



PODCAST

An 'Unapologetically Black' Monument Rises in Los Angeles

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(Rendering from video: "Destination Crenshaw: Project Visual")

When a new LA Metro rail line would've passed through the Crenshaw neighborhood in Los Angeles, residents organized and won not only a stop but also a 1.3-mile long monument that its creators promise will be "unapologetically Black." The question now is whether a monument — even one as enormous as this — can preserve the culture of a Black neighborhood as it faces the oftentimes harsh winds of development.

Jason Foster is president of [Destination Crenshaw](#), which is charged with bringing the monument to life, and he touts Crenshaw as the largest intact Black community west of the Mississippi. It is home to 43 Black businesses, making it the largest Black business corridor on the West Coast.

Journalist Chanté Griffin first reported about the 1.3-mile long monument for Next City in May: "[LA's 'Unapologetically Black' Mile-Long Monument Rises in Crenshaw.](#)" Now plans are taking shape and the newly announced lineup of artists includes [Charles Dickson](#), [Melvin Edwards](#), [Maren Hassinger](#), [Artis Lane](#), [Alison Saar](#), [Kehinde Wiley](#) and [Brenna Youngblood](#).

In this episode of the podcast, Next City executive director Lucas Grindley talks with Griffin, a Crenshaw native, and with Foster, who talks about the monument as a foothold against gentrification and eradication of culture.

"By having a permanent sculpture embedded into our infrastructure, it really talks about permanence for our community," said Foster. "And it starts a conversation around what it actually means to grow where you're planted, which is one of the things that we say. Why is it that when communities get better, folks have to move?"