

Community Highlight: Espanola Painted Crosswalks

This project dates back to May 2018, when VIVA Connects, the National Park Service and NM Department of Health teamed up with the City of Española to complete a walkability audit of the historic, westside of town. This 50-person strong audit identified deficiencies and recommended specific improvements, with a strong focus on youth safety.



As the westside of Española is home to James H. Rodriguez Elementary School, three City parks, four daycare centers, and a local YMCA chapter, we focused this grant on areas where youth are most prominent: two crosswalks at the elementary school/Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park Rd.; a crosswalk at the YDI Headstart/Valdez Park; and two crosswalks stemming from the historic Plaza de Española. Even though all of these local roads are fairly narrow and lined with houses, that hasn't stopped people from speeding—sometimes in excess of 15mph over the limit—on these roads.



These crosswalks not only call drivers' attention to the road and the people they share the roads with, but this project brought out the neighborhoods. In addition to volunteers interested in the arts, we had many folks from the neighborhood(s) come out to see what we were doing, learn about crosswalk safety, and thank us for paying attention to the issues in their neighborhood. In this case, it was a double win, as the crosswalks both call attention to the presence of pedestrians and add a splash of art and color to the area. If we can use this engagement as a launching point for participation in other City projects, even if it's just one person, that will be a win: we all have to rise together.

*-Alison Gillett,
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