



Los Angeles: Building the Polycentric Region

Congress for the New Urbanism

Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists

Reconnecting America

Edited by Alan Loomis and Gloria Ohland

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Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) is a Chicago-based non-profit organization that was founded in 1993. We work with architects, developers, planners, and others involved in the creation of cities and towns, teaching them how to implement the principles of the New Urbanism. These principles include coherent regional planning, walkable neighborhoods, and attractive, accommodating civic spaces. CNU has over 2,000 members throughout the United States and around the world. We sponsor annual conferences, known as Congresses, for the sharing and discussion of best practices in New Urbanism.

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Preface:
Reyner Banham was Wrong

I spent most of my early life in Southern California, living a sunny youth on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and in the orangey Victorian town of Redlands. My career really got its start with the "People's Republic of Santa Monica" in the eighties, where a group of young activists and planners experimented with economic democracy, public engagement and community driven revitalization.

I was obsessed with finding Raymond Chandler's Los Angeles for a book that never materialized. I hunted for his world of crumbling apartment buildings, lonely diners and decaying enclaves of the wealthy. I found many of them, imbedded in an urban fabric of displaced gridiron towns like San Pedro, San Berdo, Long Beach, Pasadena and Santa Monica. The buildings displayed a casual Beaux Arts literacy that was all the more compelling when faded.

At the time everyone was fascinated with Reyner Banham's *Architecture of Four Ecologies* and Joan Didion's *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, both of which romanticized the freeway, the desert and adriftness as harbingers of the future. The writing was compelling and seductive, and nihilism was certainly in the air in the post punk eighties, yet I found myself having these intense talks about Didion over drinks in the Oviatt Building, an art deco downtown landmark or at a table at Musso and Frank's, an old fashioned restaurant on a mixed block in Hollywood.

I learned that if one wants to get around in Southern California, one avoids the freeways - they're for chumps -and takes the extensive network of gridded arterials that connect all those exquisite towns. And I discovered the way that traditional neighborhoods were being reinhabited, by Latinos, African Americans, Vietnamese and Koreans, and the way that the city adapts to its inhabitants.

Some years later, Gloria Ohland, Scott Bernstein and I fantasized about building a grand coalition to transform transportation and land use thinking in Southern California, and we began to explore why people didn't gather regionally as they do in Chicago or New York. Conventional wisdom would have it that people are politically alienated, but we found a different reality. People were engaged, but locally, not regionally. They couldn't be bothered to travel across the region when they had so much going on at home.

Out of that work came a little essay exploding some myths about Southern California. A few of those myths are worth disinterring. It is a myth, for example that Southern California sprang up around the car, as it was actually built around the network of streetcar routes affectionately called the Red Car. And it's a myth that density doesn't exist in the region. The great central plain of Los Angeles has a density per mile that's equal to San Francisco, in an area twice the size. Hollywood and Koreatown are as dense as Paris. And about a third of those working downtown arrive by transit.

Of course the coming of the freeway was a major intervention, breaking up the grid and leading to the biggest Southern California myth of all: that of untrammelled mobility. People were encouraged to believe that the freeways enabled longer commutes at high rates of speed, and more and more traffic was channelled onto a small set of roadways. At the same time new suburban development filled the interstices between traditional towns, and strip malls were inserted into traditional neighborhoods in a pattern familiar throughout the US.

In the wake of the Red Car's demise, activists and planners argued for restoring a coherent regional structure by creating a network of commuter rail and light rail lines and rapid bus routes. The system that is finally emerging throughout the region promises to provide a higher capacity framework for the region's growth.

While the reintroduction of mass transit helps give a skeleton to the polycentric city, the true heart of Southern California has always been in the towns and neighborhoods that make its many centers. Long bemoaned by central place theorists, these independent cities and coherent L.A. neighborhoods are the core of an emergent Southern California - and therein lies the lesson of CNU XIII.

The cities of Santa Monica and Pasadena set the example with ROMA's Third Street Promenade and the Pasadena Civic Center Plan by Moule & Polyzoides, both reviving walkable mixed-use centers. Cities from Claremont to Pico Rivera are responding to the demand for new urbanism by revitalizing commercial districts and neighborhoods and developing new housing around transit.

The idea that Southern California offered a vision of a future of mobility and transience was relatively short-lived, but it did much damage. The picture that is emerging now is a tempered one, where decreasing freeway speeds are forcing busy families to shop and play in their local communities, and many of those communities seek to recapture vitality and active street life. Sometimes that's about rediscovering their roots, and building a sense of local identity based upon built or cultural heritage. Sometimes it means creating a center where none stood before, and sometimes it is the spontaneous flowering of a culture brought to the region by immigrants, as in Monterey Park and Koreatown.

This polycentric city is as much about locality as it is about the sheer size of the region and its global reach. And that's part of what the Congress for the New Urbanism is all about: the use of tradition as a frame for dealing with the problems of today, and context as an asset in the global economy. Southern California has so much to teach the Congress for the New Urbanism in this respect, and we should be grateful to those who put together this excellent book. It tells a story about transformation, not by starchitects, but by the local heroes featured herein. And that's what will make this version of the L.A. Story a sustaining one.

Introduction

This guidebook to New Urbanist practice in the Los Angeles region follows the tradition established by the Miami, D.C. and Chicago Congresses, where the breadth and consistent quality of New Urbanism is both impressive and inspiring. The practice of New Urbanism is playing out a little differently in Southern California. There aren't many of the new town projects on the suburban edge that defined much of early New Urbanist practice, and in fact few nationally known firms have successfully completed projects here.

While locally based Moule & Polyoides and Moore Ruble Yudell are active, northern California practitioners Peter Calthorpe and Dan Solomon have had few invitations to work south of the Bay Area. TortiGallas has a few master plans (so far unexecuted); Urban Design Associates has only its UCSB master plan, and DPZ and other Florida firms have no signature projects. Moreover, the built results of L.A.'s two most well-known New Urbanist projects - Playa Vista and the Downtown Strategic Plan - differ considerably from the renderings in Peter Katz's 1993 guidebook *The New Urbanism*.

In fact, Los Angeles is better known as home to some of the most prolific object-making architects in the world. With Frank Gehry as a reluctant godfather, architects like 2005 Pritzker Prize winner Thom Mayne, Eric Owen Moss, and Craig Hodgetts have defined the L.A. architectural style - a hard-edged collision of geometries, materials and angles that seems to delight in the fractured social and physical geography of Southern California, the freedom of the western-bound freeway, and the city without limits. Indeed, there are few cities in the world that have been more receptive to innovative and experimental architecture.

These caveats aside, Los Angeles today may also be the most exciting place in America to practice urban design. The city that's always been maligned as traffic-choked and strip-malled and pilloried as the poster city for smog and sprawl is emerging, at the turn of the century, as the country's premier laboratory for sustainable planning and design. Under the pressures of growth, traffic, and shifting demographics, the metropolis is undergoing a metamorphosis, densifying and reorganizing itself around its many centers and transportation corridors.

Meantime, a new environmental awareness is finding expression in the built world. The region is now home to the three "greenest" buildings in North America, and environmental standards are becoming the norm for many of the region's smaller cities. And after a quixotic 15-year quest to reclaim and re-envision the Los Angeles River as more than a flood control channel, a master plan has been commissioned by the city to coordinate planning for two state parks on urban brownfield sites with smaller riverside parks and watershed management principles basin-wide.

Even the recent construction of monumental buildings by world-famous avant-garde architects can be taken as a sign of L.A.'s urban maturity. Richard Meier's acropolis for the Getty, Rafael Moneo's Cathedral, Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall, and Thom Mayne's Caltrans headquarters all represent a significant investment of civic, cultural and capital will in the city. Moreover, if New

Urbanism is considered to be the intersection of policy, planning, design and the development practice, it's interesting to note that this Congress received significant support from the building industry. Confided one developer, "The home builders don't necessarily understand New Urbanism, but they understand it gets projects built."

But to what extent is New Urbanism influencing this metamorphosis, or is the momentum is due to larger forces? Traffic, clearly, is causing people to live in smaller and smaller geographies at the same time that seismic changes in demographics are driving the demand for smaller, more compact, more convenient homes. Stefanos Polyzoides dismisses the question. New Urbanism is a theory and a strategy, he says, that integrates all the good things that are happening, learns from them, becomes stronger, and moves on.

We will state up front that while the sheer amount of development in Southern California is, as always, impressive, few projects have succeeded completely by New Urbanist measures. Therefore, we have set out in this book not merely to catalog projects but to take a more reflective and self-critical approach, evaluating the quality and conviction of projects in implementing the ideals of the Charter as we go along. We thought it appropriate to qualify those projects that represent significant local achievement but fall short of national standards; to support policy and plans that hold promise but have been compromised, and to identify the challenges and opportunities for the practice of New Urbanism in the region to solve pressing problems of design.

The book begins with CNU Board Chairman Hank Dittmar's fond reflections on L.A. from his new home in London. Liz Moule's and Stefanos Polyzoides' 1990 essay "The Five Los Angeleses" is reprinted to provide historical context. A roundtable conversation among local New Urbanists follows, and sets the parameters we used for the book. Then, projects are catalogued according to the typology set out in the Charter, with commentary and criticism by local practitioners. Observations about changes that are not necessarily the result of design, but that are important to an understanding of the social and demographic character of urbanism in Los Angeles are interwoven throughout. Finally, Liz Moule and Stefanos Polyzoides provide a postscript summarizing their and our reflections on the changes and challenges to the region in the 15 years since "The Five Los Angeleses" was written.

Thus, this book is about the current and future state of Southern California viewed through the lens of New Urbanism. Like the Los Angeles region - and like the New Urbanism movement - this book is multi-valent and shaped by multiple perspectives and experiences. It is not a comprehensive catalog of New Urbanist projects so much as it's a low-level survey, like previous architectural guidebooks to L.A. - including Reyner Banham's *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* and Charles Moore's *City Observed. Los Angeles* - an anthology built around themes and issues and highlighting places, buildings and plans that illustrate particular architectural and planning tendencies.

The Five Los Angeleses

Since its founding in 1781, our great city, El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora La Reina de los Angeles de Porciuncula, has been visioned, designed and built four times. However, with each successive layer of its development razed and little of the cumulative evidence remaining, the myth has flourished that Los Angeles has no history.

Nothing could be further from the truth, of course. Through more than 200 years of existence, Los Angeles has indeed possessed a rich history and a complex culture reflecting the roots and the contributions of its diverse population. There are many reasons to explain the gap between the myth and the facts underlying the making of Southern California: the extraordinary speed of constructing infrastructure and buildings has promoted the practice of urban clearance and its psychic equivalent, collective memory lapses; the cultural heterogeneity and the sheer numbers of emigrant and immigrant people settling here (often for very brief periods of time) has resulted in underestimating the traditions of a common, native past, and the persistent emphasis on material and technological progress over a stable local culture has depreciated the value of the existing city and its natural setting. The leading current architectural ideology of this city was established by a few historians and apologists of modernism, including Reyner Banham, Esther McCoy, and John Entenza. Their paltry accounting and analyzing of its origins and history simply ignored the facts. They would prefer one to believe Los Angeles as a place without a past. The romance of a tabula rasa to be redeemed through modern form was irresistible to the cultural protagonists of the last era and still persists today. But Banham had it wrong when he proclaimed that "apart from a small downtown and a few other pockets of ancience, Los Angeles is instant architecture in an instant townscape." McCoy so exaggerated the contributions of the local pioneers of modernism that she created the distorted impression that they were the first significant architects the region had known.

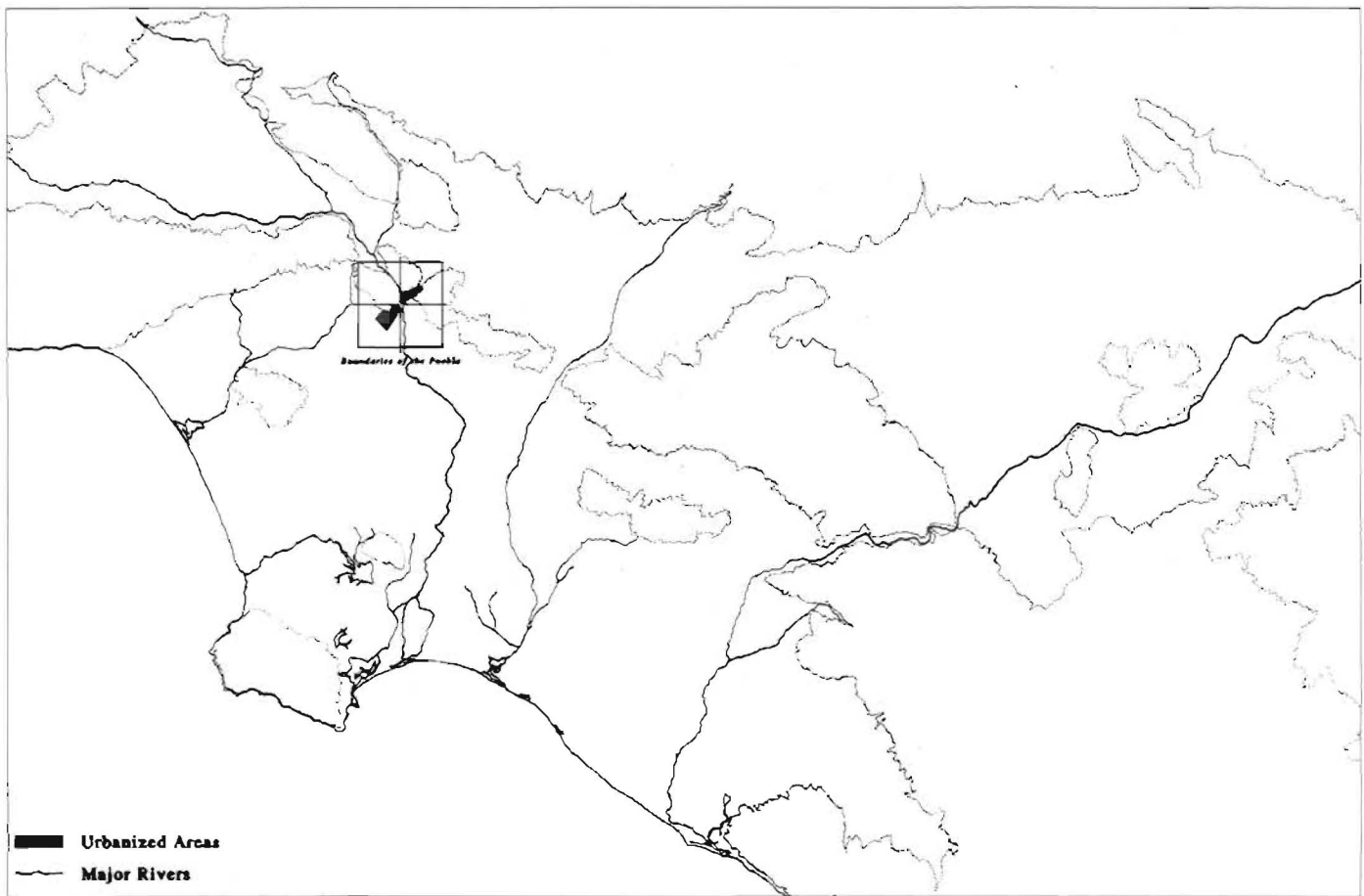
Banham's arguments highlighted his interest in geography, pop culture and highly selected elements of infrastructure - the freeways, as the crucial determinants of urban form in the Los Angeles basin. His particular fixation on these freeways has perpetrated the bizarre view that this is a unique American metropolis driven (as it were) by the language of auto-mobility. His argument was flawed then as it is now: Los Angeles was not the only place in the United States to be afflicted by automobile-induced sprawl. After 1954, every single urban area in the country was being so brutalized by the construction of the Interstate Freeway System. But more importantly, the singularity of his focus failed to adequately account for the preponderance of the city's fabric: the places in-between freeways, such as towns, neighborhoods, and districts formed out of the architectural riches of a local, centennial urban culture. Los Angeles is and has always been a typical American metropolis, not the no-past place of modernist historiography. In his interest to promote the architectural agenda of the post-CIAM generation, Banham caricatured Southern California as the epitome of a futurist paradise in our midst. Doubly ironic is that it has more recently come to symbolize for many the most acute version of the international landscape of nowhere. However, this current negative image is as undeserved as its more longstanding reputation as "the city of the future." It is not so much mobility that is this city's emblem but (as Norman Schwartzkoff aptly put it)

the fact that quantity has a quality all of its own. What always has been unique about Los Angeles has been its regional expanse and the accompanying dominance of its natural ecology by technology. It is also its political complexity, its demographic variety, and the fluidity and multiplicity of its culture that has set it apart from most other places on this continent.

Nonetheless, it is sheer size and its accompanying provincialism that makes Los Angeles most difficult to describe and compare. Many visitors, let alone residents, don't regularly traverse this metropolis or engage themselves in its diverse life. When they see vast distances, unfamiliar signs and symbols, fragmentation, local discontinuity and even chaos, what most observers overlook is a much larger territorial perspective; a vast infrastructural and natural context; and a tangible and coherent historical town structure and building fabric which would explain the wholeness of the metropolis' form over time. The propensity to ignore these signs of formal order in the urbanism and the experience of living in Southern California is a failure of both knowledge and imagination.

