



Destination Crenshaw Architectural Fact Sheet

Project Description

Destination Crenshaw is a public-private initiative to redesign 1.3 miles of Los Angeles's Crenshaw Boulevard—a main thoroughfare for the largest Black community west of the Mississippi—as a thriving business and cultural corridor for Black LA. The project, stretching along Crenshaw from Leimert Boulevard to 60th Street and running parallel to a section of Los Angeles Metro's new K light rail line, will feature community gathering spaces, storytelling features and world class art.

Destination Crenshaw is:

- transforming the public right of way and streetscape with a comprehensive Afrocentric design and storytelling features;
- establishing environmental equity with more than 30,000 square feet of new sustainable landscaping along the streetscape and within community gathering spaces, and by coordinating with Metro and the City of Los Angeles to plant more than 800 trees in the Crenshaw District;
- commissioning the largest public arts initiative ever conducted for Black artists with opportunities for Black artists with close ties to South Los Angeles, in all stages of their careers;
- and encouraging investment in existing businesses through business support and building-facade renovations

The project is managed to present construction career opportunities for area residents.

Location

Crenshaw District, Los Angeles, CA

Project Leadership

Marqueece Harris-Dawson, LA City Council President Pro Tempore, Los Angeles City Council District 8
Jason Foster, President and COO, Destination Crenshaw

Board of Directors

Deborah Bryant
Berlinda Fontenot-Jamerson
Effie Turnbull Sanders
Shomari Davis

Design Team

Perkins&Will, architect
Studio-MLA, landscape architecture
Gallagher & Associates, exhibition design
Syska, electrical

Size 1.3 miles

Main Program Areas Community gathering spaces include:

- Sankofa Park and Metro K Line Tunnel Lid – 43,560 square feet
- The Crenshaw Wall Viewing Platform – 1,105 square feet
- The Crenshaw Wall Mural – 5,280 square feet (660 linear feet)
- 50TH Street – 18,175 square feet
- 54TH Street – 22,634 square feet
- I AM Park – 5,330 square feet

Key Dates Groundbreaking ceremony: February 29, 2020
Start of construction: September 2021
Public opening: February 24, 2024

Design Themes The design for Destination Crenshaw, which was grounded in a deep community engagement process, is driven by the theme of “Grow Where You’re Planted,” inspired by African Giant Star Grass. Used centuries ago as bedding on ships transporting captive Africans to enslavement, the grass thrived in alien lands even in inhospitable conditions. It remains a profoundly resonant reminder of the patterns of global dispersion, the African diaspora and Black resilience. A design motif based on the form of African Giant Star Grass and the plant’s horizontal rootstalks, or rhizomes, connects the project’s architecture, landscape, and interpretive design.

Thematic nodes along the 1.3-mile project guide people’s experience as they walk along Crenshaw Boulevard. “Improvisation” at the southernmost edge of Destination Crenshaw, at West Slauson Avenue, focuses on the community’s resourcefulness. “Firsts” at 54th Street honors Black trailblazers, past and present. “Dreams” at 50th Street celebrates the community’s ability to create space for itself. “Togetherness” at West Vernon Avenue highlights the area’s cultural infrastructure. The sequence culminates at Sankofa Park, an elevated outdoor plaza at the project’s northernmost edge, with views out onto the boulevard and beyond, where people will be able to gather and reflect on their experience.

