest

While most in-depth listening methods intentionally focused on *how* the City of LA might design a COVID-19 Memorial, rather than *whether* it should in the first place, the survey and social media posts presented clear opportunities for respondents to indicate general opposition to the initiative. Overall, more than two-thirds (69%) of survey respondents were in favor of a COVID-19 memorialization effort in LA, with only 29% indicating that they were opposed to any kind of COVID-19 memorial. When compared to results from a survey fielded by Mayor Garcetti's *Strength & Love* initiative in late 2021, which indicated that approximately 87% of the 149 participants supported a COVID-19 memorial, our findings indicated decreased interest in 2023. This change in a memorial may be, at least in part, attributable to the time-specific dimensions of this pandemic and the fact that Angelenos' experiences and attitudes have shifted over the past two years.

Sources of Resistance to a COVID-19 Memorial

Participants who opposed a COVID-19 Memorial cited (1) timing and (2) better uses of funding.

Reason #1. Timing

Some participants felt that that now–2023–was not the right time for the memorial, either because the pandemic was not yet over, the controversies around it have not yet been resolved, people are just starting to piece their lives back together, or, in the words of one participant, “*people are still dying every day*” (Social Media). One survey respondent summed this up by writing:

I worry that now is not the right time to erect a COVID-19 memorial. Many people still find COVID-19 as a topic to be "controversial" and I worry that mourners would be disrupted by bad actors who would find any recognition of COVID-19 offensive. I also worry about the optics of using public funds towards a memorial during a time of major economic hardship in our city. I feel that right now, our public funds needs to be dedicated towards fighting our city's urgent housing crisis. We cannot mourn when our community's basic needs have not yet been met. - Survey, North Hollywood

Some participants, on the other hand, expressed that they wanted to move on and did not want to be reminded of “*when I lost three years of my life*” (Neighborhood Council Meeting, Canoga Park). For this individual, COVID-19 was “*a disease that just happened. I don't see a need for [a memorial].*” Others also said things like, “*I sure as hell don't want to remember this period of time.*” (Social Media) and “*We're trying to forget about COVID-19 right now. I don't know why we need a memorial.* (Council Meeting, Park Mesa Heights).

The feeling that a COVID-19 memorial was an improper use of money, or that the time isn't right to build one (either too soon or too late) was a common first reaction to the question of what a memorial might be. As the rest of this section will explore, however, our listening methods were designed to support resistant Angelenos to move past this knee-jerk response and consider how they might address their concerns with their memorial idea.

Reason #2. Better Uses of Funding

Many participants, even those who were generally supportive of the memorial, expressed concerns about fiscal priorities and wondered if the money could be “*better spent*” in other ways. Some specifically expressed a desire for the money that might be spent on a memorial to be used for the benefit of those who were, and continue to be, negatively affected by the pandemic. For them, spending money on a memorial that would not serve the City would be, in the words of one participant, “*a waste of time*” (Social Media). One resident of West Adams, a high-density neighborhood made up of over 90% Latino and Black residents²⁴, expressed:

COVID is something that killed hundreds of thousands of people. Why would we want to do a memorial to something..it's like doing a memorial to a plague, or some other killer. Why would we spend money on that, there are a lot of other ways we could spend our money? - Neighborhood Council Meeting, West Adams

Participants identified six primary alternative ways that this money could be spent:

1. Improving Parks.

“I'd much rather improve our parks and get people back out.”
– Council Meeting, Brentwood.

2. Addressing Homelessness.

“No one wants to remember [the pandemic], use the money for [the] homeless.”
– Survey, Highland Park

3. Addressing Crime.

“I believe the money would be better spent addressing the soaring crime rate.”
– Social Media

4. Fixing Infrastructure.

“The money would be better spent to repair our pothole filled roads!”
– Survey, Arleta

5. Reducing Food Deserts.

“We have no full service grocery stores for miles. We are a food desert. We have the largest African American voting block in Los Angeles. And we need other priorities met.”
– Council Meeting, Park Mesa Heights

6. Educating the Public and Supporting Schools.

“No memorial. Put the money into education on how to improve your immunity and eat and live healthfully.”
– Survey, Downtown LA

While clearly critical of a traditional COVID-19 memorial, it is worth noting that these participants’ ideas connect with some of the less-conventional memorial ideas generated by participants who were overall over supportive; this will be explored further in the following section.

²⁴ Los Angeles Times. (2023). [West Adams Neighborhood](#).

Memorial Form

The memorial proposals and ideas we gathered centered on five key themes: nature, art, exhibits, events, and community investment. These are described below.

Theme #1: Nature

Many participants wanted to see a memorial that would be set in nature and thereby associated with life, time, respect and connection. Often building on other memorials they may have seen (eg., the 9/11 memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the AIDS quilt), participants had ideas including events where people to plant trees in memory of those who passed away during the pandemic, or memorial parks that would be created in many neighborhoods.



Connect the life stories of those that died to a tree. Plant trees in people's names. Create a path or green belt in local communities. Connect each story through QR code/GPS coordinates. Create a central point, an ascension stone/monument at its center.

Listening Session, Northridge

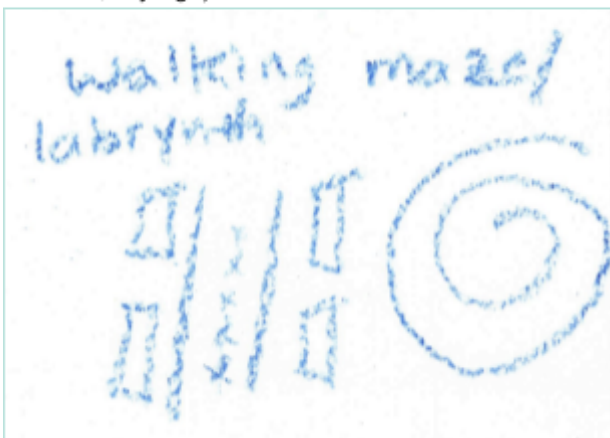


So I work in healthcare... what's very important is resiliency... and unity, community, togetherness is more important than anything. And events to commemorate in a place where people can come together. I think that's very important. And Winnetka has some of the most beautiful parks... But we could create some kind of a togetherness within our community [parks] where people can come together from all different places of LA.

Neighborhood Council Meeting, Winnetka

Participants were also given an opportunity to illustrate the form that their memorial idea might take, such as the one to the left depicting an outdoor maze that was meant to symbolize the path to healing from the pandemic (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Outdoor memorial form idea (Listening Session, Tujunga)

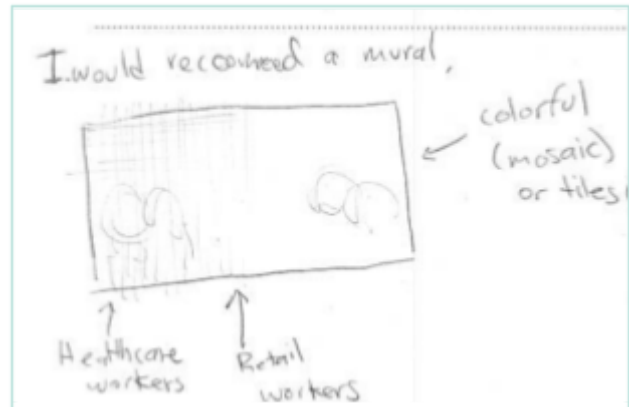


While some participants were clear that they did not want any digital media encroaching on nature-based memorials, others considered the benefits of adding digital augmentation to the environment. For example, one artist who attended a listening session proposed an *"interactive fountain with paths that lead to a platform...[in which] the water represents the things that divide us, the paths represent the things that connect us. Screen or lights that beam up - the more people on the platform, the more vibrant the light."* (Listening Session, Venice). For this and other participants, water specifically became a central feature in their proposals, associated with its ability to nurture and clean.

Theme #2: Art

Since this initiative was developed in partnership with the Public Art Division of DCA, and some sessions hosted at city arts centers, many participants were predisposed to considering art-based ideas for memorializing COVID-19. These ideas included sculptures (eg., trees, benches, installations) and murals that depict what Angelenos experienced (Figure 10). They also included visions of participatory art projects; participation ideas ranged from altering the art over time (reflecting the multiplicity of experiences and shifting nature of the pandemic) to using it as a point of entry to connecting with others and sharing one's experiences.

Figure 10. Mural memorial idea (Listening Session, Exposition Park)



At a session hosted by an arts center in Lincoln Heights, one of the hardest-hit neighborhoods of Los Angeles and described by its councilmember as “an artistic community with such a rich and vibrant Mexican-American culture,”²⁵ one participant imagined:

“Drawings or words... [that] everyone experienced during COVID on a tile and put on a wall with a memorial plaque for people to see, ...[allowing them to connect with others and understand that] they weren't alone through all of this”

- Listening Session, Lincoln Heights

Theme #3: Exhibits

When imagining how future audiences would learn about the pandemic, some participants envisioned an exhibit akin to the Holocaust Museums of Boston and Washington DC, where visitors could actually “experience” some dimension of the pandemic. This type of exhibit might provide a timeline-based narrative of the pandemic, starting in late 2019 through to the end of the pandemic. This timeline could feature key moments as they were experienced by LA residents.