The city's ahistorical myth has led each new piece of Architecture of the most recent period to taking upon itself the terrifically difficult burden of defining the image of Los Angeles as a whole and explaining it to the world. At the same time, architects faced with this impossible task have reacted by calling all issues of city-building as quixotic and untenable. This is an absurdly self-destructive purpose for Architecture. It is in the domain of Urbanism that issues of wholeness and commonality must be explored, if for no other reason than that it is this discipline that examines and forms the parts of the city that are public, not private, and therefore, accessible to all.

What we believe makes Los Angeles truly unique is the peculiar process by which it has been constructed and reconstructed over time, each phase of growth displacing the one before it and generating the myth of its perpetual modernity. As we are currently entering a yet new era in the city's rebuilding, it is imperative that a compelling version of Los Angeles' history should be presented to both its citizens, its political leaders and its architects. Our city is too incomplete and in places too dysfunctional to leave it alone and too vast to imagine that it can be changed rapidly. Our only hope is to begin to transform it deliberately and selectively in awareness of its historical profile. The production of culture and of wealth can only be sustained by people who understand the burden of maintaining a city's continuity over time and in space.



The First Los Angeles 1781-1880: *The Pueblo*

After the conquering of Mexico by Cortez in 1519, Southern California was visited only twice by Spanish expeditionary forces, during the voyages of Cabrillo in 1542 and Vizcaino in 1602. It was not until 1769 that a combined religious/military group headed by Gaspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra landed in the San Diego Bay. They headed northwards along the Camino Real to found religious missions in the hope of both converting the native Californians and promoting the colonization of their territory. Departing from this course, Captain Gaspar de Portola accompanied by Father Juan Crespi set out on a long march from San Diego to Monterey to find future suitable sites for settling. Later that year, Father Crespi arrived at a spot along the Porciuncula River where the coastal plain comes upon the hills of the Lower Arroyo Seco at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains. Crespi considered it the most suitable site for a mission and large settlement. The Mission was not settled here but in San Gabriel in 1771, leaving Los Angeles a premier site for a pueblo. Ten years later, the pueblo of Los Angeles was indeed founded in this spot. This butterfly-shaped area shaded by alders, cottonwoods, and sycamores had clear running water and fertile flat land for farming and grazing as had been earlier described in the most poetic terms by Father Juan Crespi. Los Angeles was afforded the rare civic destiny of being settled by decree of the Spanish Crown. On September 4, 1781 Governor Felipe de Neve, having laid out the pueblo based on the guidelines for site selection and urbanization coded in the Laws of the Indies, led a procession of other soldiers, eleven families of forty-four individual settlers, mission priests and some natives marching slowly around the pueblo site. They invoked the

blessing of the new community. Los Angeles became one of the few cities in the North American continent deliberately planned in advance and ceremoniously inaugurated for and by its new settlers.

The Laws of the Indies were a very sophisticated set of urbanizing rules propagated by decree of King Philip II in 1573 and used extensively in the process of Spanish colonization in America. The pueblo's location near a river and not near the ocean

was deliberate. The settlement would be protected from the unhealthy effects of swamps and from pirating. Two separate precincts were delineated for each settler: a lot for the construction of an urban house and a plot of land in the adjacent countryside for farming. The residences encircled the plaza along with royal public buildings, the granary, and a guardhouse lining the southern edge. The plaza was rectangular with corner streets heading straight into the square. It was oriented at the compass quarter points in order for the streets to be protected by the wind. The lot sizes were smaller than what was typical of other Laws of the Indies towns, perhaps through an evolution of the rules which had been in effect for over 200 years by the time they were implemented in Los Angeles. A typical house lot size was twenty by forty varas, about fifty-five feet by one

hundred and ten feet. The field lots were about five hundred and fifty foot squares, some well-irrigated by the river and the zanja madre, others drier.



Pueblo Plaza

The zanja madre (or "mother water ditch") separated the fields from the plaza allowing for domestic water to be distributed close to the new settlement. This enabled the houses around the plaza to be located on higher ground further away from the Los Angeles river. This did not prove effective enough, however, and in 1815 the pueblo was washed away by floods; its site was subsequently moved to its present location.

This move to higher ground explains why today the plaza doesn't resemble that of the original plan. While the open space was retained, its shape was no longer rectangular; it became smaller and irregular. It was at this time that the existing, larger church of Nuestra Senora de Los Angeles was laid out in its present location. The plaza became the site of a water reservoir, and because of the disarray over property lines, many houses were built encroaching on streets. A wealthy landowner built his house so far out at the northwest corner of the plaza that it required the Calle Principal (Main Street today) to angle further west as it headed north.

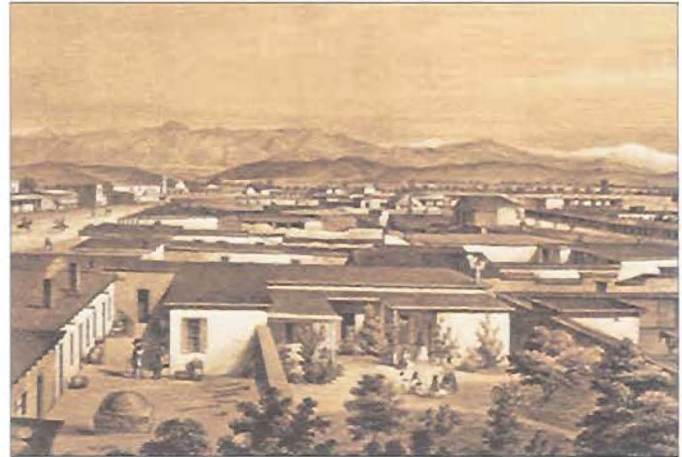
Throughout the Spanish and Mexican years of its existence, Los Angeles remained a tiny and unimportant village. It was surrounded by an immense territory, dominated by its Catholic Mission and was subdivided into ranchos rich in agricultural production. The pueblo's public life was centered on the plaza and its church; the private life of its citizens focused on the spare adobe houses lining its streets and

dotting the countryside. All of that changed rapidly beginning with the Mexican-American War of 1846-47 and the subsequent annexation of California into the United States.

In one of its first acts, the new American administration under Governor Bennett Riley sent Lieutenant Edward O. C. Ord to survey Los Angeles in 1846 and later in 1849 to draw up a plan of the pueblo's expansion. His work was meant not only as



Early Los Angeles adobe structure



Los Angeles, circa 1857

a record of the existing settlement, but also as a document to establish the limits of municipally owned land in an as yet undeveloped and unplatted territory. Under American law, lots could be sold and taxes on those holdings could be levied in order to fill the coffers of the new municipal government. Ironically, one of the first municipal transactions under the U.S. system represented a vision of the city's fate. In order to pay Ord, Los Angeles had to first gather monies from the merchants of the pueblo. Upon selling several lots in auction, the City paid Ord his full fee. The principle of district assessment, and the primacy of real estate speculation were the legacy of Los Angeles from the very beginning.

Ord's plan called for expansion to the north and to the south. Unlike most cities in the world, Los Angeles did not develop concentrically. This was due to pueblo's proximity to the river at its east (and the continued desire for adjacency to the rich agricultural lands on either side of it) and the hills to the west. The platting called for blocks that were roughly 320 x 610 feet and streets that varied in width from 60 to 75 feet. One of the blocks to the south declared unsaleable because of being located in the flood plain was reserved for a Central Park and is today the site of Pershing Square. The pueblo's buildings continued to be built of the locally available materials, adobe and wood. The predominant building types were those of the Spanish American territories, one-story small-room structures arranged around courtyards with their street fronts lined with wooden arcades.

If the land divisions of the pueblo were rational and gridded, the delineation of the territories under the Spanish rancho system was more or less topographically derived. The *diseños*, picturesque land contracts of the period, were laid out by reference to all kinds of unique natural conditions, such as hills, stream beds, coastal bays, etc. Both the regularity and irregularity of territorial subdivision within the Los Angeles basin have their source in Spanish colonial practices.

The institution of an American banking and tax system coupled with the catastrophic drought of 1863-64 which destroyed the cattle and tallow business, forced the original Californio ranch owners into irreversible debt. The ranchos were taken over by American businessmen from the northeast and midwest. The economy and the social structure of the region were changed forever. The countryside began to be dominated by large-scale agricultural business. The pueblo slowly became a territorial outpost, a frontier town. An unstable population produced a violent present and an uncertain future. The culture of the pueblo under the American administration produced a settlement that began to resemble a spontaneous camp.

Yet Los Angeles continued to develop despite its location, rather than as a result of it. The expectations that the water supply for the pueblo would be adequate did not turn out to be quite so reliable in a region dominated by a ten year rain and drought cycle. In the future, all the vegetation, water, energy and institutions that would support the life of a resident population here would have to be imported or invented. Los Angeles would become the ultimate artificially sustained city of the 20th century.

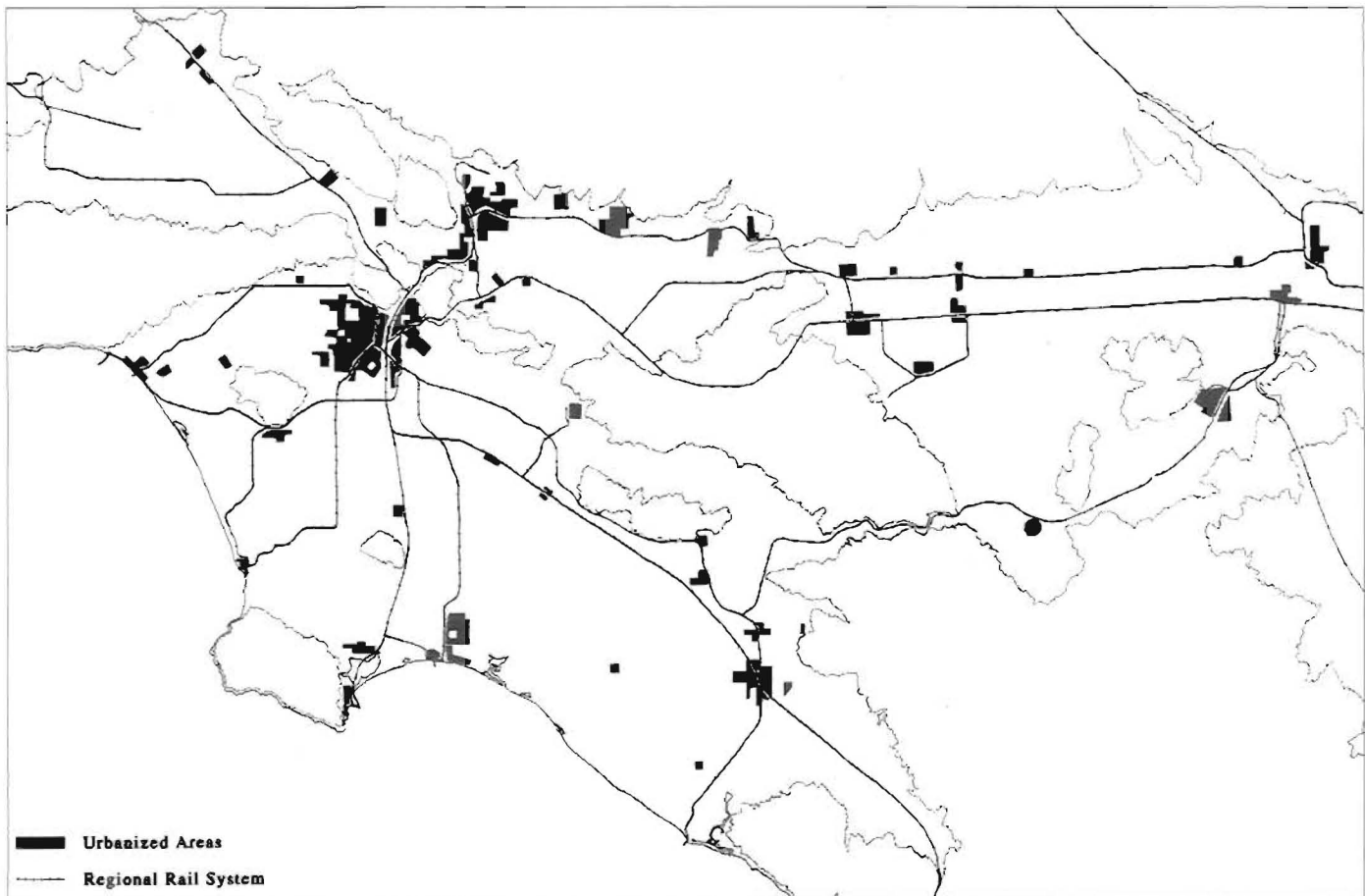
Further Reading on the 1st Los Angeles:

The Founding Documents of Los Angeles: A Bilingual Edition

edited by Doyce B. Nunis Jr. | Historical Society of Southern California, 2004

Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past

by William Deverell | University of California Press, 2004



The Second Los Angeles 1880-1900: *The Town*

The eventual domination of Los Angeles by its recently arrived emigrant American population produced a settlement in the image of their former towns and homes. This Los Angeles was made possible primarily through the establishment of railroad connections to the rest of the continent as well as the radical expansion of local infrastructure that included new road networks, water distributing zanjias, horse-drawn trams, etc.

The transcontinental railroad reached Los Angeles in 1876. The famous real estate boom that ensued in the 1880s transformed Los Angeles into a mainstream American town. Its center was dominated by multi-story brick Victorian civic, office, retail and warehouse buildings - expressions of the commercial interests that controlled its fate. Its periphery was formed by neighborhoods of tree-lined streets of single-family wooden houses, like those of Bunker Hill, the West Adams District, and Angeleno Heights, many designed in the extravagant styles of the turn-of-the-century. Central Park (Pershing Square) overtook the prominence of the old plaza as the heart of Los Angeles shifted southwards.

The Stevenson map clearly illustrates this southward drift of the town and the slow displacement through development of the agricultural lands surrounding it. The railroad tracks were located alongside the Los Angeles river as a convenient path to the north and east out of the basin and to the south to the port of San Pedro. The decision to locate the railroad here has to this day kept the city from

relating to the river as a recreational amenity. The eventual location of industrial uses next to the railroad tracks also precluded the contiguous, orderly growth of the city eastwards. The north and west boundaries of Los Angeles were provided by beautiful hills. The town during this period was contained and dominated by its natural surroundings, the urbanistic consequences of its Spanish foundation still visible.

It should be noted that four principal parks ringing the city were established at this time, but only because the lands from which they were formed had not been sold. Nonetheless, the building of Hollenbeck, Elysian, Westlake (now MacArthur), and Echo parks provided regional amenities for the neighborhoods surrounding them and for the town as a whole. They also surrounded Los Angeles, establishing its size and a sense of itself by marking its urban edge. In 1877, Brooklyn Heights, the first "suburb" overlooking Los Angeles from across the river to the east was created. It was platted as a picturesque series of curvilinear streets focused around a neighborhood park on the top of a knoll, Prospect Park, formed in a teardrop shape fashionable at the time is still in use. The entire subdivision is the first example in Los Angeles of laying out an area and fully landscaping all of the streets as a way of attracting residents.



Bunker Hill, circa 1890

The surrounding open countryside, further away from the plaza was settled into small foundation towns, like Santa Monica, San Pedro, Wilmington, Pasadena and Claremont. They were strung out along the transcontinental railroad all the way to the edges of the basin. Although Los Angeles was the dominant settlement in the region, these other towns had separate strong identities, economies, and populations. The city of San Pedro was especially well-developed, housing the area's harbor and a predominantly Anglo shipping and fishing industry. In fact, San Pedro and Santa Monica were linked by local rail well before the railroad connection to San Francisco and then to the rest of the continent.

Starting in the seventies, Southern California was heavily promoted nationwide but particularly in the midwest for tourism and for health reasons. The cult of the climate of this land of perpetual sunshine had begun, and the claims of a closer, more perfect Mediterranean made people flock here in great numbers. Pasadena was such a tourist destination and resort, developed in the midst of fertile fields of orange groves, the last rail stop before Los Angeles.

The land boomers were veterans of life in Wichita, Kansas City, Minneapolis and Chicago. A typical subdivision was made by trying to attract these buyers through building a hotel, laying out a few streets, sidewalks and curbs, and planting rows of street trees, the fastest way to establish the presence of civilization in the arid environment of the basin. By 1893, fruits, vegetables, trees, and flowers imported from Mexico, South America, Japan, Australia, and Africa were dominant. A new, exotic



Main Street, 1890's

image for Southern California was evolving through the use of this eclectic palette. The natural forms of the agricultural countryside were utilized in urban applications, such as in rows of street trees. The forerunners of the so monumentally beautiful palm-lined streets like those found throughout the region (and made famous through the promotion of Beverly Hills) were agricultural windbreaks and date groves. Strident contrasts of plant materials such as redwoods with palms, or tropical flowering trees with native oaks began to appear

From January 1887 to July 1889, over sixty new towns were laid out in the region on over 79,350 acres. But by 1889 the boom had run its course. Out of 100 towns plotted from 1884 to 1888, 62 no longer exist except as minor suburbs and outposts. The boom came in two distinct movements: the first in a normal course of railroad warfare; the second in an hysterical frenzy based on the first. What is so remarkable about the rapid transformation of Los Angeles in this period was the desire to eliminate the vestiges of the pueblo and its buildings. In part, this can be interpreted as the need to erase the memories of the pueblo as an inhospitable and dangerous frontier settlement. But equally plausible was the desire to establish in Los Angeles the dominance of an urbane Anglo-American civilization, by removing all evidence of its cultural origins in a minor rural, Hispanic Sonora Desert outpost. Only Olvera Street, the diminished and remodeled plaza, and a few surrounding buildings survive today as remnants of the original pueblo.



