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City of Los Angeles

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MAYOR GARCETTI AND GREAT STREETS STUDIO LAUNCH SMART BENCH AND BUS SHELTER TECHNOLOGY ON SOUTH L.A.'S HISTORIC CENTRAL AVENUE

Wi-Fi hotspot and mobile phone charging station are just some of the amenities installed for transit riders as part of Mayor Garcetti's Great Streets Initiative.

LOS ANGELES—Mayor Eric Garcetti today unveiled the first solar-powered smart bench and smart bus shelter installed through his Great Streets Initiative, with South L.A.'s historic Central Avenue receiving the first of 15 installations planned across the city.

Located on the corner of 43rd Street and S. Central Avenue, the project is part of a Great Streets Studio pilot program to enhance the transit rider experience through interactivity and innovation. The new smart bench provides solar-powered USB charging ports for phones and devices, and the bus shelter features a Wi-Fi hotspot, USB charging ports, new energy-efficient LED lights, and integrated real-time arrival information for Metro and City buses.

"A big part of reinvigorating our Great Streets is making them more user-friendly, so the goal of this project is simple but meaningful: upgrade our bus shelters and benches with charging and WiFi to make waiting for the bus an opportunity, not a chore," said Mayor Garcetti. "With this project, we're integrating the existing infrastructure and the technology that we rely upon in our daily lives to re-imagine the digital urban experience. Central Avenue, already so rich with L.A. history and buzzing with activity, made for a perfect launching point to bring these innovations directly to Angelenos--and take a step in bridging our city's digital divide."

The improvements launched today were developed and implemented through partnerships between the Great Streets Studio, the eco-friendly bench designer Soofa, and international outdoor advertising leader Outfront/JCDecaux.

Over the next nine months, the Great Streets Studio will install these shelters and benches on the remaining 14 corridors designated as the Great Streets of Los Angeles--improving the experience for transit riders, as well as those traveling by foot or bicycle, throughout our city.

By adopting Mayor Garcetti's community-based approach toward the use of public transit spaces, the Great Streets Studio is helping activate creative projects on each of L.A.'s designated Great Streets--breathing new life into spaces that have been underutilized. Central Avenue, home to such notable landmarks as the Dunbar Hotel, the Lincoln Theater, and the City's Historic Jazz corridor, is now the first L.A. neighborhood to receive this modernized public transit space.

Created in 2014 at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Soofa seeks to marry technology and design with its smart bench, improving the often overlooked transit public space used by so many people on a daily basis.

"Our cities need an update to keep up with a diverse mobile generation excited about technology," said Sandra Richter, Co-Founder and CEO of Soofa. "To make that happen, Mayor Eric Garcetti brings smart city technology to various neighborhoods in Los Angeles and we are thrilled that Soofa is part of it."

In addition to the Soofa Bench, Outfront/JCDecaux will provide high-quality designs to smart bus shelters that will complement the smart bench.

"Today Outfront/JCDecaux is proud to be contributing to building a smarter bus shelter along Central Avenue, said Francois Nion, Co-Managing Director of Outfront/JCDecaux Los Angeles. Working together with creative people in several City Departments, MTA, and the community, we've taken this opportunity to provide useful new services that benefit transit riders directly in their own neighborhoods. Our public-private partnership with the City of Los Angeles allows us to invest in local transit infrastructures, and contribute to the development of an ever smarter city that is looking out for its future and its residents."

About the Great Streets Initiative

Mayor Eric Garcetti launched the Great Streets Initiative in October 2013 to help re-imagine neighborhood centers, one main street at a time. Our neighborhoods are the backbone of Los Angeles – the places where we live, work, learn and play on a daily basis. All of our great neighborhoods deserve Great Streets that are livable, accessible and engaging public spaces for the people who live and work around them.

Read more at: lagreatstreets.tumblr.com and <https://twitter.com/LAGreatStreets>. Check out the Great Streets monthly newsletter found here: <http://eepurl.com/bIBZjH>.

About Soofa

Soofa is committed to reinvent overlooked but ubiquitous city infrastructure, like benches. It was founded by a team of female engineers and designers from Harvard and MIT and leads the smart city applications space. Their most recent product, the Soofa Bench was piloted with the City of Boston in 2014. Based on the product's success, 100 Soofa Benches have been installed by early adopters in 7 U.S. States. Soofa makes the city of tomorrow, today. Visit: www.soofa.co

About Outfront / JCDecaux

Outfront Decaux Street Furniture, Inc. is a joint venture between Outfront Media and JCDecaux North America. The company has been conducting business in the Los Angeles area since 2001. It currently has street furniture agreements with 16 Cities located in the LA County area.

The company provides, installs and maintains street furniture such as bus shelters, street kiosks, vending kiosks and automatic public toilets on the public right-of-ways at no costs to the Cities. The company markets some advertising media panels on the side of the street furniture elements to finance the programs and share a portion of the advertising revenue with each city annually.

Outfront/JCDecaux manages the Los Angeles Coordinated street furniture agreement and works closely with the Bureau of Street Services. It has maintained more than 2,000 pieces of street furniture while creating place-making elements in all 15 Council Districts.