For some, such an exhibit would provide opportunities for learning about science (e.g., how diseases spread) or history (e.g., how and why certain situations evolved the way they did). Others could experience the emotional dimensions of the pandemic, such as fear, grief, or anger, in the face of uncertainty. An exhibit might include some iconic aspects of the pandemic, including cloth masks, disinfecting groceries, searching for toilet paper, remote learning, and vaccines.

²⁵ Los Angeles City Council District 14. (2023). [Lincoln Heights](#). Council District 14 - Los Angeles City Council.

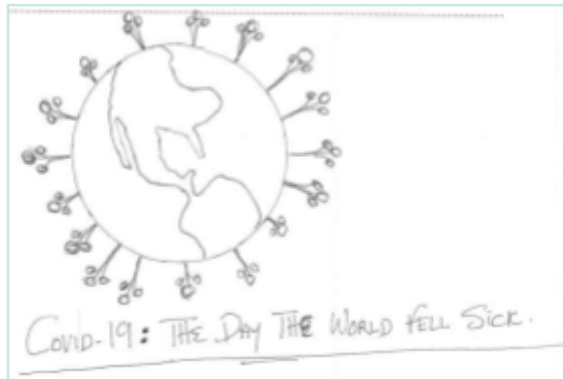
Theme #4: Events

Several people proposed events to (1) remember the “ones who aren’t here today”, (2) center pandemic experiences, and/or (3) allow for locally-rooted recognition of the global nature of the pandemic. In Lincoln Heights, one participant proposed an origami project where people would be invited to create a paper crane named for someone lost to represent hope. After they shared this idea, another attendee held up an origami butterfly that they had separately devised and constructed (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Two individual memorial ideas, created separately, using the same art form (Listening Session, Lincoln Heights)



Figure 12. Artistic depiction of an annual COVID-19 memorial day (Listening Session, Reseda)



One resident of Harbor Gateway South, a highly diverse area in south LA,²⁶ explained that a COVID-19 memorial event “*should occur once a year, as a reminder, this is a thing that happened.*” (Neighborhood Council Meeting, Harbor Gateway South). Other attendees expanded on this idea, comparing it to how Americans remember 9/11 each year, and suggested that the date correspond with the day of the first LA lockdown and treated as “*a real holiday, not a silly/fake holiday,*” (Figure 12).

Theme #5: Community Investment

Some participants, including many whose first reaction to the idea of a memorial was that it was an improper use of city funds, proposed ideas that would reallocate resources to communities and neighborhoods most impacted by the pandemic. These ideas included:

- **Create physical spaces** in underserved neighborhoods to provide “*shelter, a meeting place, a town square, a hand wash station, where people can meet and get to know each other*” (Listening Session, Downtown LA). One suggested location was Skid Row, with participants at one session focused on the unhoused shared stories of having to fend for themselves and come together to stay alive when they received almost no support from the outside.
- **Establish programs** to support artists from marginalized communities who want “*to create something that feels really Los Angeles-made and Los Angeles-specific,*” as described by an active community member who works at an arts non-profit (Farmers Market, Mar Vista).
- **Start fundraisers** to benefit those who need it. One person suggested selling COVID-19 memorial buttons that people could “*wear to show their support,*” with proceeds going to healthcare workers (Council Meeting, Harbor Gateway South) and another recommended a memorial fund that would benefit those who are in need *because* of the pandemic (Council Meeting, North Hills East).

²⁶ Los Angeles Times. (2023). [Harbor Gateway](#).

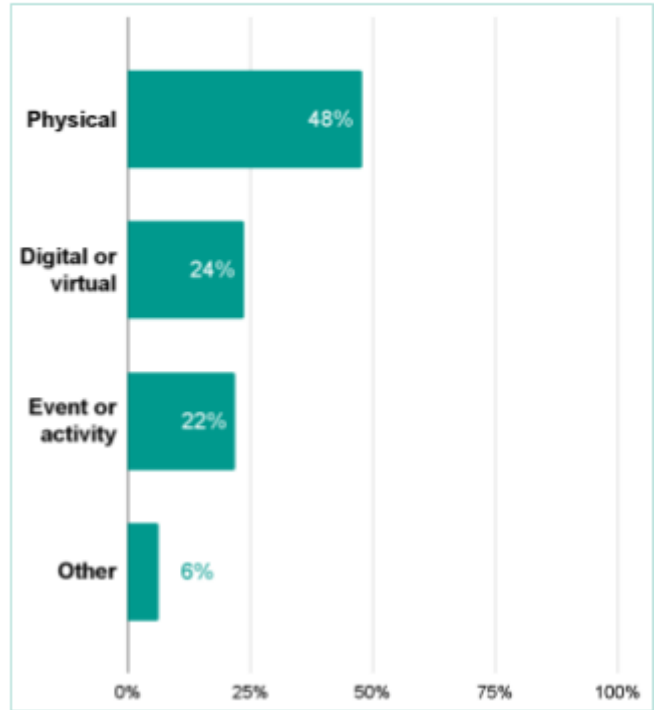
Memorial Location

The City of LA is the second-most populous city in the US, and its population sprawls across 502 square miles.²⁷ Any discussion of a new city landmark thus begs the question: where would it be located? Three primary themes emerged when considering where a memorial might be located:

(1) place-based, (2) mobile, and (3) digital.

Our survey specifically asked respondents to choose between options that mirrored these themes; options were framed as physical (e.g., art, a living monument, an exhibit), digital or virtual (e.g., website, video simulation), or an event/activity (e.g., pet adoption day, vigil). They could select as many as they liked, indicate that they did not think there should be a memorial at all, or add an idea not listed. For those not opposed to a memorial, the most popular selection was a physical form (Figure 13).

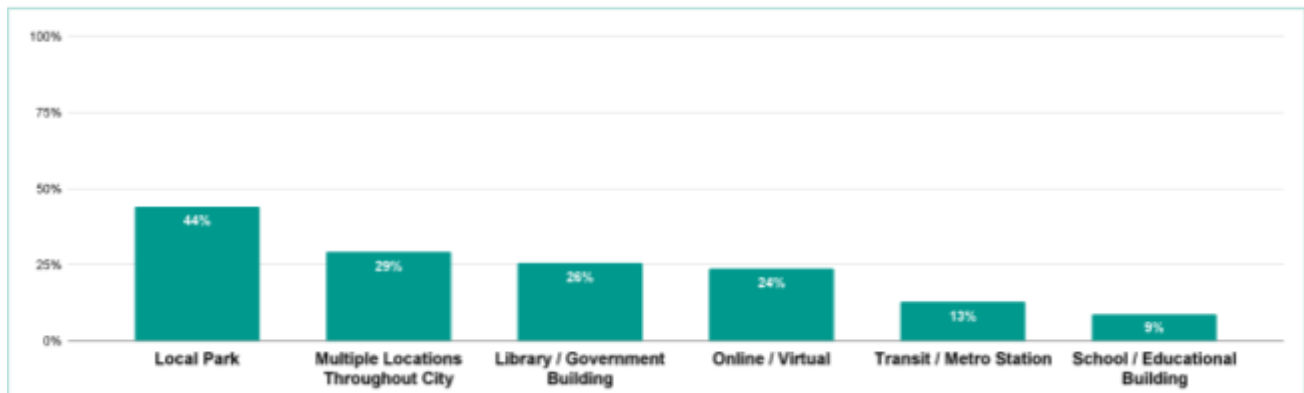
Figure 13. Survey respondents' preferred memorial form (select all that apply; $n = 349$)



Place-based

Survey respondents were invited to choose among six general location options and select all that they believed would be a fitting place for a COVID-19 memorial; a local park was the most popular selection (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Survey respondents' preferred memorial location (select all that apply; $n = 349$)



²⁷ Pitt, L. M. (2023, September 20). [Los Angeles](#). Encyclopedia Britannica.

One neighborhood council meeting in Canoga Park, a majority Latino and white area in the San Fernando Valley²⁸, found itself particularly interested in exploring ideas for a physical memorial.



Put [the memorial] at the science center because kids go on field trips there. And they have the space. It's logical, a recent history lesson. At the science center you're going to have the social, the psychology students, history students, medical students, whole fields of people that study could come to this exhibit and have some kind of takeaway from it. - Neighborhood Council Meeting, Canoga Park



You gotta think big. If you have this think tank going on, you might as well think big, not just put like plaques on a sidewalk. But something, you know, where the city could all come, and the kids, they go on field trips all the time to the Science Center. Neighborhood Council Meeting, Canoga Park



A green meadow with a white telephone booth. People would go in there to talk to the loved ones they'd lost, because they needed the cathartic release. Neighborhood Council Meeting, Canoga Park

Mobile

Many participants also envisioned memorials that would be able to move around, making them locally accessible to the many communities within LA. For example, one listening session participant suggested “*something movable, so everyone has a chance to participate*” (Listening Session, Downtown LA). Another Angeleno, who lives in Harbor Gateway South, expressed a similar vision of a “*roving monument [that] pops up everywhere*” (Neighborhood Council Meeting, Harbor Gateway South). Another participant envisioned a time-specific memorial that would include a “*day of silence, pure silence, during a certain time or any time when we go over everything everyone has gone through*” (Listening Session, Northridge)

Digital

Of the participants who favored an online or digital memorial, most still imagined that it would be geographically situated, allowing for place-based engagement. One participant, remembering another COVID-19 memorial Installation they'd seen, suggested “*an outdoor space with items [benches inscribed - 'apart, together'] in a circle, things that people remember [that] includes a QR code that has an audio/visual component with stories of people helping people ... [and] being resourceful when mother nature challenged us*” (Listening Session, Downtown LA). At another meeting, a participant similarly imagined “*a digital screen with pictures and a constant slideshow of first responders, and people handing out food...located in hospitals, maybe in the waiting rooms*” (Neighborhood Council Meeting, Harbor Gateway South).