City Hall on Broadway, 1890's

Urban clearance prevailed as a principle of growth during the Second Los Angeles. However, an even more critically important aspect of Los Angeles' character began to emerge during this time: its regional expanse. The sheer amount of land made possible and accessible through the railroad encouraged land sales and subdivisions within the boundaries of properties related to the Spanish grant ranchos. These properties encompassed the entire land mass of Southern California. The majority of newcomers either became directly involved with agriculture or had inexpensive opportunities for living spread out across the land. Los Angeles evolved from this point on as a region anchored by a historic center and surrounded by emerging smaller towns. Their building fabric was mostly compactly contained within pedestrian precincts, leaving the groves and farms among them open for cultivation.

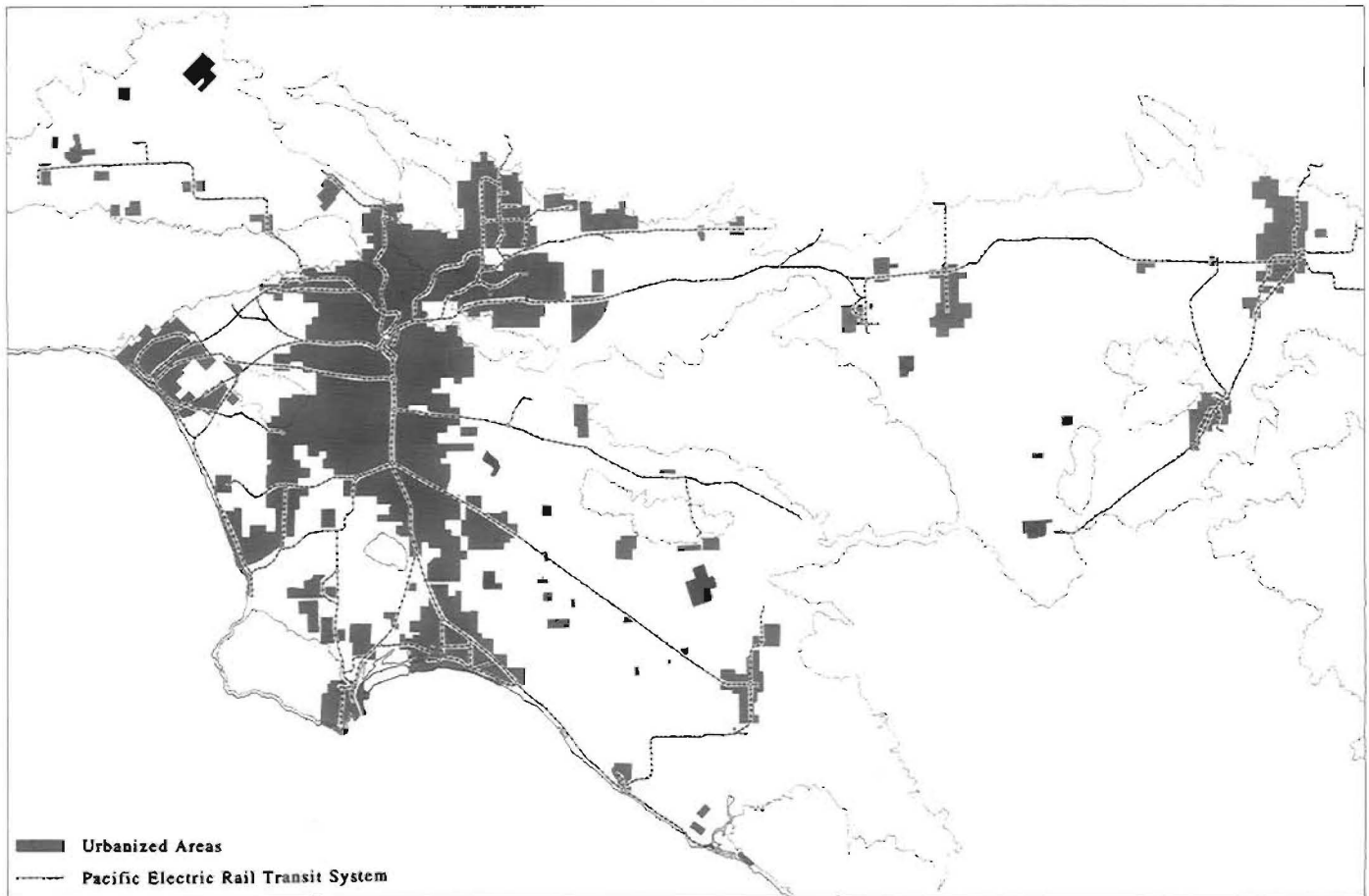
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William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles

by Catherine Mulholland | University of California Press, 2002



The Third Los Angeles 1900-1940: *The City*

Under increased pressures of migration, immigration and economic development, Los Angeles was transformed into a major new agricultural, commercial and industrial city on the west coast of the United States. Between 1890 and '97, its streets and sidewalks were paved, and sewer systems were constructed. Intense infra-structural expansion fueled urban development. In 1913 the City of Los Angeles completed construction of an aqueduct in order to bring Owens River Valley water to the city of sufficient capacity to service a population of 2,000,000 people. In 1912 a deep water port was opened in San Pedro. Lacking in wood or coal, Los Angeles became the first electrically illuminated city in America. Oil was discovered with the first well in production by 1892. In 1906, the Wilshire/Vermont area had 160 active wells, dramatically transforming the landscape. Oil shipments made from the Port of San Pedro brought prosperity to the harbor and an increase in ocean-based trade. A major airport was established in 1930 and the region developed into the most important area for the design and production of aircraft in the world.

By 1909 the third layer of Los Angeles's center which would become known as Downtown was already being built over its Victorian commercial heart - again erasing most traces of the previous settlement. Development followed transit lines through available tracts of undeveloped land in the flat central plains of the basin. In the same year, Charles Mulford Robinson, one of the foremost theoreticians and practitioners of the City Beautiful movement was commissioned by the City to offer guidelines for its further growth and orderly development. His contributions



Parade on Broadway, 1915

to the future form of Los Angeles were substantial: He conceived Downtown as a beautiful, commercial center city of broad streets and parks, elaborate bridges and public works, grand civic buildings and continuous-fabric commercial blocks limited in their height to 150 feet. Pershing Square was confirmed as the symbolic center of the region and Broadway as its commercial and entertainment heart.

The essential character of Downtown as we know it today is based on the Robinson vision. Several important regional civic monuments were built during this time including the Central Library by Bertram Goodhue and Exposition Park. The City Hall, and Union Station were proposed by him but were ultimately built in locations and in form different to his suggestions. The Los Angeles Times Building by Gordon Kaufmann, the Atlantic Richfield Building and others by Morgan, Walls and Clements, and the many office buildings by John Parkinson on Spring Street are only a few of the monuments to commerce built at this time to the prescriptions of the 1909 plan.

Robinson also established standards for the development of vehicular boulevards and for the landscape and open space character of residential neighborhoods, both of which eventually became central to the unique garden city image of the Los Angeles region. The early twentieth century was not just another period of routine growth. The city experienced sustained development based on the creation of a major industrial manufacturing sector. From 1920-30, one million and a half people moved to Southern California. This time they came on

the new national trans-continental highway system. Eight new cities were created in Los Angeles County alone: South Gate, Bell, Torrance, Hawthorn, Maywood, Lynwood, and Tujunga, mostly as "company" towns for new major industries.

By the 1920s, an extraordinary 2,500 mile inter-urban train transit system called the Pacific Electric Rail or "Red Car" was virtually complete, allowing people from all over the region to commute to its center. The intense growth of train suburbs and charter towns surrounding Los Angeles and the idea of a dense downtown employment district developed simultaneously. Extraordinary places such as Glendale, Burbank, Beverly Hills, San Marino, and many others were founded, planned and built as isolated, self-sufficient towns with a balance of civic, commercial, recreational, and residential uses. Along with their equivalent neighborhoods within Los Angeles city limits, they offered a small-town atmosphere and lifestyle to their residents away from the congestion of the regional employment center Downtown.

Simultaneously and for the first time in the city's history, an architecture native and specific to Los Angeles was being created. Architects with many diverse interpretations of a design idiom based on Mediterranean precedents such as Gill, G.W. Smith, Goodhue, Hunt, Neff, Kaufmann, Spaulding, Johnson, and many others produced some of the best residential architecture ever built in America. R.M. Schindler, in a rooted but modernist idiom, created truly unique and original residential and commercial forms. Their great houses and gardens, multi-family courtyards, public parks and magnificent streets, shopping villages, schools and other



Downtown intersection



Angeles Flight to Bunker Hill

public institutional buildings intensified the sense that the Los Angeles region was one of the most amenable places to live in the United States. They established the fundamental built fabric within which life in Southern California has been enjoyed for most of the twentieth century.

Throughout this period, the automobile played a special role in the city's development. Used primarily as a means of local transportation, it allowed people to move easily around their suburban towns. Residents of the region typically used the train for the long commute to and from the center while being picked up by the car to be brought home at the end of the day. Boulevards, most notably Wilshire, served as the city's great motoring promenades. As they were linear they tended to connect some of the new subdivisions such as Westwood, Hancock Park, Larchmont, and others to downtown. Although commercial/retail activities began to spring up along them beginning in the 1930s, they were limited compared to the major concentration of similar activities Downtown. As a consequence, Downtown remained remarkably dense. The constellation of towns surrounding it were connected primarily by rail transit, leaving much of the in-between and surrounding countryside virtually open until the 1940s.



Downtown Los Angeles, circa 1940

Further Reading on the 3rd Los Angeles:

Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920's

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by Scott Bottles | University of California Press, 1991

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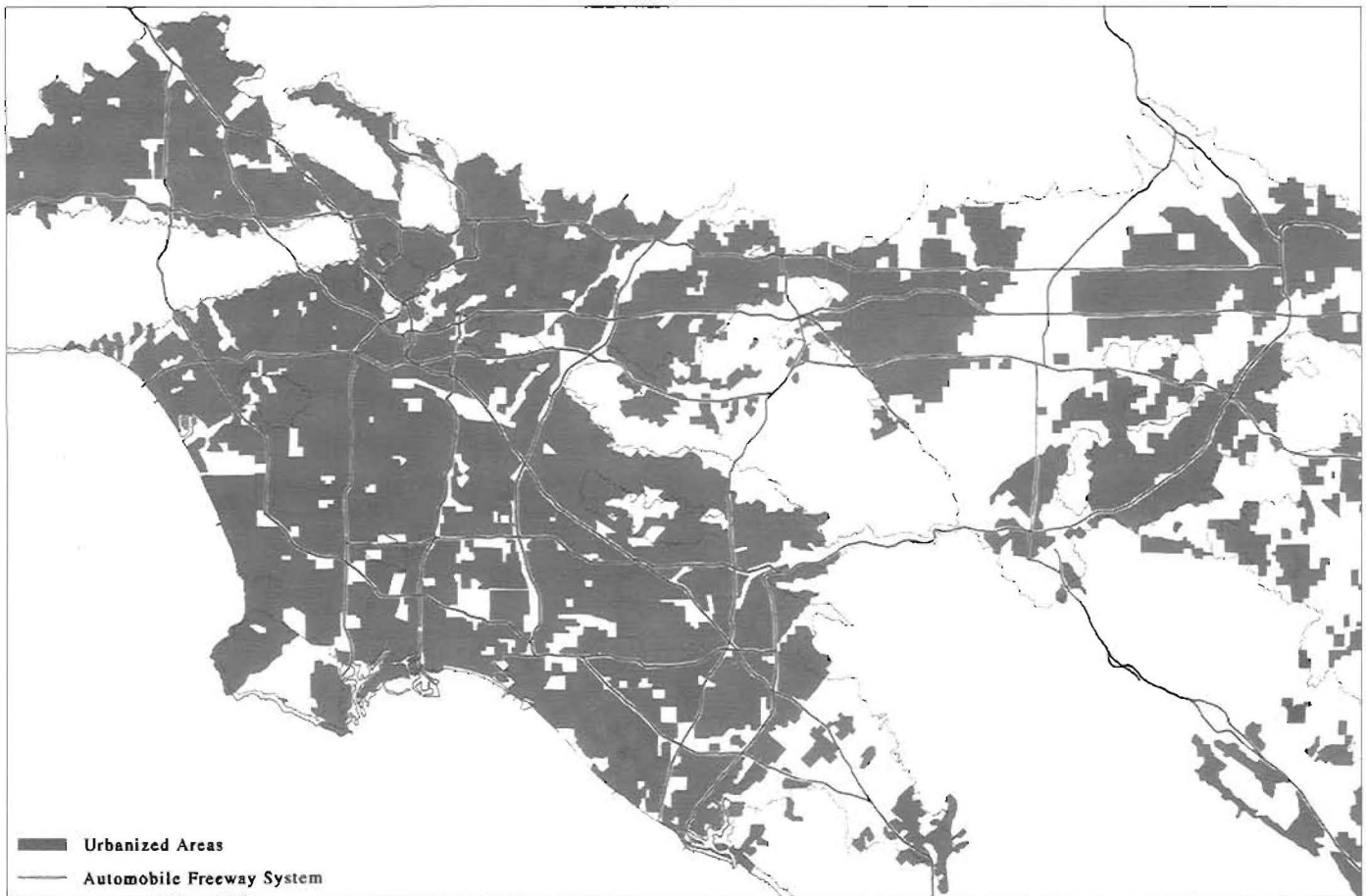
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A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970

by Matt Garcia | University of North Carolina Press, 2002



The Fourth Los Angeles *1940-1990: The Metropolis*

In 1942, three years after the inauguration of the Pasadena Freeway, the word “smog” was uttered in Los Angeles for the first time. Fueled by massive post World War II westward migration, the city began to spill over beyond its urban boundaries determined by rail corridors and pedestrian neighborhoods and districts. Infrastructural changes, principally in freeway, airport and flood control projects, induced massive land development in Southern California. Post-war national policy was designed to encourage such automobile-induced sprawl. With a new federal mortgage program in place, single family housing was built at an amazingly rapid pace. The entire basin was eventually covered by this homogeneous growth, giving the region an unlikely unity and commonality of values shared by its young, suburban residents.

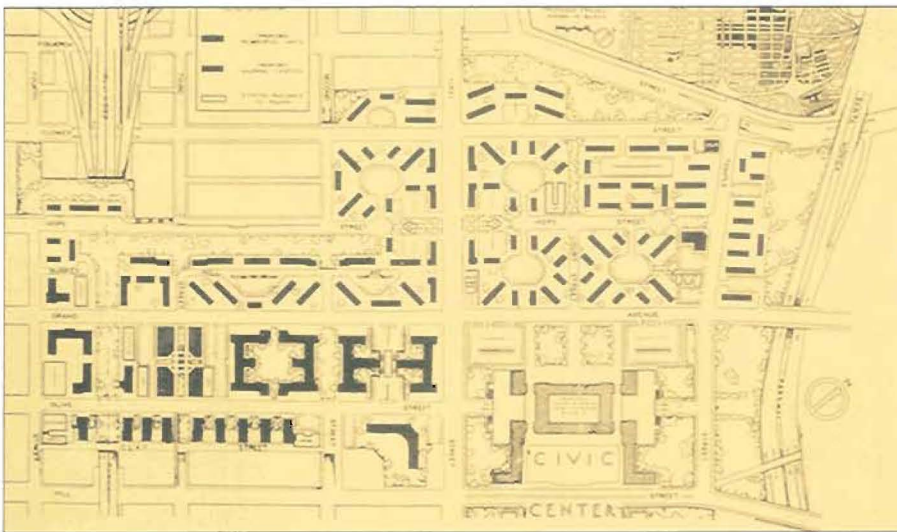
A region-wide freeway system was promoted in denial of the certain air-pollution catastrophe that it would precipitate. Its role as a piece of transportation engineering was to parallel the functional role of the boulevards as well as of rail transit and to resolve their perceived shortcomings. The interurban and intercity train lines in place were principally radial in order to service Downtown. Additional ring routes were required to connect suburb to suburb. The boulevards in place were seen to be too congested to continue to carry the ever greater loads of passengers traveling to newly acquired lands further and further away and beyond the pedestrian reach of transit stations. As a result, the freeway system was adopted and developed in a unique pattern - both grided throughout the basin and concentric around

Downtown. In the early 1950s, the transit rail system was eliminated as the transportation principle of “uninterrupted flow” became gospel. This was one of the most shortsighted and costliest decisions in the history of Los Angeles. A much abridged transit rail system is now being reinserted into the region at the cost of hundreds of billions of dollars.