Outdoor Art Installations The first permanent outdoor sculpture installations commissioned by Destination Crenshaw include:

- **Charles Dickson**, *Car Culture* (Sankofa Park)
- **Maren Hassinger**, *An Object of Curiosity, Radiating Love* (Sankofa Park)
- **Artis Lane**, *Emerging First Man* (Sankofa Park)
- **Kehinde Wiley**, *Female Warrior* (Sankofa Park)
- **Melvin Edwards**, *Column* (54th Street)
- **Alison Saar**, *Bearing Witness* (50th Street)
- **Gerard Basil Stripling**, *Crenshaw Gateway Sculpture* (Metro K Line Tunnel Lid)
- **Brenna Youngblood**, *I AM* (I AM Park)

The first cohort of large-scale murals commissioned by Destination Crenshaw include:

- **RTN Crew**, Crenshaw Wall mural, *The Saga Continues* (4911–5107 Crenshaw Boulevard)
- **Patrick Henry Johnson**, *Paul Revere Williams, The Pawn Who Became King* (5870 Crenshaw Boulevard)
- **Anthony “Toons One” Martin**, *Hey Young World* (5700 Crenshaw Boulevard)

Principal Materials

Concrete, stone pavers, corten steel, planting, steel

Paving Design Concept

The paving design is based on the horizontal root system of African Giant Star Grass. The pattern is a minimalist abstraction of a root network migrating from south to north on the sidewalks of Crenshaw Boulevard and will be present along the entire 1.3-mile length of the project. The roots are represented by black granite accent paving quarried from Zimbabwe. Shade pavilions emerge from the black granite accent stone paving.

Shade Structure Concept

The project’s shade pavilions are inspired directly by the African Giant Star Grass referenced in the unifying narrative. Clusters of shades are sculpted out of steel to reinforce the metaphor and create a recognizable icon for Destination Crenshaw.

Planting Concept

Destination Crenshaw’s planting palette takes inspiration from the primary colors of the Pan-African Flag and South African Flag used in the Kerry James Marshall painting *De Style* (1993). Dominant colors are associated with each community gathering space located within the four thematic nodes throughout the site. The dominant color scheme begins in the south with yellow (Improvisation) and transitions to red (Firsts/Trailblazers), to blue (Dreams), and then to black (Togetherness) at the most northern end of the site, within Sankofa Park.

A mixture of plant species that are both indigenous to California and the continent of Africa were intentionally chosen to reinforce the link of predominantly African-originated plant communities with the California landscape. Over 95% of the plant material used in the project originates from the continent of Africa.

Key plant species include Canary Island Pine, Bird of Paradise, Tree Aloe, Dune Aloe, African Tulip Tree, Large Cape Rush and many more.

Economic Inclusion

Destination Crenshaw combines art, architecture, interpretive storytelling, and landscape design with economic development. With a commitment to local hiring and robust small business support, the project is building a pipeline of Black talent in the construction trades, supporting entrepreneurship on the Crenshaw corridor, and promoting creative talent through programming for years to come.

Destination Crenshaw has hired more than 70% of its construction workforce from the local community, giving people jobs now and propelling community

members into sustainable careers. The ongoing DC Thrive program provides critical assistance to Black businesses and creative entrepreneurs through targeted partnerships, from social media marketing to technical assistance.

Sustainability	Low environmental impact, landscaping, greenery and urban canopy restoration
Design Team	Perkins&Will Zena Howard, Lead Architect and Curator Gabrielle Bullock, Managing Principal Kenneth Luker, Lead Design Principal Yan Krymsky, Design Principal Drake Dillard, Project Manager Malcolm Davis, Exhibit and Art Curation Manager, Facilitator Support Martin Leitner, Urban Designer Bill Schmalz, Technical Director Drake Hawthorne, Senior Project Architect Studio-MLA Mia Lehrer, President and Founder Anton Smith, Associate Principal & Project Lead Gallagher & Associates Michael Lewis, Executive Creative Director Robin Reid, Senior Producer
Consultants and Contractors	Owner's Representative: Russ McDaniel, RMS Project Management General Contractor for Sankofa Park: PCL Construction Services General Contractor for additional pocket parks and streetscapes: Build Group Structural and Civil Engineer: KPFF
Press Contacts	Lisa Richardson , RISE PR lisa@riseprfirm.com (323) 447-2421 Anna Gross , Polskin Arts anna.gross@finnpartners.com (989) 751-1748