²⁸ Los Angeles Times. (2023). [Canoga Park](#).

Memorial Audience

We asked Angelenos to consider who the target audience of an LA COVID-19 memorial might be. Most thought about these audiences in general terms, with a number of individuals specifically suggesting that the memorial be physically, financially, and linguistically accessible. Additional target audiences identified by participants were (1) essential workers, (2) future generations, and (3) hardest-hit populations.

Essential Workers

Many participants believed that essential workers deserve to be the primary audience of a COVID-19 memorial (Figure 15). These workers included medical personnel, first responders, grocery store employees, and any other individuals who were not able to stay at home or work remotely during the lockdown periods of the pandemic.

One resident of Sherman Oaks, a majority white neighborhood in the San Fernando Valley with a relatively high median household income²⁹, imagined a memorial as follows:

I'd like to see a memorial about the medical staff who risked their lives, especially early on in the pandemic when nobody really knew what was what. ... It's crucial that medical people, not just the physicians and nurses, but the people taking the role of the respiratory technicians, et cetera, who were there for the patients and the families because a lot of people died alone. And there were nurses in there holding their hands and with people taking their last breath. I would really like to see that the medical community is shown and respected and appreciated."

Neighborhood Council Meeting, Sherman Oaks

At a neighborhood council meeting in Tarzana, heavily attended by veterans and more affluent residents, a police officer shared that they believed the memorial should primarily honor those who died from COVID-19. Another attendee responded to the officer and said:

While I think it's gracious that you point the finger to the victims, I point the finger back to you, the first responders, because you guys were out there in the thick of it, not knowing really what reality is. You were still there serving us and the masses and that's something that should be celebrated and remembered always, every day. - Neighborhood Council Meeting, Tarzana

Figure 15. Illustration of frontline workers (Listening Session, Exposition Park)



²⁹ Los Angeles Times. (2023). [Sherman Oaks](#).

Future Generations

Some focused on the ability of a memorial to inform future generations about what they had experienced during the pandemic. Many said that the memorial could aim to pass on lessons learned and ensure that those who had risked and/or lost their lives would be remembered.



I'd like to see a time capsule buried somewhere that has one of these [a mask] in it, and probably has one of these [hand sanitizer] in it, you know, our lives changed drastically. There's some good things that came out of [the pandemic]...So some way to reflect that in a time capsule, so that 100 years from now, after the next pandemic, the lessons we learned hopefully will translate and help mitigate [harm].

Neighborhood Council Meeting, Sherman Oaks

Hardest Hit Populations

A number of our participants advocated for a memorial that would directly benefit those communities in LA hit the hardest by the pandemic, including low income neighborhoods and minority groups. One participant in Lincoln Heights, which was labeled as one of the highest-risk areas of LA during the height of the pandemic,³⁰ imagined a memorial that could give back.



It could be interesting to do a film festival that would give marginalized communities the opportunity and the resources to help people who come from the communities most impacted by COVID to make films and tell their stories of what it was like during, and what it's been like after, the pandemic. A film would be a really powerful way to send a message, especially in LA.

Listening Session, Lincoln Heights

Another participant at the same session agreed that a film could be a powerful way to spread an important message: *“people didn't understand it, and what we need to convey to them is what really happened, and that it happened to the poor, it happened to the elderly, it happened to the most oppressed people.”* (Listening Session, Lincoln Heights).

A neighborhood council attendee in North Hills, in a similar vein, envisioned a *“memorial fund where people could... donate specific funds for people that are in need, because of COVID. The best memorial that you can do is to provide services.”* (Neighborhood Council Meeting, North Hills). Other ideas included a memorial that revolves around “homes for people who became homeless” (Social Media) or one that supports families “who are still trying to catch up from what little they had to start with” (Social Media).



The pandemic affected people who didn't necessarily die. For example, some people now have disabilities for the rest of their lives. Other people will need to socially isolate for the rest of their lives because they are high risk. Many people will never be able to hang out with friends because they refuse to get vaccinated.

Survey, Marina Del Rey

³⁰ City News Service. (2021, January 21). [Signs Warning of COVID-19 Placed in Some High-Risk Areas of Los Angeles](#). NBC Los Angeles.

Memorial Purpose

The survey also asked participants what feelings they believed should be brought up when someone sees the memorial. Survey respondents identified “hope,” “thoughtfulness,” “comfort,” and “grief” as emotions they believed should be evoked by the memorial (Figure 16).

Connecting to these emotions, participants across listening methods saw the purpose of the memorial as being about community/connection, celebrating strength and resilience, and providing an opportunity to remember, learn, mourn, and ultimately heal (Figure 17).

Figure 16. Emotions that Angelenos believe should be evoked by the memorial (survey only)

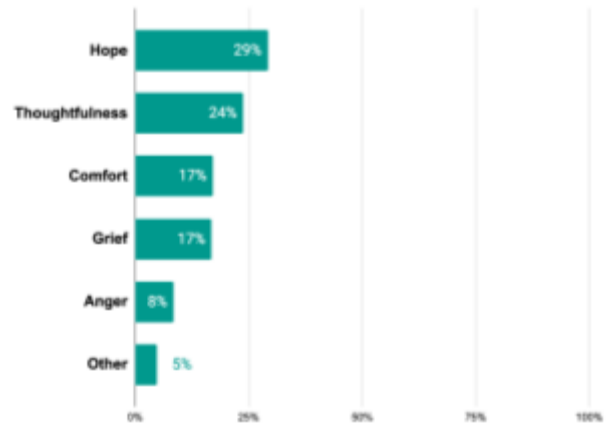
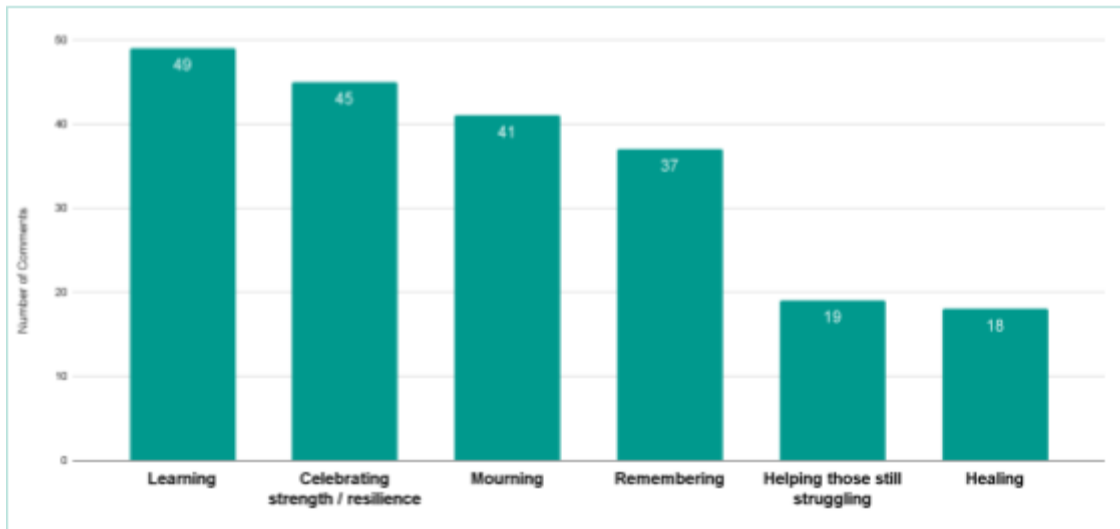


Figure 17. Comments across all listening methods regarding the purpose of a memorial



Learning

Many participants expressed that “learning” should be a primary purpose of the memorial: both learning that resilience is possible, and understanding details about the pandemic and its trajectory, especially for the sake of learning from the past and doing better in the future.



We should put into perspective the seriousness of the pandemic and those lost due to it and how strong we are to overcome.

Survey, Southeast LA



Museums show the good and the bad that the future holds for us, helps people prepare. If the memorial is too negative, there will be a negative 2040, and people will just be afraid of it happening again

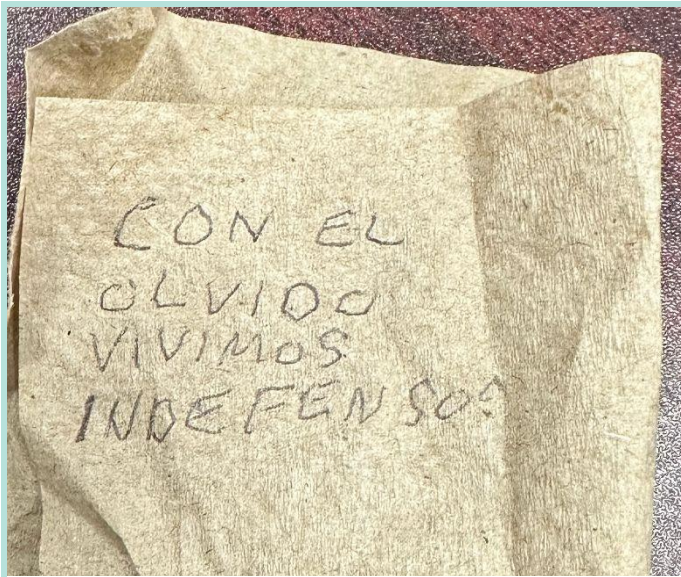
Listening Session, Downtown LA



Con el olvido vivimos indefensos. [If we forget, we're helpless.]