The first freeway, the Pasadena Parkway, was built within and sunken into the fabric of the city and the natural landscape of the Arroyo Seco. However, the next generation of freeways were built above the city on pylons and into enormously wide rights-of-way. Because many of them were not built in straight lines (national policy set to keep drivers from falling asleep at the wheel), they severely damaged the social and the built fabric of the areas they traversed. Not only did they create great gashes wiggling through the city, but became walls through neighborhoods and districts often dividing one of their parts from another. In the early years of freeway-building, the system functioned quite well. The limited commuting distances and the low number of vehicles allowed traffic to flow relatively smoothly. But eventually, and as the urbanized edges of Los Angeles moved further out and the number of vehicles in circulation skyrocketed, a severe case of low density congestion set in. The city had annexed quite a bit of land preceding this period. In an effort to respond to an enormous demand for housing as well as additional water rights, the San Fernando valley had been acquired. To gain access to a new industrialized port, the city had reached down a thin strip of land to San Pedro/Wilmington for incorporation. To acquire land for an airport, the city had claimed the beach area south of Santa Monica. The universal directionality of motion encouraged by the freeway system allowed all open land within Los Angeles to become accessible, therefore, valuable and available for contiguous development. The Fourth Los Angeles grew by filling out the sections of the Jeffersonian mile-by-mile continental survey. Large boulevards lined with commercial activities surrounded exclusively residential developments within this gigantic grid. This urbanizing pattern was endlessly repeated until it collided with a distinct town like Santa Monica or a topographical feature like the foothills, the river, or an old rancho boundary. Los Angeles began to be developed as the enormous, formless in-between all the somewhere places of Southern California. A vast, privatized nowhere, lacking of adequate open space or access to the regional landscape

and spatially isolated from the necessary common, civic places. Every family in Southern California was sentenced to perpetual dependence on two or more cars.

In the spirit of modern planning, Downtown was judged to be overly congested. Since the early 1930s a grave confusion had prevailed regarding the phenomenon of congestion. The conflict of accommodating excessive numbers of people and vehicles within road ways and sidewalks was judged to be a serious problem. Unfortunately, it never occurred to anyone that large numbers of people were necessary to sustain an economically prosperous pedestrian city center. The freeways were advertised as a means of easing access to and



Redevelopment Plans for Bunker Hill, 1963

circulation through Downtown. Instead, they allowed many people to bypass Downtown for their employment and retail needs, while flooding Downtown with cars and requiring vast amounts of parking. The same number of people, about 300,000 were employed in the beginning and at the end of the Fourth Los Angeles in the greater Downtown. Where roughly two thirds of them accessed their jobs by transit in 1940, it was the same percentage that accessed them by automobile in 1990. Naturally, a de-congested Downtown became physically, functionally and symbolically eroded. More than 50% of its building stock was demolished in favor of parking. Many downtown districts atrophied and decay set in.

Downtown continued to play a prominent role in the life of the region. But as accessibility by automobile became omnidirectional within the basin, a variety of other competing sub-centers emerged. Economic growth was increasingly attracted to them, especially after the Watts Riots when whole populations moved westwards fleeing the inner city and its racial and economic problems. Their growth generated a sense of fragmentation within the metropolis. It was then that the word "urban" began to mean "poor" and "suburban" began to mean "affluent." By 1960 there was political consensus that the now decongested and declining Downtown needed to be replanned and redefined as a modern city center befitting a car-dominated, up-to-date metropolis. Bunker Hill, the oldest mixed-use district of Downtown was declared severely blighted and measures began to be taken to have it replaced through clearance and redevelopment with large separated blocks of commercial, motel (not hotel!), residential and parking uses. The hill was to be lowered in order to eliminate the necessity for an Angel's Flight and a super block sized grid of highway-standard streets and ramps was to be laid over it for easy auto access. Pedestrians, automobiles, and service vehicles were to be separated vertically in space by overpasses for "safety." New high-rise buildings were to be isolated in the centers of blocks, surrounded by plazas designed primarily for viewing, not human occupation

Bunker Hill was indeed cleared, and a commercial citadel was built to replace it. It was all part of that most tragic and misdirected process of Urban Renewal that swept the country in the 1960s and destroyed so many center cities throughout the United States. The life of what was left of Downtown Los Angeles was sapped as commercial activity did not multiply as expected, but just relocated to the newest quarters. Dozens of empty buildings were left behind, many dozens of them significant architectural monuments, most of them still empty. The architectural form of the new Bunker Hill was finally established by the "Silver Book" plan of 1972, so named because of the sleek color of its cover representing the region's attachment to high tech metaphors during this time. Its stereotypical modern buildings, isolated plazas and parking and car-dominated streets turned the center of Los Angeles into a caricature of an international anyplace. Its housing prescriptions were never carried out. Downtown became increasingly dominated by non-residential uses. In combination with similarly conceived and constructed segregated islands of commercial development, such as Century City, Southcoast Plaza, and Warner Center, it erased the possibility for a genuine public, pedestrian life in Southern California for a generation.

At least the economic life of Downtown was stabilized. It reemerged as the predominant West Coast financial and business center of our country and one of the most important on the Pacific Rim. Yet, the homogenizing influence of the automobile-oriented development standards, the erosion of a vital and popular public realm, and the disinterest in retaining significant housing neighborhoods undermined downtown's special physical endowment. This became exacerbated by the

predominance of suburban development models, such as sealed, underground malls and office parks, that undermined Downtown at the expense of surrounding centers and bedroom suburbs.

The expansion of the territory finally transformed the city into a contiguous metropolis, what we now call simply Southern California; at 5000 square miles, one of the most extensive areas of suburban sprawl in the world. Within this vast spread of monotonous and undistinguished suburban house tracts, the region's public monuments, employment and shopping centers became engulfed by parking. Farther out beyond the Jeffersonian grid into Orange, Ventura and Riverside Counties, these same public places gravitated away from populated areas, isolated from them by the phenomenal quantity of parking surrounding them. The commanding physical contrast between the dense built city and the open countryside that dominated the Third Los Angeles was virtually erased and replaced with the landscape of nowhere.

On the verge of a Fifth Los Angeles, the metropolis became quickly dominated by those aspects of the built world constructed in the last fifty years to accommodate and favor the car: roads and parking lots. The citizens of the region increasingly became subject to the cumulative negative effects induced by fifty years of sprawl: extreme distances and time delays, intense privatization, social ghetto-ization and alienation, and environmental pollution, now the typical experiences of current daily life. Random growth and uncritical dependence on technology brought Southern California to the brink.



Bunker Hill, circa 1965

Further Reading on the 4th Los Angeles:

City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles

by Mike Davis | Verso Press, 1993

Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir

by D.J. Waldie | St. Martin's Griffin, 1997

My Blue Heaven: Life and Politics in the Working-Class Suburbs of Los Angeles, 1920-1965

by Becky M. Nicolaides | University of Chicago Press, 2002

Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles

by Eric Avila | University of California Press, 2004

The problems of Los Angeles are the very definition of the burgeoning urban and ecological crisis everywhere. The urbanism crafted out of a single-minded dependence on the car has been carried out as low density, land-intensive suburban sprawl on the one hand and as abandonment of the center city and the public realm on the other. The qualities that characterize this form of Los Angeles have been planned for exactly as they are: segregated land use by "zones"; streets made for automobiles, not the pedestrian; landscape as residual buffers, not for human occupation; neighborhoods of racial and economic homogeneity; and buildings without a human-scale. The resulting urban fabric is neither urban nor rural. Any sense of a vital urbanity associated with small towns or large cities and of unspoiled nature expected of the countryside is increasingly threatened by the omnipresence of "nowhere." The economics of continuing to build and maintain such widely-spread infrastructure of freeways, roads and utilities is indeed unsustainable in the face of competition with other more compact cities and threatens our economic well-being. Los Angeles has pioneered in the short-term, techno-centric economic development of immediate consumption over long-term human cultural development of social equity, quality of life and environmental responsibility. The riots of the Spring of 1992 indicated among other things that the systematic assault on the city and its public spaces destroyed more than just buildings. It destroyed our collective shared experience - a bond that bridges ethnic and class distinctions. The extremes of the intense hermeticism of the walled enclaves from Simi Valley to Mission Viejo and the disenfranchisement of the barren and alienating streetscapes of Florence Avenue must be seriously re-evaluated if the city is to become the integrated multi-cultural boosterist city of its dreams.

Despite of this or in part because of it, evidence of an emerging transformation of this metropolis is to be found everywhere. A new regional, multi-modal rail transit system comprised of four hundred-miles of light and heavy lines, amplified by bike-ways and expanded bus service is under construction, partly in the old right-of-ways of the Red Car lines. This project promises a region-wide alternative to the car as well as intensified development around its stations.

Rebuilding public space throughout Southern California coupled with the "localization" of retail activity is generating active pedestrian districts all over the basin. Cities like Pasadena and Santa Monica stand out as the best examples of municipalities actively directing the reuse of their downtown commercial districts. Through mixed-use projects and selective densification, commercial activities are accommodated adjacent to multi-family dwellings. The net result is that the making of livable pedestrian centers preserves the character of the surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods.

The city that we envision the Fifth Los Angeles becoming would be predicated on a few operative principles aimed at encouraging a dedication to place: Supporting a sense of local economy and community, building upon our city's heritage and reinvesting in the public realm.

Because our society has so fetishized the private spaces in this city, it is important to emphasize the need to also encourage its opposite. The public realm is made up of both open space and institutions: it is those shared places which bring people to gather together, that relate them to one another or, conversely, that separate them and secure their privacy. A city is a cultural artifact and a repository of places and things. It is what we are born into and what we leave behind. What a society holds

in common is not only what it shares with the living, but that which is shares with those before us and those after us.

Our system of governance upholds both our individual civil rights and our common interests as cities, states and nations. However, while our Constitution guarantees these rights, they are being constantly undermined by the sorry state of the built world around us. In order to maintain the vigor of our democratic ways, we need to elevate the construction of a Los Angeles suitable to the needs of its residents to the level of urgent priority. For too long, all levels of government have been preoccupied with abstract social and economic programs divorced from the power of place. It is, however, by building this common permanent place, the public realm of our built world that the urgent problems of our society can be addressed, our rights and responsibilities applied and a balance between public and private interests established.

If the Fourth Los Angeles was chaos by design, then the reversal of policies that destroyed this metropolis and degraded the quality of the natural world in and around it is in order. The following is an outline of operative principles towards the physical transformation of the Los Angeles region during the phase of its development we are now entering:

1. Layering - The Fifth Los Angeles depends for its growth on a new, regionally centered entrepreneurial economy that is committed to the enhancement of local places. Similarly, it is also dependant on a government with a new purpose that measures its accomplishments by the positive physical change that its initiatives generate. The metropolis all around us represents over a hundred years of continuous investment in our well-being. To the degree possible, the Architecture and Urbanism of its future should be based on an ethic of conservation and gradual infilling. The unique physical fragments of Los Angeles as they exist today should become the point of departure for its further redevelopment and the source of its character and difference from other places in America. In research such as is represented by this essay, the historical images and facts about the ecological and urban history of the city must be documented and taken into account in design. And the lost, mythical-poetic dimensions of past Southern California cities and land-



Metro Rapid Bus



Mixed-Use Transit-Oriented Development (Sunset+Vine)

scapes should also be imagined and brought to bear. No more attempts to turn Southern California into a memory-free zone should be tolerated.

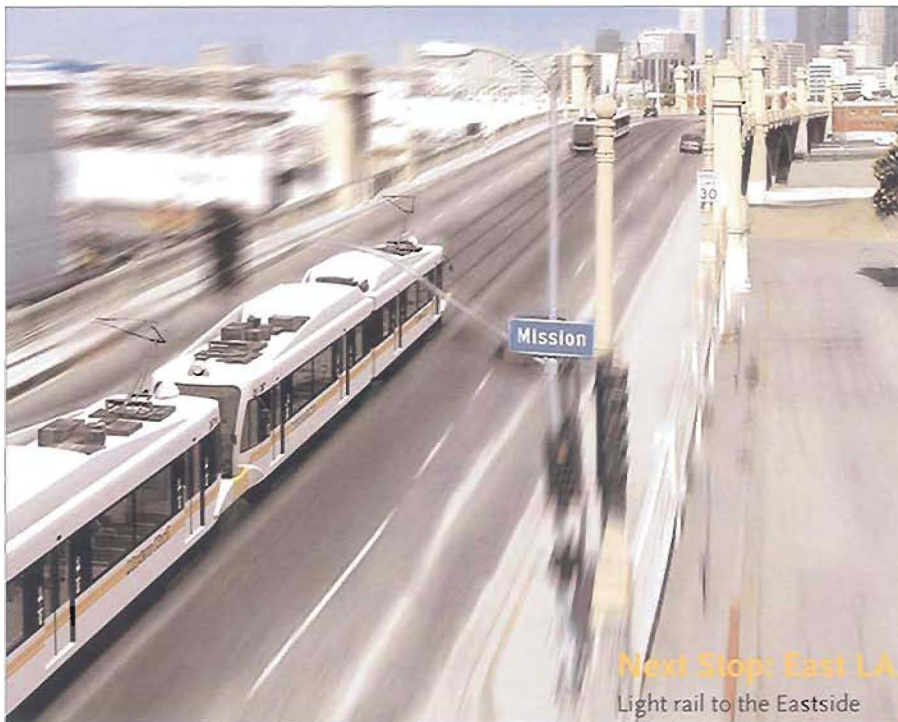
2. Urbanism formed by Architecture - Urbanism is the design of the public void of the city. A complex array of voids composed in particular figures is the essential character and experience of all cities, including Los Angeles. Architecture and Landscape Architecture are the means by which this *forma urbis* is incrementally formed. The collective figure of this void is more complete, permanent and important than the shape of any single one of the buildings that define it. Within this open space framework, roads, transit networks and infrastructure of all kinds should be designed to contain sprawl and to support pedestrian precincts of all kinds. Special climatic, ecological and cultural influences on the design of open space in this region should be taken into account in order to safeguard its local character. Internationalist diagrams of urban and territorial organization favoring the automobile and all other forms of machinery should be discarded once and for all.

3. Architecture that Marks Time and Place - The architectural project today is most typically an isolated act that depends on objectives that benefit a limited cast of characters. And yet it is the means by which the city and the countryside are constantly and incrementally constructed day in and day out. Its effects, therefore, are essential to the well-being of all. Marking time and place is a means of fulfilling Architecture's most noble purpose; that is, the establishment of the identity of a society through their constructed and natural surroundings. A mere personal expressive gesture is not enough to elevate Architecture towards such a goal. Single buildings must be supported by a local typological code that takes into account both historical precedent and accepts the possibility of introducing new formal patterns. The linking of both typological memory and individual expression can relieve Architecture of its consumerist burdens and revalidate it as an instrument for re-building the city.

4. Catalytic Projects as Transformers - The city grows relatively slowly. At the same time, this process of change is a potent, relentless and permanent one. For half a century, the dominant paradigm for city-making has been the violent imposition of formally complete, self-referential and spatially isolated objects onto the body of the historic city and the open countryside. It is now time for the acceptance of a new paradigm that is the reverse of our current practices. We should be designing the collective body of the city and nature, not exclusively its individual architectural parts. Buildings, landscapes and open space projects should be designed as small and incomplete interventions. Their programs should accommodate with equal passion client interests, the interests of the public and the invisible interests of the unrepresented. Their completeness should be defined by reference to their physical relationships to existing objects and places. All new projects should be considered as catalytic in promoting positive physical change, further economic investment, and improvements in the daily life of all beyond their property boundaries.

5. The Promise of Public-Private Cooperation - The State and the Market as we have experienced them in the 20th century are the principal promoters and sponsors of "nowhere." The first priority for Architecture is to reject both the State and the Market as isolated agents of urban growth. States by themselves are capable of little more than establishing normative standards. Similarly, the unchecked market produces mindless uniformity and repetition through the statistical validation of marketing recipes applicable everywhere and usually framed under limited ambi-

tions and singular purposes. Long-term economic prosperity and the construction and maintenance of beautiful cities are linked. Private and public interests must actively cooperate in the regeneration of this region.



Eastside Gold Line Light Rail

Neighborhoods and buildings should become the ultimate means of empowerment in our society, the illustration in one place of our best social intentions. However diverse the population of Los Angeles becomes, only dialogue can generate the agreements upon which a common, public future can be delivered. The public sector can sponsor a neighborhood framework for political participation. The private sector can make it its responsibility to deliver architectural and urban form based on the common ground that such citizen involvement would generate. The Fifth Los Angeles can only become the place of our dreams if the needs of individuals and the many diverse groups that comprise the city are met, at the same time as a sense of community is re-established by the deliberate rebuilding of the physical world within we all exist.