Listening Session, Reseda (Figure 18)

Figure 18. Parting words of wisdom handed to a facilitator by a Spanish-speaking attendee, following a listening session at a senior enrichment center in Reseda, a highly diverse neighborhood in the San Fernando Valley.



Celebrating strength and resilience

For some participants, a memorial was about celebrating the strength and resilience of individuals and communities getting through the pandemic.



If people don't give up, you continue to help one another grow. We can grow better, no matter what we've been through, we can grow better because it gives us inspiration, it gives us courage not to give up no matter what's going on. ... That's something that the pandemic [did], we was losing stuff, people was hurting and stuff like that, so when people take time... and they embrace you and they help you, when they've got to help themselves as well. And that's what I appreciate. I can definitely say that was a scary situation, I don't know if we're going to have more...but to come out of it with a newfound knowledge that I can do something to help someone else is a beautiful thing.

Listening Session, Downtown LA

Another Angeleno, who lives in Cypress Park, a neighborhood in Northeast LA with a high population of Latino residents and an above-average median household income³¹, reflected:

I think that an aspect of the pandemic that is worth memorializing is the extent to which communities came together to help each other... like the networks that were created and had existed but that were used to do such good [during the pandemic] is the first time I have felt good about humanity in a long time.

Neighborhood Council Meeting, Cypress Park

Other participants felt that the memorial should honor the history of the Los Angeles area, perhaps in the form of an indigenous symbol that reflects unity, community, and other positive elements that came out of the pandemic (Listening Session, Lincoln Heights). Leaning on support systems including family, pets, community groups, and faith, participants shared a range of sources from which they drew strength during the pandemic (Figure 19).

Helping others

Some participants reflected that a memorial could be used to help communities and/or individuals who were particularly affected by, or still struggling because of, the pandemic.

Figure 19. Illustration of a memorial idea created by a member of an LA senior enrichment center (Listening Session, Reseda)



In my mind, something that not only helps memorialize the event...but how would that thing maybe also continue to better the lives of the people that were most affected, which in my mind, besides people who got sick with COVID or died from COVID, you know, I think the workers were the most affected by it and we haven't seen any improvement in wages or anything as a result.

Neighborhood Council Meeting, Sherman Oaks



A free big museum with multiple interactive exhibits that recognize the marginalized communities that were most impacted by the pandemic and uplifts the need for healthcare for all, and a better social safety net to survive large-scale emergencies. Funded by a big tax on all companies that profited from the pandemic. This museum could also have ample free community services, resources, accessible in all languages spoken in LA.

Listening Session, Lincoln Heights

³¹ Los Angeles Times. (2023). [Cypress Park](#).



Maybe like a memorial fund... where people can donate specifically funds for people who are in need because of COVID. That would be the best memorial you could do: provide services. - Neighborhood Council Meeting, North Hills East

Mourning Losses

While some participants saw a memorial as an opportunity to look forward, others shared ideas related to mourning losses, particularly the deaths of the pandemic.



A brick wall [where each brick represents a person who died]...you can put it in the neighborhood that that person lived in. And then that family member can always go back and look at that wall. 'This person lived in this neighborhood.' ...Anybody who died during that time frame that lived in that community [can have a brick].

Neighborhood Council Meeting, North Hills East



It was not their time to go, and for that reason, they will always be in our hearts and our memories of them will live on in this monument. (translated from Spanish)

Listening Session, Watts

Remembering

Other participants in favor of using a memorial to reflect back on the pandemic recommended that it be used to remember, with less of a focus on grief and more to understand and document the pandemic experience in LA.



What would I want people to know about what we experienced? I think about like, the videos of people in Italy singing, and the kindness because that was a part of it. And I worry that by 2040, the death will be easy to remember. And I hope there's a way for us to also remember that tragedy brings out the best in people and it brought out a lot of good—some bad actors—but a lot of good.

Listening Session, Venice



Something that could speak to how scarce and fragile everything felt. Remembering the empty shelves and panicked people over coughing. The vastness of the vacant outdoor areas still gets me. I know this wouldn't be possible, but a replica of the city that people could walk through, with no people.

Coffee Shop, Hollywood

Healing

One final theme that emerged from Angelenos' memorial ideas was a memorial as a way to process and heal from the pandemic. Many mentioned the memorial as a site of honoring, celebrating, and experiencing community in this positive way.



I think something that could feel like a real connection. Like yeah, because...one of my major issues with this city in particular is that we are more isolated than other cities that are more urban and dense, like New York or Chicago, or, you know, some other place where you have to walk or take public transit more. So the idea of something where people could actually come together, connect, feel. Yeah, I'm thinking that would be helpful.

Farmers Market, Mar Vista

Figure 20. A younger participant (pictured with her family) sharing her COVID-19 memorial design idea expressing the resilience of her community (Listening Session, Watts)



Reflections on our Process

Finally, we assessed how the CPR-LA initiative itself impacted Angelenos.

Value of Listening Sessions

While recruitment for listening sessions in particular was challenging and required significant effort, the process of engaging Angelenos in these conversations was meaningful and valuable. These sessions elicited the most thoughtful input of all methods; participants were encouraged to go beyond simply weighing in on a memorial and to share reflections, collaborate, and express creativity. These opportunities to reflect and create are welcomed by Angelenos who are navigating their daily lives while grappling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The design of our listening sessions was informed by scholarship and practice in art therapy, which is believed to be an effective alternative to traditional formats because it does not rely on using words to express feelings. The foundation of art therapy is the curative power of the creative process, and the communication that occurs between the individual, the artwork, and the therapist or facilitator.³² Several studies have shown that using art to express difficult emotions and experiences can reduce participants' depression, stress, and anxiety³³ and encourage the externalization of memories and emotions into physical form.³⁴

Using art in a community or group setting can help people connect with others with similar experiences, foster inclusion, diminish feelings of loneliness, and offer a unique source of support and empathy that cannot be found elsewhere.³⁵ Group processing allows participants to exchange coping strategies and support each other, which can lead to statistically significant reductions in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress.³⁶

The power of art and community as both a tool of healing and of research situates DCA as an ideal organizer for an initiative such as CPR-LA. As a city department whose work focuses on art and culture, DCA can play a key role in fostering community reflection via artistic practice, as demonstrated by their innovative decision to engage researchers for the purposes of helping the LA community heal from the pandemic for this initiative.

³² Schouten, K. A., van Hooren, S., Knipscheer, J. W., Kleber, R. J., & Hutschemaekers, G. J. (2019). [Trauma-focused art therapy in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder: A pilot study](#). *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 20(1), 114-130.

³³ Woollett, N., Bandeira, M., & Hatcher, A. (2020). [Trauma-informed art and play therapy: Pilot study outcomes for children and mothers in domestic violence shelters in the United States and South Africa](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 107, 104564.

³⁴ Schouten, K. A., van Hooren, S., Knipscheer, J. W., Kleber, R. J., & Hutschemaekers, G. J. (2019). [Trauma-focused art therapy in the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder: A pilot study](#). *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 20(1), 114-130.

³⁵ Mendelsohn, M., Zachary, R. S., & Harney, P. A. (2007). [Group therapy as an ecological bridge to new community for trauma survivors](#). *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 14(1-2), 227-243.

³⁶ Simon, S., Moreyra, A., Wharton, E., Dowtin, L. L., Borkovi, T. C., Armer, E., & Shaw, R. J. (2021). [Prevention of posttraumatic stress disorder in mothers of preterm infants using trauma-focused group therapy: manual development and evaluation](#). *Early Human Development*, 154, 105282.

Creative Expression and Reflective Storytelling

Our listening sessions were carefully designed to engage participants and support them as they moved through a reflection on their collective COVID-19 pandemic experience. The framing here was intentionally forward-looking and collective, so as to allow the participants to see and connect with others in the room and provide a sense of shared purpose. The sessions then invited participants to delve into what they wanted to share about their personal experience, without any pressure to share something they were not comfortable sharing. The final activity provided participants with an opportunity to brainstorm and share their creative ideas for a memorial, thereby allowing them to channel and give an expressive form to their emotions.

Overall, this structure supported creative expression and reflective storytelling, both of which were appreciated by participants as they grappled with such a sensitive topic. As one facilitator noted, *"once we got people into the room, the listening sessions were effective in giving participants the space and support to go beyond their surface-level assumptions and responses to a COVID memorial and dive deeper into the why behind those responses."* Another facilitator shared feedback they received from the host of a listening session for members of the disability community; this host expressed that the session had been a *"great"* experience, with facilitators asking the *"right questions"* and giving participants a moment to pause and think deeply about their past experiences during the pandemic. The host shared that members of their community had *"gotten a lot out of"* the listening session—that, as a disability advocacy group, they had frequently been asked (and were still being asked) to conduct outreach of their own related to COVID-19, but that this had been the first time someone had asked *them* how they were doing, what their experiences during the pandemic had been, and given them an opportunity to process and reflect. Overall, as one facilitator put it, *"the firsthand accounts and candid stories shared during these sessions illuminated the multifaceted dimensions of the LA experience."*

Ultimately, the structure of listening sessions provided a constructive opportunity for participants.



There was also a healing process within the listening sessions... finding a way to create something positive out of the grief and trauma from the pandemic. People are tired of being sad and scared. Interestingly, this was one of the barriers to getting people to attend the Listening Sessions - they did not want to dwell any more on the pandemic and wanted to move on. For those who made it to the sessions, this same feeling also led to creative and compassionate ideas for a memorial that could give back to the community.

Listening Session Facilitator

In conducting our process evaluation, we were particularly struck by the positive impact the listening sessions had on participants' emotional well-being and their engagement in this type of collaborative governance. In all, we were able to create a welcoming, safe, and reflective space for meaningful reflection around the lived experiences of COVID-19 for residents of LA.

Positive Impact and Therapeutic Value

We often heard from listening session hosts and participants that, while they had a deep appreciation for being invited to share their insights, they were even more grateful to have been provided with the time and space to reflect on their COVID-19 experiences. Some participants went so far as to describe our listening sessions as therapeutic and others shared that they hadn't had an opportunity to process their pandemic experience prior to the session, and that they didn't realize how much they needed it until they took part in one of our sessions.



I would imagine the information you get from these sessions [can be used for so many things]. Yes, the memorial, and yes, the artists and yes, yes, yes, but who knows what you'll get out of this from all the different groups and people. There's so many people who aren't processing it at all, frankly, right, and that's really cool [that this initiative gives them that opportunity].

Listening Session, Venice

The session design provided a simultaneously reflective and forward-looking approach to engaging with lived COVID-19 experiences. Tapping into best practices of empathic curiosity and cultural humility, they placed participants at the center of the engagement as our facilitators listened to what they had to share. Beginning with a visual activity in which they could see which words others were anonymously submitting provided an initial visual stimulus that allowed people to feel at ease and connect with other participants. The focus on collaborative design in the later parts of the session, when we invited participants to imagine, design, and share their vision of an LA COVID-19 memorial, provided a constructive and supportive space for attendees to channel their experiences and emotions. As one of our facilitators noted:



I think the best part of the sessions for participants was likely the discourse that occurred around each portion. Community members were given a chance to share their honest feelings and connect with others on a deeper level of understanding and compassion.

Listening Session Facilitator

Participants were overall very positive about their decision to take part in the session, and became invested in the initiative as a whole. As one facilitator noted, *"most folks were very interested in staying in contact/following the fruition of the project and people were interested in whether there would be a COVID-19 memorial created."*

Facilitators experienced a deep level of engagement with the participants, reporting that they *"really enjoyed collecting data in this way... providing a space for folks to process the experiences and even trauma from the pandemic, of times for the very first time, especially in a public manner."* This listening method provides clear benefits not only for participants, but also for hosts and organizers who have the opportunity to hear from, connect, and heal with their communities on this deeper level.

Discussion

Key Themes

Overall we recommend moving forward. Summarizing our findings, we've identified the following 10 key themes that depict the multifaceted experience of Angelenos during the pandemic and capture the many ways that COVID-19 impacted individuals and communities across LA.

<p>Social Impacts and Inequities</p> <p>1</p> <p><i>"Profound inequities revealed." "Black and brown communities were and still are disproportionately affected."</i></p>	<p>Personal & Emotional Struggles (e.g., isolation, sadness, and fear)</p> <p>2</p> <p><i>"It was scary!" "The personal disconnect of human connection."</i></p>
<p>Political and Governmental Responses (actions—or lack thereof—of elected officials)</p> <p>3</p> <p><i>"Elected officials turned their backs on the people." "Mixed messages from State and Federal Governments."</i></p>	<p>Public Health & Safety Protocols (e.g., masking, vaccinations, social distancing)</p> <p>4</p> <p><i>"Masks were mandatory and how many people have died due to COVID-19" "La importancia de las vacunas. [The importance of vaccines.]"</i></p>
<p>Economic & Work Impact (e.g. essential and remote workers)</p> <p>5</p> <p><i>"Essential workers had no choice but to be at risk." "People have started Zooming more, not working in buildings."</i></p>	<p>Acts of Kindness & Solidarity</p> <p>6</p> <p><i>"There was suffering and isolation but also ... acts of kindness and solidarity." "Invest yourself in mutual aid to help others in your community."</i></p>
<p>Cultural & Behavioral Shifts (e.g., social distancing, technological advancements)</p> <p>7</p> <p><i>"The year that Zoom became a part of our culture." "No fun, no life, no way to really socialize."</i></p>	<p>Death & Loss</p> <p>8</p> <p><i>"So many people died. We learned nothing from the 1918 flu pandemic." "People died without having their loved ones at their bedside."</i></p>
<p>Being Prepared & Looking Forward (preparedness for future crises)</p> <p>9</p> <p><i>"Our infrastructure was not equipped, we need to do better for the future." "In 2040, it would be nice to say that we planned in advance for the next pandemic."</i></p>	<p>Everyday Experiences (e.g., Zoom weddings, online shopping)</p> <p>10</p> <p><i>"Zoom weddings are a thing." "Toilet paper-gate."</i></p>

Affordances of Listening Methods

CPR-LA offered broader insights beyond the question of whether and how the City should move forward with a memorial. In particular, our listening approach has deepened our understanding of how these listening methods compare to one another across multiple domains. Such insights into the affordances of each method have the potential to inform strategic decision-making for future initiatives that seek to reach and collect input from citizen stakeholders across the City.

In this section, we offer an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of each listening method, not for the sake of arguing that one method is superior to another, but rather to support informed decisions about which combinations of methods may be most effective for the particular needs of future initiatives.

Our overall comparative assessment of the affordances of each listening approach is synthesized in Table 5. The sections to follow provide a more detailed discussion regarding how each of these affordances manifested in the context of the CPR-LA initiative and the relative trade offs and balances between them.

Table 5. Relative affordances of each listening method. A rating of “high” indicates that the method has a strong ability to contribute the affordance to a listening initiative.

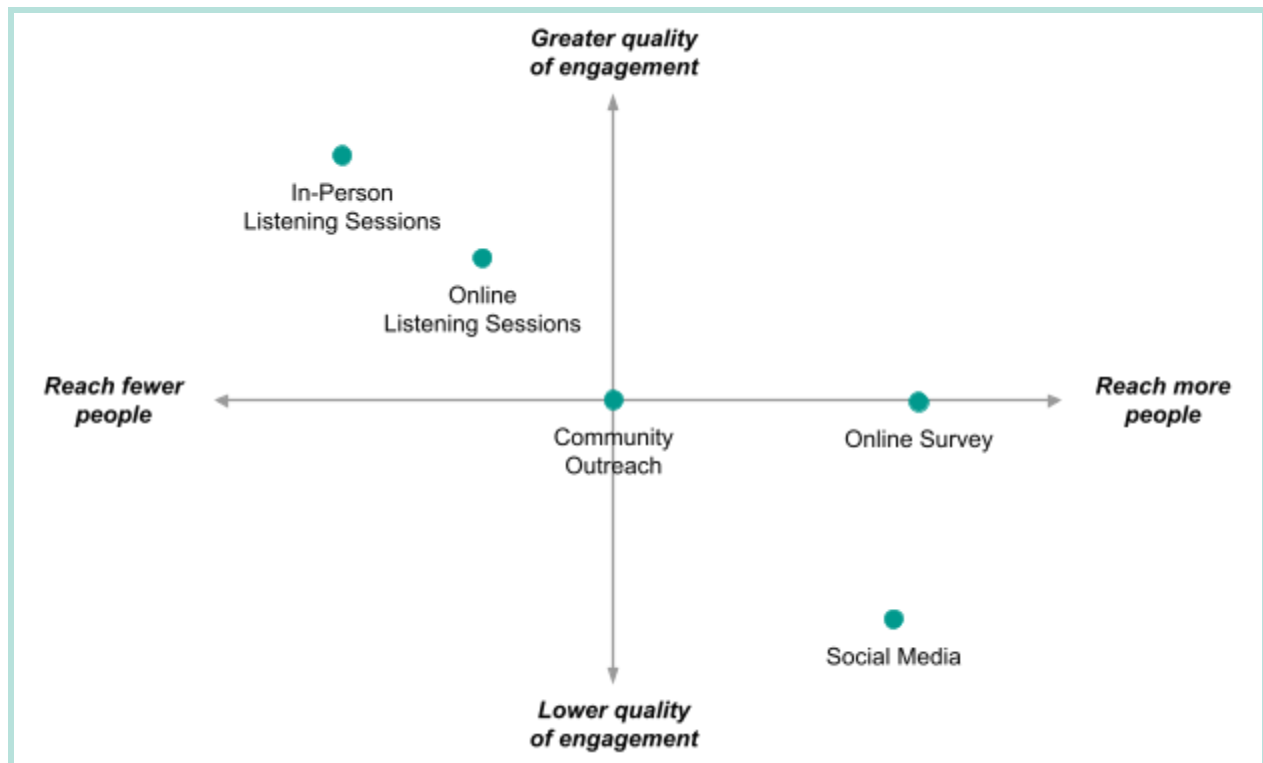
AFFORDANCES	METHODS			
	Listening Sessions	Community Outreach	Online Survey	Social Media
Reach	Medium	Medium	High	High
Engagement	High	High	Medium	Low
Ease of Implementation	Low	Medium	High	High
Depth of Data	High	Medium	Medium	Low
Benefit to Participants	High	Medium	Medium	Low

Reach vs. Engagement

Our online modes of data collection, survey and social media, reached the greatest number of participants. While community outreach and listening sessions had relatively lower reach, they allowed for more sustained, deep engagement with participants and richer data overall.