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Up Against the Sprawl: Public Policy and the Making of Southern California

edited by Jennifer Wolch, Manual Pastor, Jr. & Peter Dreier | University of Minnesota Press, 2004

Globalizing L.A.: Trade, Infrastructure, and Regional Development

by Steven P. Erie | Stanford University Press, 2004

The Next Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Livable City

edited by Robert Gottlieb, Mark Vallianatos, Regina M. Freer & Peter Dreier | University of California Press, 2005

The **Hale Solar Laboratory** is a National Landmark designed by Kaufmann, Coate and Johnson in 1924 with gardens by Beatrix Farrand. The building was the private scientific retreat of George Ellery Hale (1868- 1938).

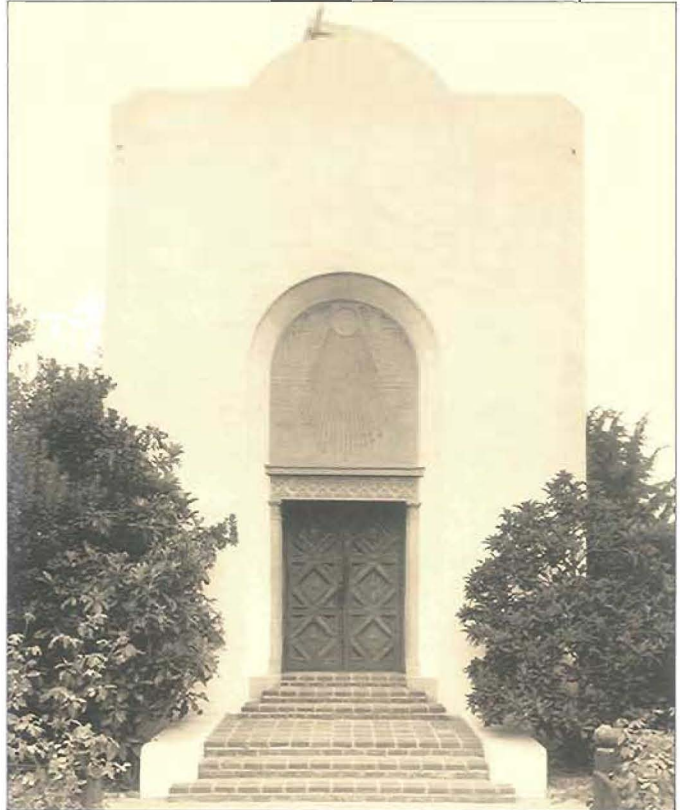
Hale was an internationally famous scientist, a trustee behind the endowment of the Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino, CA, the founder of the California Institute of Technology, the head of the jury for the Edward Bennett 1925 plan for the civic center of Pasadena, and the client force behind Bertram Goodhue's National Academy of Sciences building on the Mall in Washington, DC, and his many buildings at CalTech. He also co-founded the International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the Astrophysical Journal. He persuaded President Woodrow Wilson to form the National Research Council, through which scientific minds could be best used to help the country during World War I.

Hale's greatest accomplishment was the organizing and carrying out projects involving the construction of astronomical observatories.

During the course of his career, Hale was responsible for the founding of three major observatories: Yerkes in Wisconsin, and Mount Wilson and Palomar in California. He built the world's largest telescopes many times over.

The Hale Solar Laboratory was Hale's office and workshop for the later years of his life. Hale's scientific contributions were many, especially in the area of astronomy. Hale was one of the first scientists to compare observations in physics laboratories here on earth to what is seen in the heavens. He detected the existence of strong magnetic fields inside sunspots. This was the first association of magnetic fields with any extraterrestrial body. More than anyone else, he is the person most responsible for the rise of the science of modern astrophysics in the United States.

The Hale Solar Laboratory is also significant as the site of many scientific discoveries, the most famous being Hale's refinement of the spectrohelioscope, a device that made it possible to observe the hydrogen-rich prominences of the sun.



Vinayak Bharne Urban Designer, Moule & Polyzoides, Pasadena

John Chase Urban Designer, City of West Hollywood

Art Cueto Local Coordinator, CNU XIII

Ann Daigle Urban Development & Planning Manager, City of Ventura

Alan Loomis Urban Designer, Moule & Polyzoides, Pasadena

Gloria Ohland Senior Editor, Reconnecting America

Stefanos Polyzoides Principal, Moule & Polyzoides, Pasadena

Alan Pullman Principal & Design Director, Studio One Eleven, Long Beach

James Rojas Chair, Latino Urban Forum

Observations from
the Observatory

Stefanos Polyzoïdes : As we look at these projects and assess the progress of New Urbanism in Southern California, we have to remember that 20 years ago there was nothing going on here, there wasn't a leaf moving.

Ann Daigle : I always think of California as a pioneering place, and we should use this opportunity to document the changes that have happened, whether it's the impact of culture on new product types or on the way people live. The needs of communities are leading policy change in California.

John Chase : The book should serve as a "New Urbanist Eye for the Average Guy."

James Rojas : The projects are less interesting than the movement, which is reshaping the whole country.

John Chase : We should ask to what degree architecture serves as a vehicle for cultural content and ethnic identification. What is the capacity of architectural form to reflect specific cultures, or cultural diversity? Do policies provide for that? Can someone buy a house in a family-oriented ethnic community and accommodate an extended family by adding a granny flat and a unit above the garage?

Ann Daigle : And we should look not just architecture but also at the spaces in between the buildings, the way they are used, and how this impacts the public realm.

Art Cueto : Policies are as important as the projects. If you look, for example, at all the loft conversions happening downtown, it's because the city adopted the adaptive re-use ordinance. Those buildings were vacant for a long time because of certain policies and now they're not vacant because of new policies.

Vinayak Bharne : The question that interests me is would these projects have happened without New Urbanism? And to what extent were they informed by the New Urbanism? Wasn't infill, for example, inevitable?

Stefanos Polyzoïdes : The answer to that question is that New Urbanism is a theory and a strategy that establishes itself and then attempts to integrate into itself all the good things that are happening - whether they're being done by card-carrying New Urbanists or not. New Urbanism is like global warming: it's affecting everything without necessarily being responsible for everything. But it's important to examine why there isn't enough regional work and why so much work is being done poorly. And why there are so many buildings but so few neighborhoods and corridors - especially corridors.

Vinayak Bharne : Then we should assess projects using a New Urbanist lens. We should ask what it is about these projects that make us want to look at them.



Avenue 26 Transit Village

A transit village that mixes more than 533 units of affordable, market-rate, rental, for-sale and senior housing with neighborhood-serving retail and childcare is going up next to the Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park Gold Line station in historic Lincoln Heights, in a largely industrial low-income neighborhood that needs both investment and housing. There will be a total of five buildings, with 74 percent of the housing reserved as affordable. The first phase will consist of 101 units of senior affordable housing in one building and 121 units of family affordable housing in a second and 165 for-sale condominiums in two more buildings. Phase II will consist of 146 units of workforce housing. The building is being financed with institutional capital and low-income housing tax credits and includes no public subsidies.

Architect : Several, including Van Tilburg, Banvard & Soderbergh
 Client/Developer : AMCAL Multi-Housing, Inc.
 Status : Under construction

Gloria Ohland : For example, there are 500 housing units going up in several buildings at the Avenue 26 Gold Line station, all of them by one developer who is mixing market-rate with affordable, rental and for-sale, and senior housing, with neighborhood-serving retail and childcare - in a neighborhood that is a wasteland of underutilized industrial buildings. And he's doing it without any public subsidy. But judging from this developer's other projects, and from the drawings, the architecture is going to be only so-so, and there isn't any public funding for place-making components like public space or pedestrian corridors. So while this project is remarkable by many measures, design isn't one of them. Should New Urbanists welcome this project into the fold?

Stefanos Polyzoides : We should critique the project. This isn't about glorifying architects, it's about figuring what's inside the loop and what's outside and saying a few intelligent things about why it's good or not. I think individuals' perceptions and actions are determined by their theoretical understanding of what's going on. New Urbanism has informed the market. We've all been working for 15 years to make this happen.

Vinayak Bharne : For example, the Downtown Strategic Plan [which was led by Stefanos and Elizabeth Moule with Duany Plater-Zyberk] was a very pragmatic way of dealing with the issues downtown. But nothing happened. The plan was never implemented. And now, 20 years later, what is happening downtown is essentially an implementation of that plan, though no one is saying that, and maybe no one would even acknowledge that. But it's because there is no other way to repair the city.

James Rojas . The change starts at the edge - and that was New Urbanism, 15 years ago - and then after a while it has permeated the center and become popular culture. A few brave pioneers lived downtown before, but suddenly there's an avalanche of people who want to live downtown.

John Chase . But we can't declare victory yet. We have to remember it's still a very small segment of the population that's willing to live downtown in a loft. Most people are still buying those new houses on virgin land in Orange and Riverside counties.

Art Cueto : Is the increased interest in downtown due to changing perceptions about downtown and urban living?

Stefanos Polyzoides : The process builds upon itself. Downtown Los Angeles would never have been possible without downtown Pasadena, which wouldn't have been possible without the experience of Denver and San Diego and Manhattan. Turn on the TV at night and you won't find one TV show that glorifies suburban living.

John Chase : Whereas in the '50s there was *I Love Lucy*, and they lived in Manhattan but then they moved to Connecticut, and then there was *Leave It To Beaver*, set in the suburbs. In the '70s you had *The Brady Bunch* and *The Partridge Family*, and they all lived in the suburbs. In the '90s you had *Friends* and *Seinfeld* and *Frasier*, and TV was all about non-traditional households - not nuclear families - and they were living in the city again.

Gloria Ohland : Ultimately what has stimulated interest in New Urbanism and in living downtown is changing demographics. Singles are the new majority. Households are getting older and smaller and more diverse. There just aren't many traditional families anymore - married couples with kids are only 25 percent of the population. But even more than demographics, it's traffic that's stimulating interest in urbanism. Who wants to drive to the suburbs anymore? A single family home in a residential neighborhood is boring.



The Johannes Van Tilburg Building is located on the prominent corner of Arizona Avenue and the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica. This four-story, 26,500 square foot structure houses restaurants on the ground floor and offices on the second, third and penthouse levels. The building has a warehouse ambiance with large multi-pane windows, high ceilings and dome roof. Contemporary treatments, such as an entry courtyard, tiered terraces, colorful exterior and ground floor retail spaces complete the design. Van Tilburg, born and raised in Holland and a tenth generation builder/architect, believes the pedestrian quality of the District is the perfect setting for his urban renaissance design. His firm, Van Tilburg, Banvard & Soderbergh, AIA has its California office in the penthouse of this building.

Architect : Johannes Van Tilburg & Partners
Client / Developer : The Janss Corporation
Completed : 1988

Art Cueto : The suburban lifestyle doesn't work for the modern household. A family needs two wage earners - but then who takes care of the kids and who gets home in time to cook and who has the time to cut the grass? That lifestyle is oppressive.

Ann Daigle : Politics and policy is not in step with the market.

James Rojas : And it was relatively easy to make over Old Pasadena and downtown Santa Monica, but downtown was a very big dinosaur. It didn't take long for people to get comfortable with New Urbanism Pasadena-style and Santa Monica-style. And now that people are used to the idea of New Urbanism they're finally getting comfortable with the idea of living in downtown, even though there aren't any amenities or green spaces or supermarkets or places to park your car.

Stefanos Polyzoides : This familiarity has also made a big difference in capital investments. [Architect Johannes] Van Tilburg told me that when he did his first buildings on the Third Street Promenade back in 1988 the city allowed him to be part of its Park-Once district. But his banker called him up and said "Great proposal but there must be some pages missing on the parking." And the banker passed on the project! Jan had to build it himself with his own money. Two years later he did a second building and offered the banker the same proposal - with the same pages missing - and there was no problem getting financing.

Gloria Ohland : That's the other interesting thing about the Avenue 26 TOD project - it's affordable transit-oriented housing with no public subsidies. Institutional capital recognized the project could work.

Stefanos Polyzoides : These buildings belie the investment formulas of suburbia. If you buy the logic of the suburban product how can you buy the logic of an 18-story loft-style condominium building? And that's why downtown languished for so long.

Vinayak Bharne : One kind of urbanism is morphological and deals with the physical form of the city, but New Urbanism also finds expression as policy and even in financing. New Urbanism in Southern California is influential not only because of the design and typology but because of these other less tangible manifestations that are not physical.

Gloria Ohland : The Charter states that right up front: "We recognize that physical solutions by themselves will not solve social and economic problems, but neither can economic vitality, community stability and environmental health be sustained without a coherent and supportive physical framework. We advocate the restructuring of public policy . . ."

James Rojas : You could say that Proposition 13 helped bring about the New Urbanism. Downtowns have been revitalized because cities needed revenue. Once Proposition 13 constrained property tax revenues they had to boost sales taxes revenues. So they had to develop their main streets as walking streets.

Vinayak Bharne : The transit-oriented district is a tangible urban form, but it is also a policy. You could also argue that Pasadena had a form-based code in the City of Gardens Ordinance and the "park once" strategy long before these became part of mainstream New Urbanist terminology. We should also look at why there's limited greenfield development in Southern California while infill development is booming.

Alan Pullman : There's a tremendous amount of greenfield development being built by the homebuilders in Riverside, San Bernardino, Temecula, Indio. Some is informed by New Urbanism, stylistically at least. It's New Urbanism applied as appliqué. We're not even close to winning the battle.



Victoria Gardens, Rancho Cucamonga

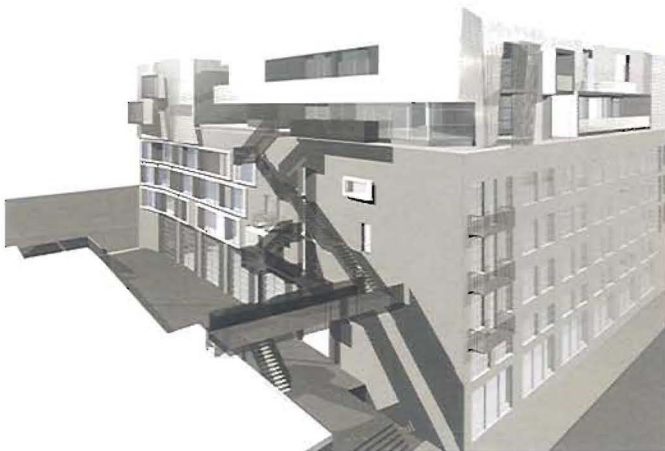
Alan Loomis : There's almost no greenfield New Urbanist development out there. That's why the few New Urbanist projects - like Victoria Gardens in Rancho Cucamonga, which is really just an enlightened mall - are so important. It's the first attempt to stake a claim for New Urbanism in the Inland Empire beyond a few downtown revitalizations.

John Chase : I want to revisit the subject of corridors and say again that this is an extremely important development type. Corridors have the most latent capacity to accommodate housing and development and to be re-envisioned because there are too many of them and they are no longer really viable. And they are what makes Southern California ugly.

Gloria Ohland : The regional growth scenario adopted in the Bay Area channels growth into existing centers and along transportation corridors - but corridor planning and implementation is problematic because corridors cross so many jurisdictions. So the council of governments has been mounting planning efforts around particular corridors, bringing to the table every agency that is a player and trying to assess and coordinate all the resources that can be brought to bear - whether it's funding for a neighborhood park or redevelopment or transportation projects. It's a recognition of the enormous potential of corridors.

Stefanos Polyzoides : The most amazing thing is the extent to which all these developments overlap. Getting one courtyard building through in West Hollywood or one code passed in Azusa or Ventura may seem like a small thing but taken together they all add up and that's why this movement matters immensely.

James Rojas : The reality is that New Urbanist projects tend to target the high end of the market when the median income in L.A. is relatively low - there are 2 million people living below the poverty line here. How does New Urbanism address that problem?



John Chase : With initiatives that provide incentives for smaller units?

Stefanos Polyzoides : There's never an excuse for poor design.

Gloria Ohland : Indeed, the Fuller Lofts, just around the corner from the Avenue 26 project, prove that you can combine excellent and innovative design with sustainability and affordability.

John Chase : But personality, charm and talent don't always come packaged together. A project may succeed in one way but not in another. And even though the design may not be stellar the project still may succeed in ways that are notable.

Around the corner from the Lincoln Heights transit village, the **W.P. Fuller Building**, a 1920s-era, cast-in-place concrete industrial building, is being redeveloped and expanded into 102 for-sale live/work and loft spaces. New units will be constructed on the roof, and the upper floors will offer mountain and city views while there will be creative workshop spaces located in the basement. The center of the building is being cored to allow for the penetration of light and air. A number of units will be reserved for households earning below \$66,000 a year. The developer has applied for LEED certification. The building is four blocks from the Gold Lines Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park station.

Architect : Pugh + Scarpa
Client/Developer : Livable Places
Status : Under construction

Alan Pullman : Los Angeles is home to some of the most famous object-building architects in the world. What are we going to say about the object buildings?

John Chase : So many architects in Southern California want to make an individual statement that they cut their buildings off from everything around them in order to achieve maximum visual impact. Which is more important? For a building to differentiate itself? Or to relate strongly to its context?