In the case of listening sessions specifically, however, in-person sessions appeared more effective *both* in terms of generating greater reach and in terms of the quality of the engagement—we had more attendees at the in-person sessions even though, in theory, online sessions allowed for greater accessibility. In-person listening sessions were also more effective than online sessions in terms of the quality of engagement, as in-person attendees tended to share more deeply about their experiences, and being in-person also brought the memorial design challenge to life.

This suggests that both the setting (in-person vs. online) and level of synchronicity of a method has an impact on reach and engagement: asynchronous data collection increases reach and decreases engagement, whereas synchronous data collection decreases reach and increases engagement. When considering needs for future initiatives, decision-makers can weigh their desires for deep, high-quality responses and for reaching a greater number of people, and select the setting and synchronicity of their method accordingly.

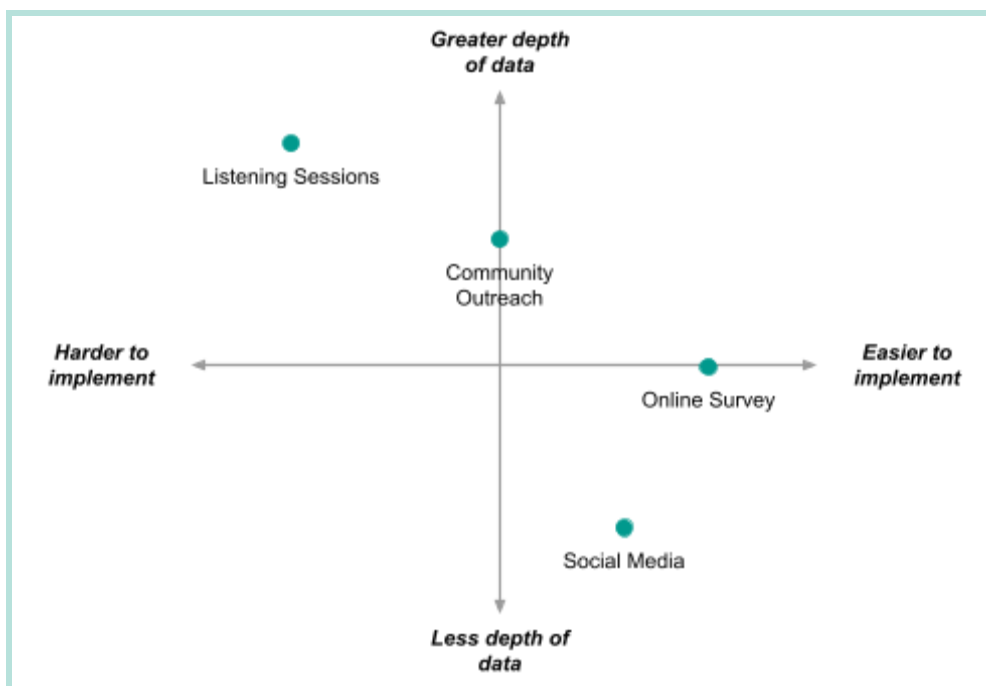


Ease of Implementation vs. Depth of Data

Listening sessions required a significant investment of time and resources for organizers to coordinate, including the effort of identifying, contacting, and collaborating with community partners to host the events and the need for skilled facilitators and a certified counselor to manage the events themselves. While community outreach involved less coordination and planning, it nevertheless required staff to identify relevant events, request permission to attend, and physically show up where potential participants would be. In contrast, the survey and social media required less overall effort—once the survey and posts were drafted, the most demanding aspects were soliciting help to distribute and collecting responses.

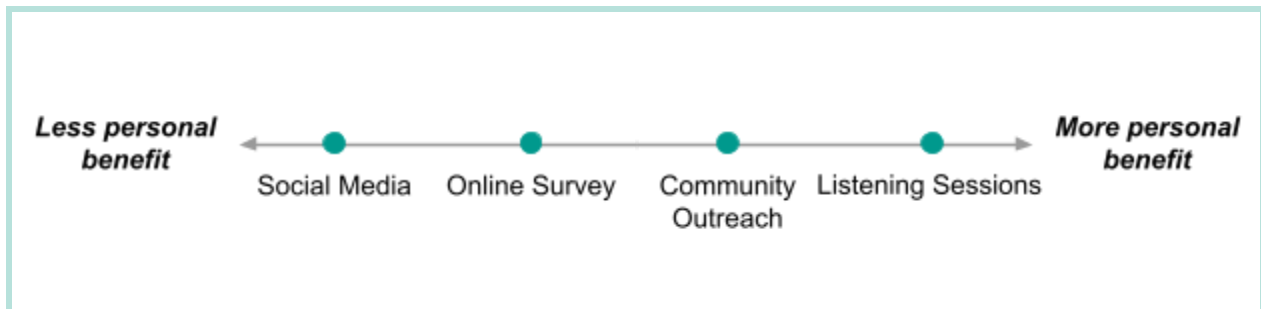
A benefit of the more energy-intensive data collection methods were the depth of the data itself (similar to the reach vs. engagement affordances mentioned above), and in the extent of receptivity to the idea of a memorial that participants displayed. Methods that required more planning and coordination also tended to produce deeper responses, as participants appreciated the thoughtfulness of the method and felt valued by facilitators. In listening sessions, for example, we saw a greater openness to new ideas, as participants were provided with an opportunity to engage in mindful reflection and to feel like they were part of a larger community. In-person methods allowed for more nuanced discussion, provided facilitators with the opportunity to provide context to the question of a memorial and encourage participants to be more open and creative in their ideas, and gave participants the time and space to think more deeply about their values and priorities beyond an initial knee-jerk response.

Easier-to-implement listening method—the survey and social media—tended to evoke less effortful responses from participants. Contributions via these methods tended to include more opposition to the idea of a memorial, as participants responded more impulsively and were less receptive to the context around the initiative.



Benefit to Participants

Not only did the levels of reach, engagement, and depth of data vary based on method, but so did the extent of the benefits that participants reaped from the methods themselves. As discussed in the [Value of Listening Sessions](#) section above, our synchronous listening methods (listening sessions and community outreach) provided participants with a greater opportunity to reflect on the trauma they endured during the pandemic and to consider how a memorial could honor their experiences and their lost loved ones. Asynchronous methods (survey and social media) provided these benefits to a much lesser extent, and lacked the benefits of processing in a space held by trained facilitators altogether.



Balancing these five affordances—potential for reach, extent of engagement, depth of data, ease of implementation, and benefit to participants—is an ongoing consideration for any community engagement initiative. Some methods may be better-suited than others to achieving the goals of a community engagement initiative, depending, in part, on factors such as the sensitivity of the subject matter, the number of people impacted, and the resources available for implementation.

While our findings regarding the affordances of various outreach and listening approaches toward collaborative governance are preliminary, the successes of the CPR-LA initiative indicate the importance of reaching people in various ways to ensure democratic participation in public projects. We believe that identifying and deploying a variety of methods, as we did with this initiative, is a promising tactic to ensure a balance of reaching and engaging as many people as possible in any initiative that aims to hear from the public.

Recommendations for Next Steps

Overall, our findings suggest that a memorial could serve an important purpose in helping Angelenos to honor, remember, and mobilize from the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants reported both a need to process the pandemic and an interest in educating future generations about what we experienced collectively during this time.

Based on this research, SCI has identified a series of potential short-term, mid-term, and long-term next steps as the City of Los Angeles continues to consider the creation of a COVID-19 memorial.

Short-Term Recommendations

Over the next three to six (3-6) months, the City may consider taking the following steps.

1. **Engage Stakeholders to Release and Promote the CPR-LA Findings.** We recommend that DCA develop a plan to share these CPR-LA findings with the public. This effort may be led by DCA but it would also benefit from the involvement of the Office of the Mayor, Department of Recreation and Parks, and City Council as well. Ideally this will be a two-pronged strategy to
 - a. share the main report with the LA public at-large, thereby providing transparency around the process that the City underwent to consider a COVID-19 memorial; and
 - b. share findings related to collaborative governance and public engagement strategies at relevant conferences and City meetings.
2. **Create a Space for Continued Pandemic Reflections.** This could be done through a chat or comment feature associated with the report release or a series of public events to share the findings and invite additional reflections. The City might also explore the idea of creating a digital platform, such as a CPR-LA website, where people can contribute their photos, memories, and reflections, effectively building a COVID-19 archive for LA.
3. **Incorporate Listening Methods into Other City Initiatives.** The CPR-LA initiative used innovative listening techniques that were challenging but led to successful results. In addition to sharing memorial-related findings with other city departments, DCA can share our listening methods and work with others to both incorporate these strategies and develop additional innovative ways to improve public reach, engagement, and input into City initiatives.
4. **Integrate Reflections into Existing Events.** During the CPR-LA initiative, SCI provided Angelenos with an opportunity to reflect on the pandemic during existing public events such as the Lincoln Heights Youth Arts Center's Grand-Reopening Celebration and LA Freewaves' "Heal Hear Here" public healing art event. DCA may consider integrating COVID-19 reflections into other upcoming city events. Strategies for this could include a curriculum for a COVID-19 reflections program at DCA's art centers or adapting SCI's Listening Session Toolkit for distribution to community organizations who are interested in facilitating reflections about the pandemic.

Mid-Term Recommendations

Over the next one to three (1-3) years, the City may consider the following steps.

1. **Provide Artistic Funding Opportunities.** SCI's research lent further evidence to the increased trauma and inequities experienced by LA's communities that were hit the hardest by the pandemic. We recommend creating funding opportunities, such as micro-grants, for those most affected by COVID-19 to empower local artists and creators to express their community's experiences, resilience, and hopes through art, and begin the process of creating and distilling ideas for a city-wide COVID-19 memorial.
2. **Create Accessible Remembrance Initiatives.** Most ideas provided by Angelenos during this initiative emphasized the importance of accessibility and inclusivity for a

memorial. DCA may consider a number of low-cost opportunities for remembrance that don't require major construction, such as memorial plaques in local parks or posters at public libraries, to show Angelenos that the City is committed to acknowledging and honoring the LA's COVID-19 experiences.

3. **Establish an Annual Remembrance Day.** Just as the US continues to consider establishing an official federal COVID-19 memorial holiday³⁷, the City of Los Angeles could establish an annual event that would provide Angelenos with a designated day to reflect on their pandemic experiences and to take stock of how far they have come. Ideas for possible activities and events on such a remembrance day shared by participants during CPR-LA included fundraisers, community dinners, pet adoption events, and a CicLAvia event.

Long-Term Recommendations

Over the next three to five (3-5) years, the City may consider taking the following steps.

1. **Create a Large-Scale, Permanent, City-Wide Memorial.** DCA can create a call for proposals or ideas, followed by the selection, funding, and design development of a large-scale permanent memorial for LA. While CPR-LA participants did not express unanimous support for this type of memorial, most Angelenos who contributed to this initiative were at least warming to the idea of creating something to memorialize the COVID-19 pandemic in Los Angeles and what the city endured. This report can serve as a resource and a reference for any artists being considered to develop a memorial idea or design, as a means to ensure their submissions reflect the authentic experiences of Angelenos.
2. **Introduce a COVID-19 Civic Education Program.** A memorial alone is likely not sufficient to educate the next generation on what we experienced and how to prepare for future pandemics or similar crises. A final recommendation is to create a civic education program focused on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. DCA or another City agency could collaborate with schools, community centers, and cultural institutions to integrate this program into their curricula, ensuring that future generations of Angelenos understand the challenges faced by the City during the pandemic. This would inform future Angelenos about the pandemic, while also emphasizing the importance of community resilience, solidarity, and preparedness for future crises.

³⁷ covidmemorialday.org

Conclusion

The overall goals of the CPR-LA initiative were threefold:

1. **Engage** the Los Angeles community in thinking about and providing feedback on their thoughts for a COVID-19 pandemic memorial,
2. **Listen** to input from a wide variety of Angelenos via multiple channels (both in person and online) with a focus on both geographic diversity and reaching special populations.
3. **Inform** future efforts by sharing findings and recommendations on both the idea of a COVID-19 memorial and the community engagement and listening process used for it.

As such, this report presented findings related to experiences with COVID-19, thoughts on a memorial, and reactions to the initiative itself.

By combining multiple listening methods, we sought to capture both the breadth and depth of public opinion. Our survey and social media outreach provided a broad overview of general sentiment, allowing us to efficiently reach a large number of people. That said, survey and social media respondents may not delve deep into the reasons behind their opinions, or capture the full diversity of thoughts and feelings on the matter. This is where our listening sessions and community outreach came in. They offer greater depth and nuance, detailing the motivations, emotions, and narratives behind the numerical data captured by the survey. Through these methods, we sought to understand not just only what Angelenos thought, but also *why* they thought the way they do, which allowed for more empathetic and targeted responses.

We also ensured that our listening sessions were personally and collectively meaningful to participants. Our blend of both traditional (e.g., neighborhood councils, surveys) and innovative (listening sessions, social media) methods allowed us to be inclusive, catering to diverse groups and varying comfort levels with technology. This type of multi-method approach may have significant value for inclusive collaborative governance; the lessons learned through this initiative can inform city governments as they engage with, and listen to, their constituents.

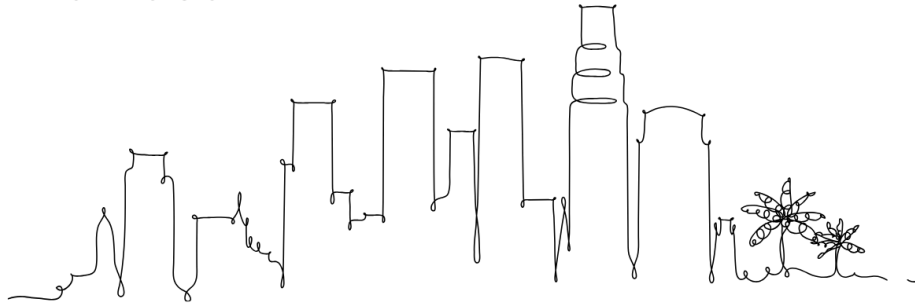
The pandemic unfolded in starkly disparate ways across LA. These differences were not mere coincidence; they were deeply rooted in the City's complex interplay of social, economic, and political realities. The pandemic did not just create new challenges; it amplified pre-existing ones, and ought to be remembered as such. Only by understanding and acknowledging the vast diversity of experiences, giving them voice and ensuring they are heard and remembered, can we hope to build more inclusive, resilient, and equitable futures for all Angelenos.

In the wake of an event as profound as COVID-19, it becomes paramount for community voices to be heard, understood, and honored. The diverse experiences of Angelenos, shaped by a myriad of individual battles, collective sorrows, and unique stories, cannot and should not be distilled into a singular narrative. Only by taking the time to listen closely can we encompass the scale and scope of their lived experiences. If we are to consider the creation of a memorial that genuinely resonates with and honors the City's diverse population, then it is not just a matter of choice, but a profound responsibility to listen both widely and deeply to its inhabitants. Only in doing so can we ensure that a memorial does justice to the memories, sacrifices, and resilience of LA residents during this unparalleled and unprecedented collective trauma.

Appendix A: Recruitment Materials

Listening Sessions

CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
COVID-19 PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS INITIATIVE



IF L.A. CREATES A COVID-19 PANDEMIC MEMORIAL...

HOW WOULD YOU ENVISION IT?

**THE CITY OF L.A.
WANTS TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

The City of L.A. is considering creating a memorial to honor lives lost, remember our experiences, and move forward together. Before taking any action, the city is asking for input from Angelenos.

Share your thoughts at a listening session. These are guided discussions happening around L.A. where you can express your experiences, opinions and ideas and have them shared with the city (anonymously).

Your input matters. Even if you can't attend in-person, you can still participate through a virtual session or online questionnaire. The pandemic affected us all, help us shape the future of how it will be remembered.

**JOIN US FOR A
LISTENING SESSION**

RSVP at [bit.ly link]



LOCATION NAME

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

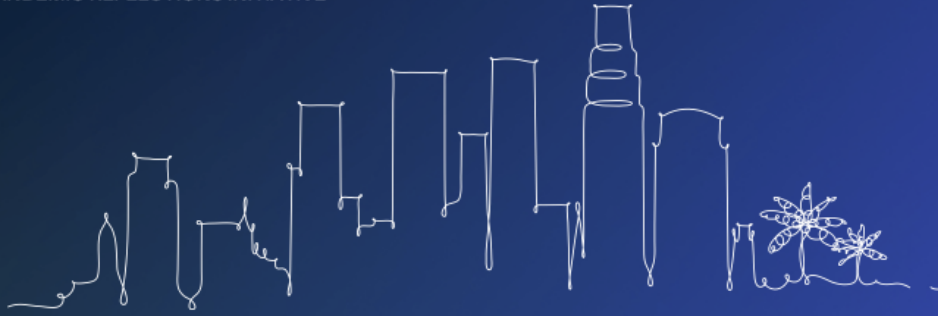
MONTH DAY, 2023

0:00-0:00AM/PM

Can't attend but still want your voice heard? Find additional listening sessions, answer a questionnaire, and learn more at www.culturela.org/pandemic-reflections.

Survey

CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
COVID-19 PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS INITIATIVE



IF L.A. CREATES A COVID-19 PANDEMIC MEMORIAL... **HOW WOULD YOU ENVISION IT?**

**THE CITY OF L.A.
WANTS TO HEAR
FROM YOU!**

The City of L.A. is considering creating a memorial to honor lives lost, remember our experiences, and move forward together. Before taking any action, the city is asking for input from Angelenos.

Your input matters. Even if you can't attend in-person, you can still participate through a virtual session or online questionnaire. The pandemic affected us all, help us shape the future of how it will be remembered.

FILL OUT OUR SURVEY!