Stefanos Polyzoides : If they fall within the parameters of urbanism, we should discuss them. But the Disney Concert Hall is a marginally urbanist building. The new cathedral is a violently anti-urban building. The new Caltrans headquarters is simply pathetic.

Art Cueto : The Disney Concert Hall is a more intimate setting than the Music Center, and it's more public in the way it relates to the street - though the gardens on the roof are not easy to get to.



Grand Avenue Project, 2004.

James Rojas : The more important thing is the plan for Grand Avenue. But no one really knows enough about that yet.

John Chase : The Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood is another example. It doesn't measure up as New Urbanism, but as a physical object it's very seductive and beautiful. Architecture can rise to a very high level and still the urban design can be terrible.

Alan Loomis : They might be bad buildings from a New Urbanist perspective but they do represent a collective social investment - it's worth mentioning that the city is investing in civic monuments again.

Ann Daigle : The problems with many buildings has a lot to do with site selection. It used to be that you picked the important site, but these days with politics and financing it's about finding the cheapest site.

Stefanos Polyzoides : And the cathedral, unfortunately, was built next to the free-way - it's a great building in the wrong place. Place matters.

Alan Loomis : There are great buildings in the wrong place and great places with the wrong buildings. Like the Avenue 26 TOD project. Architecture matters as much as place.

Ann Daigle : Cities used to be laid out beautifully to create a sense of place, and site selection was enormously important to ensure terminated vistas and such. Those considerations have all disappeared.

Stefanos Polyzoides : It's important that we get the point across that a lot of what is happening in Southern California is not monument building, and that even though people may not notice, it matters immensely. The problem is that architecture critics see contextual buildings but don't assess them as architecture.

Alan Loomis : Which is one of the most exciting things about this book. Yes, people think of object buildings when they think of L.A. But the point that we want to make is that there's also this other stuff happening that's really transforming the street and has a much bigger impact on livability in the region. This transformation hasn't been noticed nationally, and to a large extent it hasn't been noticed locally either. This book will help make that clear.

Vinayak Bharne : Rather than talk about whether Disney Hall is or is not New Urbanist or a civic monument I think we should look at the bigger picture. We should look at the district, and then talk about whether Disney contributes to it. Because that provides for a very different view of the building.

Ann Daigle . California is the epitome of the suburban nation and the whole point of the Congress being in Los Angeles and focusing on the polycentric city is so that other regions all over the country can see the problems and how they're being addressed.

Alan Pullman . I think there are several important categories of important New Urbanist activity in Los Angeles. One is the re-use of industrial land, which is being retooled for the post-industrial economy - there are projects in Oxnard and in Long Beach and here in L.A. there are the Cornfield and Baldwin Hills parks. There's the retooling of suburban strip centers into more vibrant and urbanizing mixed-use places. And the reworking of commercial corridors as a shared public place and location for more housing and not just a corridor for cars.

Stefanos Polyzoides : In deciding whether a project is New Urbanist we have to be clear that it has to do with a transformation brought about by design and not just a social transformation. We have to be clear that what we are talking about is intentional change at some level - visible, intentional change. But New Urbanism isn't an end in itself. It's not a Hall of Fame, not a Valhalla of projects. It's really a tendency, a movement. It's a way of getting from here to there. Is the form-based code in Ventura the best one in the state? Maybe. But for how long? Until it's bested by the next iteration. It has to do with evolving, with understanding, with an overlapping of all these things. We're learning from one another to make things better by sticking to the principles of the CNU.



Clockwise from window: Stefanos Polyzoides, Alan Pullman, Vinayak Bharne, John Chase, Curt Stiles, Gloria Ohland, James Rojas, Ann Daigle & Alan Loomis

Regional Growth Vision

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| | Existing Light Rail/Subway | | MagLev Alignment |
| | Planned Light Rail/Subway | | Potential High Speed Link |
| | Potential Light Rail Links | | Potential High Speed Transit |
| | Existing Commuter Rail | | Major Airports |
| | Potential Commuter Rail | | |
| | Planned Rapid Bus | | Public Open Space |
| | Potential Rapid Bus | | Other Public Lands |
| | Freeways | | Agricultural Land |
| | Transitway | | Rural Lands |
| | Regional Center | | New Open Space |
| | Town Center | | New Development |
| | | | Industrial Centers |
| | | | Infill |





The Metropolis, City & Town

commentary by Gloria Ohland

The vast size and diversity of the 38,000-square-mile Southern California region has always confounded regional planning efforts. The concerns of Imperial County on the Mexican border, dotted with date groves and tiny, dusty towns, seem very dissimilar to those of teeming, heavily trafficked, urbane Los Angeles, which seem dissimilar to the issues in vast, verdant Riverside County, where greenfields are being rapidly diced into 5-acre ranchettes. But the logic of organizing growth in the entire region along a centers and corridors concept only gets more and more compelling.

The regional growth visioning exercise led by John Fregonese for the Southern California Association of Governments reached that very same conclusion. And it led to a regional transportation plan that proposed accommodating growth in existing centers and along commercial and transportation corridors comprising just 2 percent of regional land, which given the region's size is not inconsiderable. Fregonese says that's where the population wants to live anyway, noting that because of demographic changes underway here as elsewhere in the country the housing market and settlement patterns are changing dramatically.

Add to that the fact that the region actually has little land available for development - unless it's way out there without amenities and unconnected by infrastructure and/or requiring a harrowing commute. In Denver or Dallas there's still a choice of where to develop but this is the densest, most urbanized U.S. metropolis; planners here may toy with the idea of Portland-style densities but the real model should be Chicago or Manhattan. The growth pressures will continue to be, in the words of Fregonese, "inexorable and immutable." The population of 18 million is forecast to grow by 6 million by 2030 - the biggest growth spurt since the 1950s. That's about 1 percent every five years, but population is already up 1.25 percent in 4 years.

Southern California Compass Growth Vision

Aided by Calthorpe Fregonese Associates, the Southern California Association of Governments launched a two-year visioning exercise to build consensus on strategies to accommodate an additional 5 million residents by 2025. The vision adopted into the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan calls for significant mixed-use infill development in existing communities along existing commercial and transportation corridors. Called the "2 Percent Strategy" because development would occur on just 2 percent of land in the region, the plan is projected to accommodate up to 400,000 new units of housing and increase transit use by 50 percent. The land use component of the plan was responsible for 50 percent of the air quality benefits achieved in the RTP and about 35 percent of the reduction in vehicle miles traveled.

However, this means local governments must implement land use strategies that encourage infill - which requires that SCAG reward good behavior without threatening local control. To that end SCAG has set up a tracking system to monitor hot spots, and created a "suite of services" to assist local jurisdictions in implementing appropriate land use regulations, transportation investments, economic development and redevelopment strategies. Local government response has been positive: SCAG is helping Ontario test different development scenarios for a large greenfield development; working with Upland to determine the redevelopment potential of city-owned lots in the historic downtown within walking distance of Metrolink commuter rail; and is helping to analyze the potential for more TOD, especially affordable housing, in South Pasadena.

Fortunately, Southern California has hundreds of centers and corridors to develop. "Whereas Chicago or New York really have only one downtown, L.A.'s downtown has been distributed along classic corridors all over the place," says Fregonese. "Downtown can be replicated in hundreds of places that have the right physical configuration." In fact, he adds, "Most of the region is transit-oriented development that's just waiting for transit."

Moreover, as Bill Fulton points out in an essay in SCAG's 2004 "State of the Region" report, 70 percent of a region is made up of housing, the need for housing continues to be great, and the market for housing is still hot and getting hotter. Multi-family housing construction is on the upswing, from 10 percent of all starts in L.A. County in the '90s to 50 percent from 2000-2003, even in Orange County the percentage increased from 13 percent to 36 percent. And, recognizing that the market is changing, most major homebuilders have opened divisions that specialize in infill. All this suggests that the market is ready to deliver development to centers and corridors. The bad news is that the '50s-era zoning codes still in place in most of the region have pretty much locked out the market.

(image on previous pages)

The Southern California Association of Governments is infamous for finding a silver bullet every three years when it has to demonstrate conformity with the Clean Air Act in its regional transportation plan. One year it was the mag-lev high-speed rail system, one year there was a plan to create a regionwide shuttle system with 40,000 shuttles, and another year the answer was correcting the jobs-housing balance. This year, it's land use and Fregonese's "2 Percent Strategy." But two things could sail this ship of state where others foundered: demographic changes and the market. Moreover, notes Fregonese, of the region's 188 cities, only 50 are critical to make the plan work, "and 40 of those have already implemented these land use changes."

The Compass Plan is described in more depth below, as is another heroic planning effort in Riverside County to simultaneously generate a new General Plan, long-range transportation plan and multiple species habitat conservation plan, one of a very few such integrated planning efforts in the nation, albeit one with decidedly mixed results. The institutionalization of form-based codes into state statutes, described below, could be a boon for planning efforts statewide. The state's new so-called "granny flat" law easing restrictions on second dwelling units is one of the many strategies needed to address the affordable housing shortage. And state Treasurer Phil Angelides and his "Double Bottom Line" policies are applauded for bringing the powerful instrument of investment capital to bear on the need for sustainability as well as to address the growing disparity between rich and poor.

Ventura County SOAR Initiative

Initiatives passed by voters in Ventura County from 1995 to 2002 set urban growth boundaries around eight cities and made it impossible to change specified land use designations in their general plans as well as in Ventura County's general plan without a popular vote. The land use designations that are protected differ from ordinance to ordinance: the City of Ventura, for example, only protects those lands designated for agricultural use within city boundaries, while the county ordinance protects county lands designated for agriculture, as well as lands designated as "rural" or as "open space." The City of Thousand Oaks also protects "parklands." The measures - all part of an overarching campaign called SOAR, or Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources - have withstood a challenge in the state Supreme Court, and the few attempts to change land use designations have gone down in defeat at the polls.

The bad news is that nothing has happened in the meantime to encourage good development, so that the development that has occurred is not compact or walkable or New Urbanist by any stretch of the imagination. But that's all about to change, at least in the City of Ventura, the largest and oldest city in the county, which in 2004 hired Rick Cole as city manager. Cole has been called one of the country's most visionary planning experts, and as mayor of Pasadena was responsible for much of the planning that made the city a New Urbanist model. As city manager of Azusa he successfully encouraged that city to become the second city in California to adopt a form-based code (Petaluma up north was the first). Since taking over the reins in Ventura he has launched several planning charrettes to help bring the city to consensus on the kind of development that should occur, and the city is already close to adopting a form-based code.

In an excerpt of a speech in the January 2005 *Planning Report*, Cole talked about one likely focus for development in Ventura: "There is beginning to be consensus that we've got these corridors, these long strip streets that have an old Burger King, and a used car lot, and a vacant lot, and a little tiny office building, and a strip of one-story retail stores - this all needs to be replaced with handsome boulevard housing. There's a crying need for workforce housing. That will be tough at first, because there are neighbors who will think that it's more dumb growth. But if we show it can be done right and we do it right a few times, it will actually spread very rapidly." As model New Urbanist projects come out of the ground and prove successful it's likely they will multiply.

Riverside County Integrated Plan

Developers, local governments and environmental groups have long been at odds over the future of Riverside County, the fastest growing county in the state. In SCAG's 2004 "State of the Region" report, Bill Fulton notes that the construction of multi-family housing is up significantly in both L.A. and Orange counties, but "these figures do not mean that the huge single-family housing market has vanished," he writes. "Mostly it's moved inland - especially to the blazing Riverside County market, where single-family detached homes account for almost 90 percent of housing starts . . . up from 81 percent in the '90s. In fact, from 2000 through 2003, Riverside County produced 66,000 single-family homes - twice as many as any other county in California."

The driving force behind the Integrated Plan was the recognition that major infrastructure projects had to be built to service all this new development, and that it would be quicker and cheaper to involve stakeholders in an planning process up front rather than deal with lawsuits at the back end. In 1998 the county initiated an ambitious integrated planning effort to coordinate habitat, land use and transportation planning and involving a broad range of stakeholders. Five years later, environmentalists declared a "win" with a new multiple species habitat conservation plan that calls for 153,000 acres of private land to be added to existing 350,000 acres of public land. A county-wide developer mitigation fee of \$1600 per housing unit will help fund land acquisition.

But the land use and transportation plans were both disappointing, especially when an intriguing "transit oases" plan that organized mixed-use development around 18 linear parks served by shuttles -- all destinations within a 5 minute walk and waits of less than 10 minutes at stations - was quickly scuttled. The General Plan does, however, require that development be organized in a few higher-density mixed-use community centers, though most such development is optional. The resulting transportation plan includes a new east-west multi-modal transportation corridor, but plans for a new growth-inducing north-south freeway was rejected - only because so much new development had been permitted across the county that siting a new freeway proved virtually impossible. Instead, the existing freeway will be widened and transit will be added.

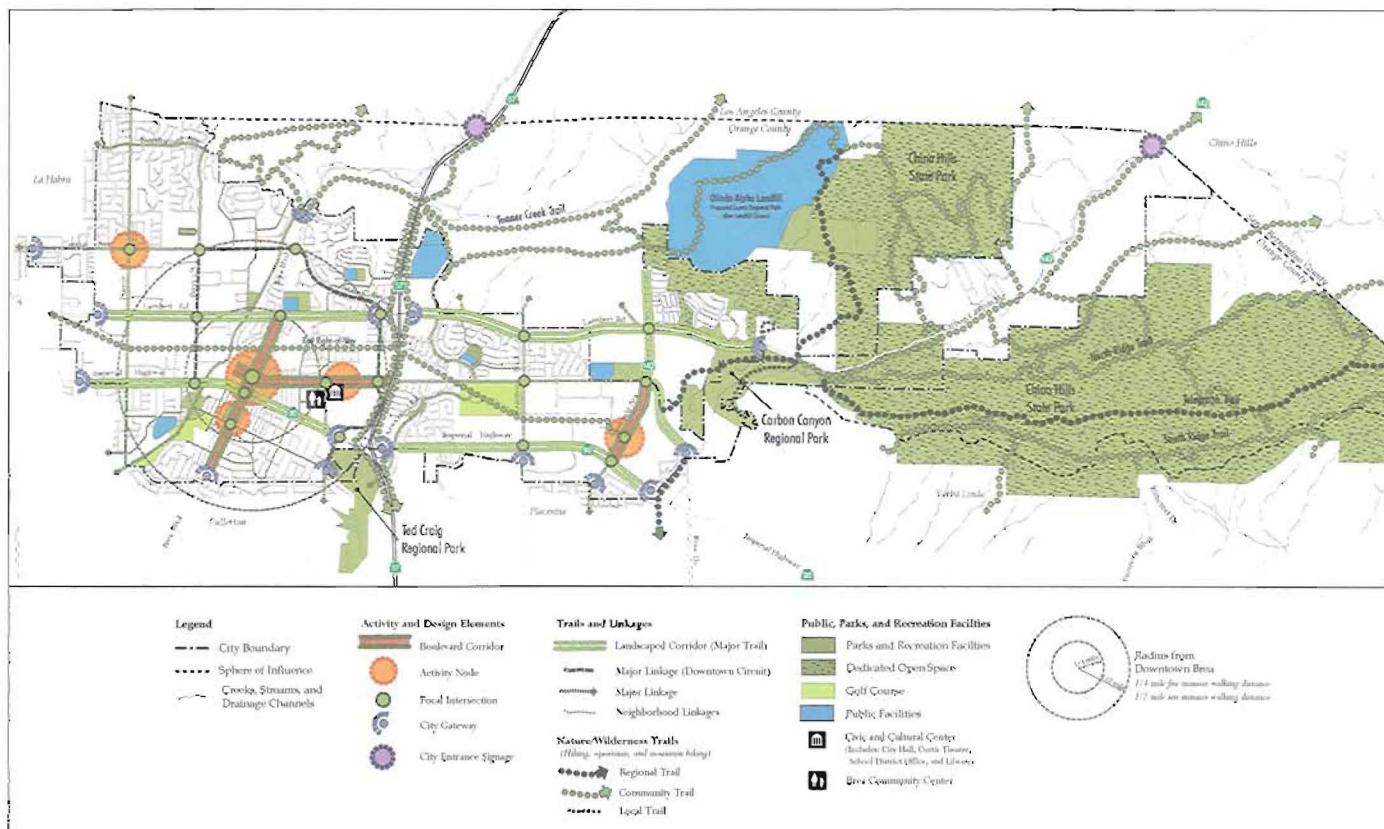
"The concern I have is that the development community is cherry-picking the smart growth package - yes they want to do infill and higher-density housing, but they also want to continue the dumb growth at the fringe," Dan Silver of the Endangered Habitats League concluded in an interview in the Planning Report in 2004. "Smart growth has to be a complete package. Infill is good but you also have to control rural residential subdivisions - which is the monster that's eating hundreds of thousands of acres of California's defining landscapes."