<https://bit.ly/CPRLA-SURVEY>



LEARN MORE AT:

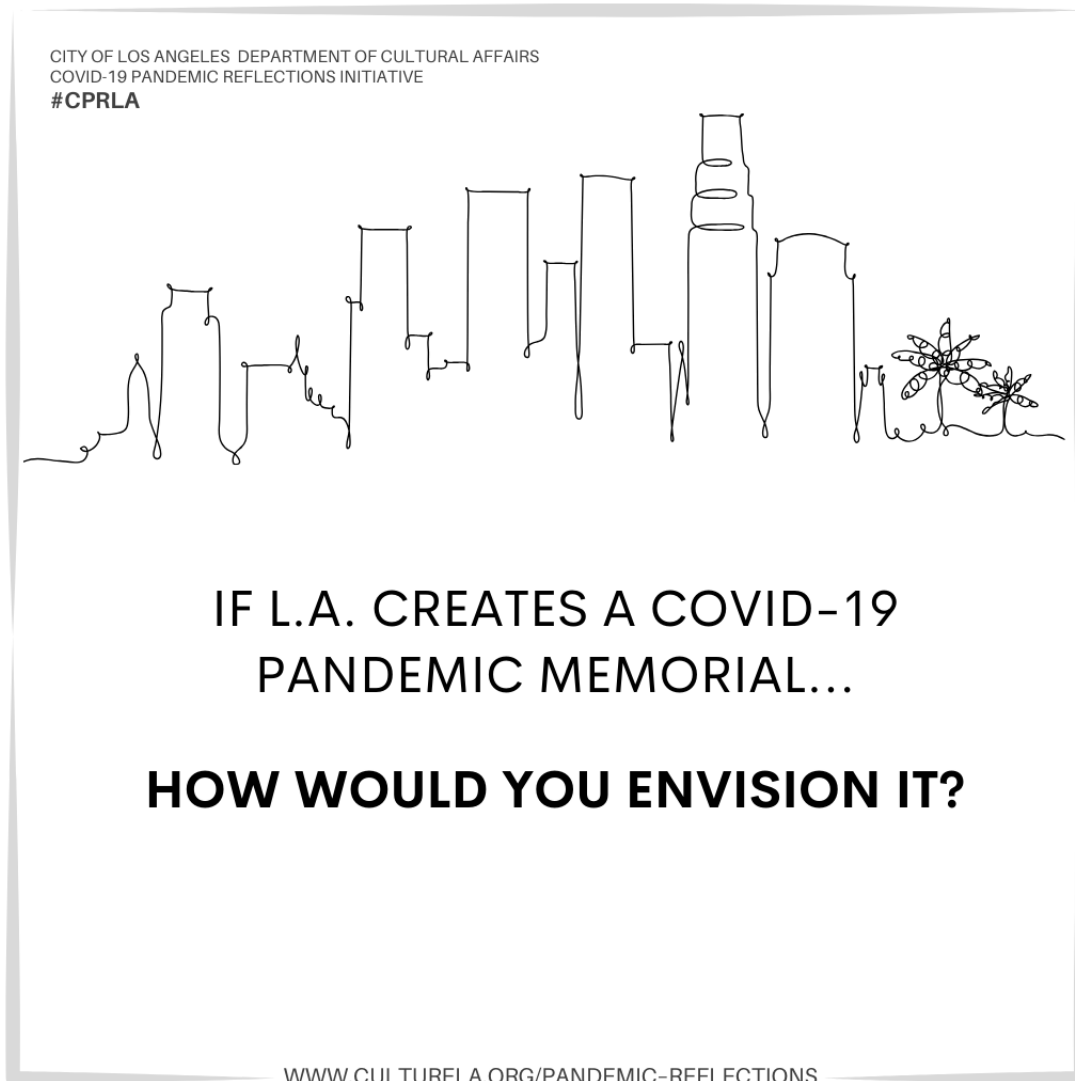
www.culturela.org/pandemic-reflections



Social Media as Research

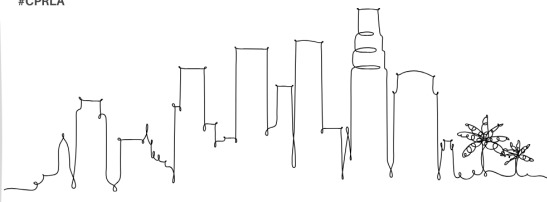
Sample caption: *L.A. is considering creating a COVID-19 pandemic memorial and wants input from Angelenos. We're helping them collect opinions and ideas. Should they do it? If so, what should it be? Comment below or take the survey #cprla*

Single Post




Carousel

CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS
COVID-19 PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS INITIATIVE
#CPRLA



IF L.A. CREATES A COVID-19
PANDEMIC MEMORIAL...


HOW WOULD YOU ENVISION IT?



WWW.CULTURELA.ORG/PANDEMIC-REFLECTIONS

**THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES IS
CONSIDERING CREATING A
PANDEMIC MEMORIAL.**

The Covid-19 pandemic affected us all in profound ways, both individually and as a community. The city is exploring possibilities for creating a memorial to **HONOR** lives lost, **REMEMBER** our experiences, and **MOBILIZE** to rebuild together. Before taking any action, the city is seeking input from Angelenos.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS INITIATIVE
#CPRLA

**A MEMORIAL CAN BE
ANYTHING.**

Memorials can take many forms, including **PHYSICAL** monuments like sculptures or gardens, **ARTISTIC** works like murals and installations, **DIGITAL** creations like a website or virtual museum, and **ACTIVITIES** like annual events or community projects. They can be publicly or privately funded, in one location or many, temporary or permanent.

Let your mind go free.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS INITIATIVE
#CPRLA



**MAKE YOUR
VOICE HEARD!**

**Share your opinions, thoughts, and
ideas in the comments!**

You can give even more input using the online survey or by attending a listening session.
Learn more and take the survey here:
WWW.CULTURELA.ORG/PANDEMIC-REFLECTIONS

COVID-19 PANDEMIC REFLECTIONS INITIATIVE
#CPRLA

Appendix B: Listening Session Sites / Hosts

In-Person Sessions:

1. **With Love Cafe (CD1):** A local cafe and market between Central and South LA with a non-profit arm that hosts community programming. *** Hosted in a hardest-hit area.*
2. **Lincoln Heights Youth Arts Center (CD1):** A city arts center located in Lincoln Heights with a close-knit staff and community. *** Hosted in a hardest-hit area.*
3. **Bernardi Senior Center (CD2):** A multipurpose senior care facility in Van Nuys with a large population of Spanish-speaking members. *** Targeted elderly adults, conducted in both English and Spanish, and located in a hardest-hit area.*
4. **ONEgeneration Senior Center (CD3):** A senior enrichment center in Reseda that provides classes and programming to promote the health of active older adults. *** Hosted in a hardest-hit area.*
5. **Griffith Park Adult Community Center (CD4):** Community center in Los Feliz that offers adult programming, including art classes. *** Hosted in a hardest-hit area.*
6. **McGroarty Arts Center (CD7):** A city arts center located in Tujunga that offers arts education to people of all ages.
7. **Exposition Park Library (CD8):** LA Public Library adjacent to the University of Southern California.
8. **The KINN (CD11):** A coworking space in Venice Beach for conscious entrepreneurs.
9. **LAPD Devonshire Police Activities League (PALS) (CD12):** An afterschool enrichment program in Northridge that aims to build trust and understanding between young people, the LAPD, and the community. *** Targeted first responders.*
10. **LA Poverty Department (CD14):** A non-profit performance and art group in Downtown LA made up primarily of unhoused people and members of the Skid Row community. *** Targeted unhoused and/or low-income and hosted in a hardest-hit area.*
11. **Southern California Crossroads (CD15):** A non-profit organization located in Watts that serves youth and adults in areas of violence prevention, intervention, hospital-based and school-based services. *** Targeted low-income and hosted in a hardest-hit area.*
12. **Watts Towers Arts Center (CD15):** A city arts center located in Watts that provides programs designed for cultural enrichment for all ages. *** Hosted in a hardest-hit area.*

Online Sessions:

1. **Disability Community Resource Center:** A non-profit community group based in Mar Vista dedicated to supporting quality of life for people with all kinds of disabilities. *** Targeted members of the disability community.*
2. **See Change Institute (CD5):** This online session was hosted directly by See Change Institute, without a designated community partner, for members of the CD5 community.
3. **Department of Cultural Affairs:** This online session was hosted for the staff of the City of LA Department of Cultural Affairs

Listening Session overview by COVID-19 impact on region

Partner	Council District	COVID Impact on Region	Target Population
With Love Cafe	1	Hardest-Hit	General
Lincoln Heights Youth Arts Center	1	Hardest-Hit	General
Bernardi Senior Center (Bilingual Session)	2	Hardest-Hit	Elderly Angelenos
ONEgeneration Senior Center	3	Hardest-Hit	Elderly Angelenos
Griffith Park Community Center	4	Hardest-Hit	Elderly Angelenos
See Change Institute (Online)	5	(Online)	General
McGroarty Arts Center	7	Not Hardest-Hit	General
Exposition Park Library	8	Not Hardest-Hit	General
The KINN Coworking Space and Clubhouse	11	Not Hardest-Hit	General
LAPD Devonshire Police Activities League (PALS)	12	Not Hardest-Hit	First Responders
LA Poverty Department Skid Row Performance Group	14	Hardest-Hit	Unhoused and Low-Income
Southern California Crossroads	15	Hardest-Hit	Low-Income Angelenos
Watts Towers Arts Center	15	Hardest-Hit	DCA Staff
Disability Community Resource Center (Online)	City-Wide	N/A	Angelenos with Disabilities
Department of Cultural Affairs (Online)	City-Wide	N/A	DCA Staff

Note: No listening sessions were hosted for Council Districts 6, 10, or 13