City of Pasadena General Plan

The 1992 Comprehensive General Plan Revision Program is a direct response to the growth management issues that preoccupied Pasadena during much of the 1980's. The central philosophy of the revision program was to develop a unified vision for the future of the City, which is shaped and driven by community values and reflects the input of its residents. An extensive community outreach program served as the foundation of the revision program and simultaneously educating the public on planning issues and providing numerous opportunities for active participation. Spanning a seven month period, 3,000 residents attended more than 55 forums, workshops and speakers events, and three newsletters were mailed to over 65,000 households and businesses.

The resulting Guiding Principles behind the Comprehensive General Plan are :

- Growth Will be Targeted to Serve Community Needs and Enhance the Quality of Life.
- Change Will be Harmonized to Preserve Pasadena's Historic Character and Environment.
- Economic Vitality Will be Promoted to Provide Jobs, Services, Revenues and Opportunities.
- Pasadena Will be Promoted as a Healthy Family Community.
- Pasadena Will be a City Where People can Circulate Without Cars.
- Pasadena Will be Promoted as a Cultural, Scientific, Corporate, Entertainment and Educational Center for the Region.
- Community Participation Will be a Permanent Part of Achieving a Greater City.



City of Brea General Plan

The City of Brea's General Plan, adopted in 2003, exemplifies how land use and transportation policies consistent with New Urbanist principles can be applied within a suburban setting. The new general plan stemmed from heightened public interest and a ballot measure in 2000 on the future hillside development. An ensuing and extensive public outreach process involving Brea residents and businesses identified the following vision for Brea in the year 2020: "Brea will be a community that provides great places to live, work, learn, and play; places that respect the community's natural resources, and cultural resources; provide open space and public spaces that appeal to all Breans; encourage cultural diversity; and enhance the overall quality of life for all residents."

The new general plan achieves this goal through the following policies:

- Restricting new hillside development by basing unit density on the percentage of calculated property slope and restricting population density to three persons per acre.
- Allowing higher density and mixed use development within downtown Brea and along specific corridors.
- Promoting the use of alternative transportation modes in order to reduce dependency on private automobiles and improve environmental quality.
- Producing an urban design plan that supports the development of walkable streets; producing high quality neighborhoods with shops, schools, and service within walking distance to one another; a lively downtown with outdoor dining, shops, and homes mixed together; and streetscape and public improvements along arterials intended to improve the city's sense of place.

Granny Flat Ordinance

A state law that took effect in 2003 eases restrictions on second dwelling units - often nicknamed granny flats - requiring local agencies to approve or deny second-unit applications without public notice and hearings. Because it will make it easier to legally build a cottage in the back yard or convert a garage into a rental, advocates believe it will begin to address the state's severe shortage of affordable housing without increasing urban sprawl, as well as provide homeowners who are having trouble paying the mortgage. The new law was deemed necessary because so many cities were blocking construction of second units by charging high permit fees, requiring excessive parking or holding long public reviews. But while the law says applicants who meet city standards cannot be denied, many affluent cities either already have or are putting into place stringent requirements that undermine the intent of the law by mandating unreasonable parking requirements, severely limiting the size of second units, or requiring they be affordable to low-income people. A second bill that sought to address this problem by setting reasonable statewide standards was defeated in 2004.

Form-Based Code Language Government Code Section 65302.4

A 2004 state law formally institutionalized "form-based zoning" into state statutes. While existing code didn't preclude form-based zoning, neither did it encourage mixing uses or consideration of urban form and design. It read: "The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals. The plan shall include the following elements: (a) A land use element that designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities and other categories of public and private uses of land."

Cities have taken this language literally, laying out areas for housing, for example, that are separate from other uses and creating the all-too-familiar sprawling auto-oriented neighborhoods. The new language formally allows mixed uses and supports the regulation of relationships between businesses and the streets. It reads: "The text and diagrams in the land use element that address the location and extent of land uses, and the zoning ordinances that implement these provisions, may also express community intentions regarding urban form and design. These expressions may differentiate neighborhoods, districts, and corridors, provide for a mixture of land uses and housing types within each, and provide specific measures for regulating relationships between buildings, and between buildings and outdoor public areas, including streets."

The new language came about because the city attorney in Petaluma, California, questioned the legality of an attempt to enact a form-based code supported by the community and elected officials. This led to a meeting with Bay Area New Urbanists, Andres Duany, and the governor's Office of Planning and Research, resulting in a white paper on smart growth policy that contained language that became the basis of the new code.

State Investment Policies & Low Income Housing Tax Credits

The California economy is seventh largest in the world, and state Treasurer Phil Angelides is using the powerful instrument of investment capital to respond to the challenge of accommodating growth while preserving the environment and simultaneously addressing the growing economic disparity between rich and poor. His "Double Bottom Line Initiative" in 2000 set and implemented policies that direct state infrastructure and community development funding to support sustainable growth and broaden economic opportunity. These include the adoption of criteria for awarding of \$450 million in state and federal tax credits for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing; the adoption of new rules governing low-cost loans made by the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank, which directs \$1.4 billion toward local infrastructure projects in economically distressed communities; the adoption of policies by the state and the state's two largest pension funds -- CalPERS and CalSTRS, which together invest \$270 billion in capital globally -- to apply similar criteria to their emerging markets investment portfolios.

Angelides, a former developer and early activist in CNU, chairs the state's Tax Credit Allocation Committee, which annually awards federal and state tax credits to finance the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing. Applications are now scored so that projects are awarded points for providing good access to transit, parks and recreational facilities and for being close to retail and supermarkets. Apartments for families are given points if they are located

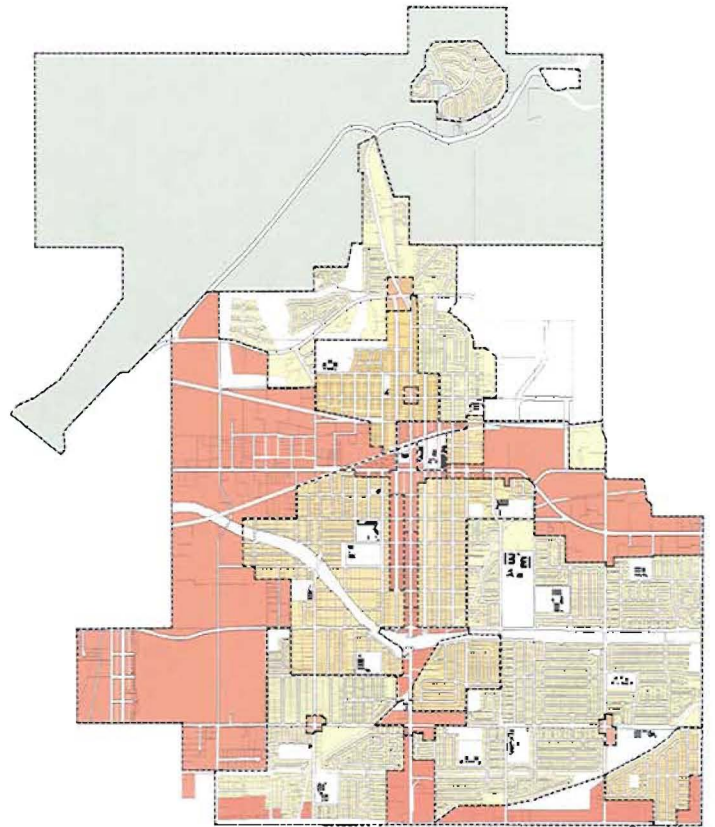
within walking distance of a public school. And points are awarded to projects in low-income communities where a comprehensive revitalization effort is underway. Because competition for these tax credits is fierce, it's virtually impossible to win the requisite points unless projects meet all these goals.

City of Los Angeles TownHome Ordinance

In December of 2004 the City of Los Angeles changed the zoning code to allow construction of new "fee-simple" town homes in areas zoned for apartments or commercial development. ("Fee simple" means there is one owner of both the land and property, as opposed to joint ownership by a condominium association, for example.) This new town home or "small lot" ordinance allows properties zoned for multi-family residential use to be subdivided into much smaller lots than was previously required, and permits the construction of detached homes, town homes, row houses, bungalow courts and courtyard housing.

The intent of the new ordinance was both to reduce the cost of home ownership by reducing lot sizes and to provide a greater range of housing choices. Although home ownership rates across the nation have climbed to 67 percent, in L.A. the rate has remained stagnant at 39 percent. Home prices have risen dramatically with the median price rising to \$440,000 in mid 2004. In 1999 the City Council created the Housing Crisis Task Force to examine the problem and recommend strategies to increase housing production, and one of the recommendations was to make create more affordable home ownership opportunities through innovative land uses such as smaller lot sizes.

In the past condominium development has offered first-time buyers entry into the market but in recent years the exorbitant cost of the construction-defect liability insurance associated with condominium homeowner associations - sometimes costing more than \$20,000 per unit - has limited the development of condominiums. Since town homes are constructed on separate lots with no common walls or foundations, condominium associations are not necessary. Many cities across the country have popular neighborhoods with row houses or brownstones that are built on this model. But the city's zoning code had prohibited development of town homes unless they were part of a condominium association.



City of Azusa General Plan & Development Code

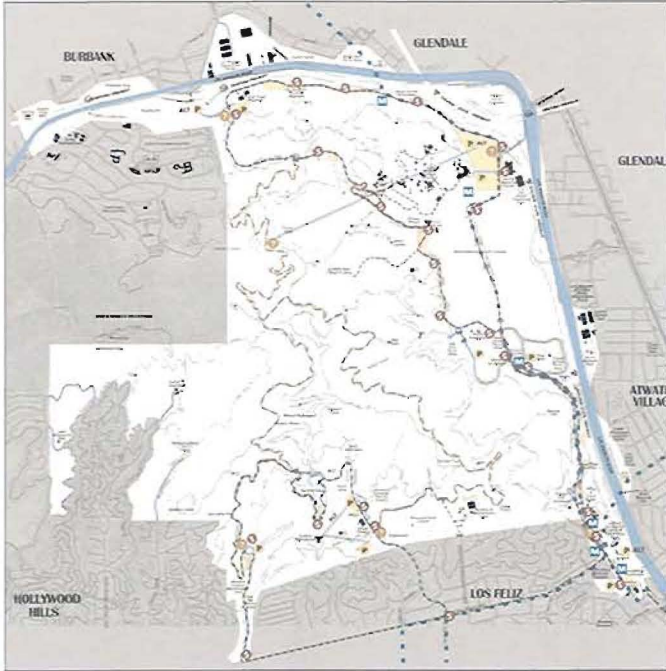
This new General Plan and Development Code seeks to transform Azusa from a typical postwar suburb of production house tracts and commercial strips into a town of distinct, compact neighborhoods surrounding a vibrant downtown. In contrast to conventional planning practice based upon use-exclusive functional zoning, the Azusa General Plan placed a strong emphasis on architecture and design, specifically, a form-dependent regulatory geography of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors. Extensive fieldwork, public participation, and comment from city staff established the boundaries, unique character, physical conditions, as well as the envisioned future of each of Azusa's existing places. Based on this analysis, the General Plan and Development Code promotes and enables the idea of planning as a community-based process focused on physical improvement following the principles of the Charter of the New Urbanism.

The Two Parks that Matter the Most

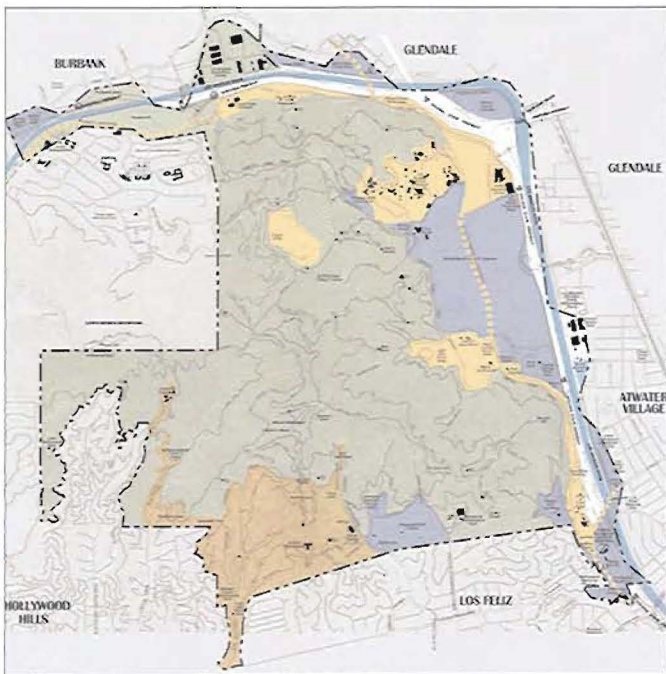
commentary by John Leighton Chase

Griffith Park Master Plan

At 4,000 acres Griffith Park is the largest urban municipal park in the United States, encompassing multiple climate zones and biospheres, and serving as the overlapping turf of many ethnicities. Like many other major urban parks, Griffith Park is the home of a host of public institutions and local icons, including the Autry Museum of Western Heritage, the Los Angeles Zoo, the Greek Theater, the Griffith Observatory, and the Hollywood sign. The park accommodates many uses - from golf to miniature trains to pony rides to a historic carousel - and provides rolling green lawns for picnicking and sunbathing as well as steep trails for hiking and horseback riding.



Public Transportation and Shuttle Plan



Park Zone Plan

The 2005 Draft Griffith Park Master Plan by Melendrez and Associates and Deborah Murphy (who worked first for Melendrez and later as a consultant and project manager) seeks to optimize the public benefit by maximizing accessibility, strengthening the design identity, and increasing the park's integrity as a native ecosystem and watershed area. Development is focused in areas that are the least environmentally sensitive, and the untouched hills to the west are targeted for future acquisition and annexation. The plan centralizes authority by giving the park a manager, and recommends that park revenues stay in the park instead of disappearing into the General Fund.

The plan includes two aerial tram rides (in a nod to Walt Disney, who would have been an ideal transportation planner for the city): One tram would run from the Autry Museum to the Los Angeles Zoo to Toyon Vista, an area of the park that is currently a landfill but would be reclaimed for park use. The other tram would link a new parking garage with both the Greek Theatre below and Griffith Observatory above, and other new parking garages would free up land currently devoted to surface parking for recreational activities. One has to ask why it is that residents have to travel all the way to Palm Springs to catch a tram. And while we're on the topic, why doesn't somebody rebuild the Mt. Lowe Railroad in the San Gabriel Mountains to provide everyone with a shot at big-time nature that doesn't require driving or hiking?

Los Angeles has a tradition of developing great plans that are never realized - the noble dreams of planners that are never implemented by politicians. The Draft Plan for Griffith Park is likely to be one of these, as the plan's funding wasn't enough to also provide for the outreach necessary to get the buy-in of stakeholders, who've already got their long knives out. This was inevitable because the plan proposes change and provides for greater public usage, even though the impact on the land, would be lessened. Hopefully this plan to improve an enormous municipal resource that belongs to the entire city won't get compromised by its neighbors.

The Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan

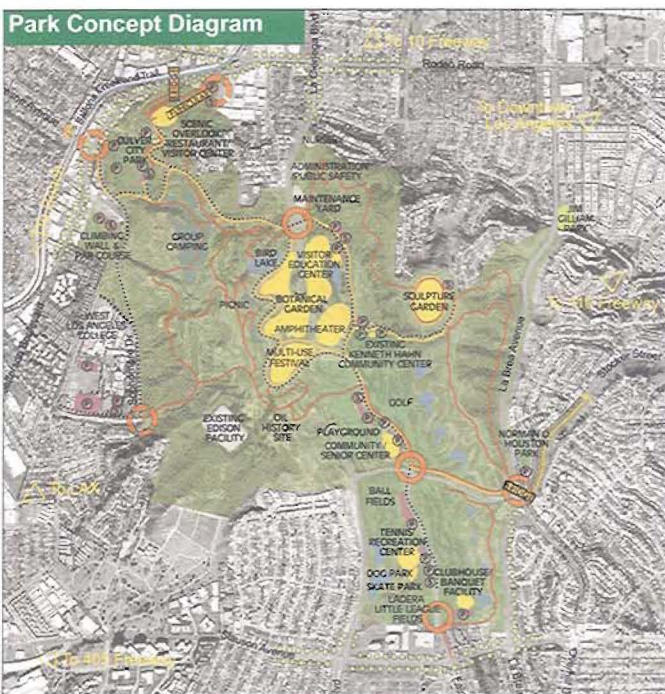
When you drive on down either La Cienega or La Brea south of the Santa Monica freeway, you pass through a largely uninhabited No Man's land, a ravaged, petroleum-contaminated landscape of rolling hills littered with 400 functioning and 800 non-functioning oil rigs. This no-place in the thick of the city is destined to become L.A.'s second largest urban park, incorporating the existing 319-acre Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, the newly acquired 68-acre Vista Pacific site, and hopefully growing into a 1600-acre 2-square-mile regional park as additional public and private lands are acquired.

There's a surprising amount of wildlife to be found here, the only natural habitat remaining in the vast 127-mile Ballona Creek Watershed. As noted by Therese Kelley in *Issue 5* of the Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design newsletter, "A 2001 study by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

found the presence of the rare Gray Fox - the only canine that can climb trees - not to mention hundreds of birds and insects and dozens of reptiles and other mammals native to the Los Angeles basin but seldom encountered anymore. Somehow between the oil derricks, the busy traffic arteries, and an Edison power plant, the Baldwin Hills also manage to support the largest remaining expanse of coastal scrub in the Los Angeles basin."



And the hills are still here, rising 500 feet above the plains below, with great views in all directions: You can see the Santa Monica Bay all the way up to Point Dume, the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains, and all of developed Los Angeles. This brownfield site couldn't be more well-positioned to serve as the city's second major nature preserve and communal living room after Griffith Park, a common ground where multiple publics and multiple species can coexist. The Baldwin Hills Park master plan was developed by landscape architects Mia Lehrer and Walter Hood after a series of workshops held in 2000 and 2001, an extensive public process that cultivated a broad constituency and intense sense of public ownership.



A proposed half-mile-long land bridge would enable both people and animals to move across busy La Cienega, uniting the site into one big park and providing species with an expanded habitat. The hillsides that are steep enough to have already discouraged development would be accessible only via footpaths. The central valley in the middle, which has seen some development, would become the hub of cultural and active recreation, with a playground, ballfields, a community center, golf course and amphitheater. The park would feature all manner of amenities from botanic and sculptural gardens to sites for camping and picnics, as well as lakes, a climbing wall, view points and a restaurant with a scenic overlook.

Transit Oriented Development

commentary by Gloria Ohland

"She drove [the freeways] as a riverman runs a river, every day more attuned to its currents, its deceptions, and just as a riverman feels the pull of the rapids in the lull between sleeping and waking, so Maria lay at night in the still of Beverly Hills and saw the great signs soar overhead at seventy miles an hour, Normandie 1/4, Vermont 3/4, Harbor Fwy 1. Again and again she returned to an intricate stretch just south of the interchange where successful passage from the Hollywood onto the Harbor required a diagonal move across four lanes of traffic. On the afternoon she finally did it without once braking or once losing the beat on the radio she was exhilarated, and that night she slept dreamlessly."

-- Joan Didion in *Play It As It Lays*



Hollywood & Western (Red Line)

In "The Five Los Angeleses" Liz Moule and Stefanos Polyzoides chronicle the development of Los Angeles along El Camino Real (the "King's Highway" that connected missions along the California coast) and then the Transcontinental Railroad, then horse-drawn trams, the radial streetcar system and finally the regionwide web of freeways. The construction of each stimulated a flush of development by making new land readily accessible. Now, as even Caltrans publicly concedes the era of road-building has come to an end, despite gridlock, a new rail system is being constructed over the bones of old to make possible yet another layer of development and redevelopment in Los Angeles.

It's been decades since the experience of sliding along the freeways afforded the sense of exhilaration extolled by Joan Didion in her '70s homage to Los Angeles, *Play It As It Lays*. L.A. has long ranked at the very top of the Texas Transportation Institute's list of the most severely congested regions in the U.S. But residents have adapted by living in smaller and smaller geographies, discovering that the "culture of congestion" - celebrated by architect Rem Koolhaas in his book *Delirious New York* as the ingredient that makes cities so intoxicating - is not a bad thing. As Los Angeles enters the new millennium the centers of polycentric L.A.'s many cities are contracting and densifying as people move back to the urban core where less travel is required. Meantime, the county's two half-cent local sales taxes have enabled to L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to continue building transit.

There are now more than 500 miles of urban and commuter rail in L.A. County and more than 100 stations, and another 15 miles of urban rail and 15 stations in the pipeline. That's only half the rail system that was extant in the 1920s, when the Pacific Electric (the Red Cars) and the Los Angeles Railway (the Yellow Cars)



Hollywood & Vine Station (Red Line)

were the largest electric trolley systems in the country, and 6,000 trains ran on 144 routes extending into four counties. But today's smaller rail network is supported by 2,300 buses serving 18,500 bus stops, the number of Metro Rapid bus corridors is being expanded from 11 to 28 in three years, and L.A.'s first bus rapid transit corridor, with 12 stations, opens in the fall.

Here in Autotopia the Blue Line is the most heavily traveled light rail line in the U.S., and the bus line down Wilshire Boulevard carries more riders than BART in the Bay Area ever has. More people get on and off buses along Pacific Boulevard in Huntington Park than at any MTA rail station. More than 30 percent of people traveling into downtown use transit

(comparing to 38 percent in transit-intensive San Francisco), and transit has a 25 percent share on the Eastside. Buses run every 90 seconds on the busiest routes, putting bus service here on par with highly-touted service in Curitiba, Brazil.

The City of Los Angeles, meantime, has put in place policies to exploit that infrastructure investment, permitting higher densities, taller buildings and reduced parking requirements not only around rail stations but - if development includes affordable housing - within 1500 feet of well-served bus stops. The city has created an online searchable database allowing developers to determine whether properties qualify; the planning department was going to publish a map, but there were so many bus stops and so much eligible property the city feared alarming residents. The city's Housing Authority has helped fund affordable projects near transit, and because the subway travels through three Community Redevelopment Authority project areas - downtown, Hollywood and North Hollywood - the CRA has helped fund and assemble properties.

The housing shortage in California is an even graver problem than traffic, and the presence of transit - even just the promise of transit in the future - is providing officials with the excuse to plan and zone for more density and less parking. Even outlying cities are staging planning exercises along proposed rail corridors that are just a gleam in the eyes of transportation planners - along the proposed Gold Line extension to the San Bernardino County border, for example. While the presence of a rail station is important, says UC-Cal Poly Pomona Professor Rick Willson, "just the idea of a rail station is often enough to provide officials with the excuse to cluster housing in existing neighborhoods. Even suburban home builders see the way the market is going and they're opening divisions that specialize in infill development."

Concurrent changes in the demographics of this country - smaller, older

The Metropolis, City & Town

and more diverse households, with singles soon to become the new majority - are revamping the housing industry. A host of other influences - the high cost of land, the Internet, laptops, cell phones, the globalization of markets, low-cost airfare - are making the American Dream of a single family home in the suburbs no longer viable or desirable. Life isn't 9 to 5 anymore. An increasing number of people want living arrangements that make it possible and convenient to blend life and work - lofts and live-work space and townhomes located in close-in neighborhoods with a yoga studio, cafes, shopping, movie theaters, a dog park.

The MTA claims \$1 billion has been invested in joint development to date, with another \$4 billion in investment in 30 new projects underway around Metrorail and light rail stations. Metrolink, the commuter rail line, doesn't own either its stations or any land around them, but has counted 33 projects either planned or in development at the 55 Metrolink stations. And this count only assesses development underway near stations. The MTA's assessment includes a \$55 million mixed-use joint development project at its station on Wilshire and Western, for example. But are another five other projects that are together worth about half a billion dollars along a mile-long stretch on either side of the station.



Hollywood & Highland (Red Line)

Some of the TOD projects are stellar examples of transit-oriented development, including Moule & Polyzoides-designed Del Mar Station in Pasadena and Mission Meridian Station in a South Pasadena neighborhood of single family homes, where developer Michael Dieden invested an extraordinary amount of time and resources to win city and community support. Both projects demonstrate how significant density and massing can be integrated sensitively into existing built-out environments, and how TOD projects can serve as nodes in a regional transit system at the same time that they become as places in their own right and provide privacy and security for residents.

Even seriously flawed projects, like the massive transit-oriented entertainment development at Hollywood & Highland just down the block from Grauman's Chinese Theater, are proving lively focal points of activity. Orienting oneself in this huge entertainment-retail-hotel complex as one emerges from the subway station or parking structure and has to negotiate a maze of escalators and hallways illustrates the critical impor-

importance of thinking through the "arrival sequence" into a TOD. Moreover, the vast subterranean parking lot has proven a major financial liability for the city, which financed it, and there are problems with the mix of uses and the inward focus of the development at what is a key intersection in an important neighborhood, and the project is now being revamped by the CIM Group.

Nevertheless Hollywood & Highland is a major generator of pedestrian activity and - most importantly - provides quality public space, something that is in very short supply in this city. The forecourt of the development provides space for the performances of string quartets and other community functions as well as a place to roll out the red carpet for film premiers. Other ambitious mixed-use projects beginning construction along the Metrorail subway corridor - at Hollywood/Vine and Vermont/Wilshire, both in Hollywood, and at the North Hollywood station in the

San Fernando Valley - also hold enormous promise.

The TOD development practice across the nation is evolving rapidly, as projects come out of the ground and prove that TOD can create livable neighborhoods that add value to surrounding communities, generate revenues for local government and local business, increase ridership for transit agencies, and prove profitable for developers and lenders. Moreover, these projects can accommodate new development, density and amenities, and provide new housing types, meantime aiding in the preservation of surrounding single family neighborhoods. And people who live in these developments are five times more likely to use transit, according to recent studies by Cal Poly Pomona's Rick Willson and Robert Cervero of UC-Berkeley. Those who work in transit-oriented projects are 3.5 times more likely to ride transit, according to the study.



Mission Station (Gold Line)



Del Mar Station (Gold Line)

Last year the Center for Transit Oriented Development, the national non-profit organization for which I work, sought to assess the potential market demand for housing along fixed-guideway transit systems (rail and bus rapid transit) in the U.S. by 2025, given changing demographics and the market, and the fact the U.S. is in the midst of a transit building boom. Because of Southern California's demographics as well as its rate of growth and the size of its transit system, potential demand for housing near transit in Los Angeles was deemed to be second only to demand in metropolitan New York, even though L.A.'s rail system is much smaller and far less mature.

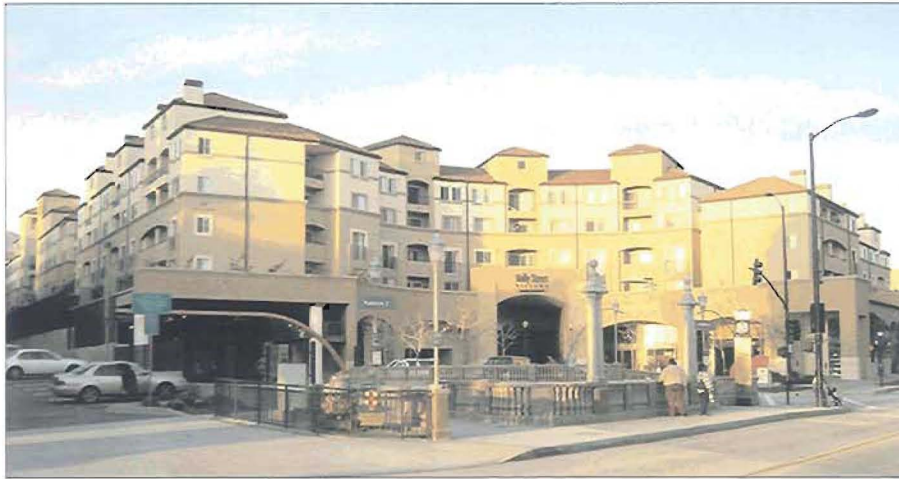
The CTOD study, which was funded by the Federal Transit Administration, found that demand for TOD housing at the 4,000 existing and planned stations in the U.S. would likely double by 2025 - with 14.6 million households looking to rent and to buy housing near transit. About 1.75 million of those households will be looking to rent and to buy housing near the 164 stations that will be in place in the Los Angeles region - an astonishing 10,000 households per station.

"This study is an attempt to assess what could be the biggest shift in homebuying and home-renting attitudes since the march to the suburbs began after WWII," says Shelley Poticha, CEO of the CTOD and its parent organization, Reconnecting America. "But all potential demand is latent. Whether it is realized - and transit becomes the armature for regional growth - depends on whether the market is able to deliver attractive, high density housing near stations that's priced so it's affordable and attractive and competitive with other available housing in the region." That's where New Urbanists must play an important role - designing prototypes for buildings and blocks and entire neighborhoods that help reorient cities around transit.

The most important TOD projects are discussed elsewhere in this book - both Del Mar and Mission Meridian are in the section on blocks, and Hollywood & Highland and

Hollywood/Vine are in the Hollywood Town Center section. The ambitious and undernoticed Avenue 26 transit village and Fuller Lofts, under construction in 2005, are talked about in "Observations from the Observatory." Livable Places' Olive Court in Long Beach is one of the few new projects along the Blue Line and combines a mix of for-sale townhomes and flats around three courtyards, proving affordable housing can be as appealing as market rate.

Three important other projects are not discussed elsewhere: The developer of Del Mar, Urban Partners, has begun a huge project atop the subway station at Wilshire and Vermont, building 449 units of mixed-income multi-family housing with 35,000 square feet of retail, a child-care center, and a 800-student middle school, designed by the L.A. office of Arquitectonica. Craig Jones of JSM Construction is introducing some density next to the North Hollywood subway station with a 15-story residential tower, the tallest building in the San Fernando Valley, next door to MTA-owned property that is up for joint development, and part of a massive 700-acre redevelopment site that also includes the \$218 million mixed-use NoHo Commons, with 716 apartments as well as office and retail, also under construction in 2005.



Holly Street Village contains 374 rental apartments (20% dedicated to lower income families), and neighborhood serving retail.

Architect : VTBS Architects (Van Tilburg, Banvard & Soderbergh)

Holly Street Village, eagerly designed and constructed to accommodate a light rail station even though it would be almost a decade before the light rail line would finally be built. Holly Street served as a national TOD prototype for having incorporated the station, a mix of uses including a restaurant and neighborhood-serving retail, mixed-income housing and adaptive re-use of a historically significant YMCA and restored Hall of Justice (which houses artist lofts). But 10 years later it serves more as a historical reminder of how far the TOD design and development practice has come in thinking through the problem of integrating stations and housing into existing neighborhoods.

And any assessment of TOD in Southern California would be remiss without a mention of Pasadena's brave



The non-profit Livable Places is developing 58 for-sale condominiums in Central Long Beach one block north of the Metro Blue Line light rail station at Pacific Coast Highway. There will be a wide range of home types - a mix of townhomes and flats between 800 and 1,400 square feet in size, with 11 floorplans and one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom configurations. Many of the units will be made affordable to low- and moderate-income families earning between 80-120 percent of the area median income. Designed by Studio E Architects of San Diego, Olive Court places homes in the interior

of the development around three landscaped courtyards, and homes along the street will be arranged in a three- and four-story building with smaller gated courtyards fronting the sidewalk. The location provides residents with easy access to both downtown Long Beach and downtown Los Angeles, and markets, a library and other conveniences are within walking and biking distance. The homes, which should be ready for occupancy by 2006, will feature energy-efficient design and appliances to reduce utility costs, and are being built using environmentally friendly materials and practices.

Architect : Studio E
Client/Developer : Livable Places

Metro Rapid Bus

commentary by Alan Loomis

In the past five years, Metro's "Red" Rapid Buses have become a distinctive feature on Los Angeles's principal boulevards and avenues. With limited and fixed stops - approximately one mile apart - Rapid Bus provides a layer of mobility between the Metro Rail system and local bus service.

Under the guidance of Suisman Urban Design, Rapid Buses are identified not only by their red color (in contrast to the orange local buses), but also by the distinctive

teardrop "Rapid" icon, which flies flag-like over each Rapid stop (sadly, Metro's new paint scheme has removed the Rapid icon from the buses themselves). Where sidewalk space is available, an innovative and simple canopy system also establishes the bus stop. Designed for shade coverage, shelter, and diffuse lighting at night, the canopy additionally marks the exact location the bus doors will open. A modular design, the canopy anticipates the longer, articulated buses that will eventually run along Metro Rapid routes. Herein lies the principle innovation of the Rapid Bus program and design - its incremental implementation strategy.

As Rapid Bus proves its viability, as ridership increases, and as funds become available, new levels of infrastructure can be added to each route. Ultimately, L.A.'s Rapid Bus service may evolve into a light-rail system on rubber tires - similar to rapid bus systems in Curitiba Brazil and other South American cities, where "trains" of buses run on dedicated right-of-ways and passengers board at pre-pay platforms. Already, bus-only lanes have been tested on segments of the heavily-traveled Wilshire Boulevard corridor, and a bus transit-way - the Orange Line - is being constructed across the San Fernando Valley.



Perhaps as further investment is made in Rapid routes over time, Rapid Bus will also begin to leverage change in the surrounding real-estate. But to date, there are no viable transit-oriented developments at Rapid stops. Nonetheless, Rapid Bus has proven to be a cost-effective means of improving personal mobility across the entire metro region, in contrast to the multi-million dollar "all at once" costs of rail service; and its iconographic design has re-presented and improved the identity of the bus system as a whole, elevating its second-class status and increasing ridership.



The Metro Rapid Program, whose aim is to improve bus speeds, was implemented in June 2000 in an effort to increase ridership and reduce commute times. Following the release of studies of public bus transportation in Los Angeles, which showed that 50% of a bus' service time is spent stopped at lights or passenger stops, Metro Rapid launched a series of changes that reduced passenger travel times by as much as 29%. As a result, ridership increased by 40% in two demonstration corridors, with one-third of the gain realized in new riders. Metro Rapid is now expanding into 26 additional corridors. When completed in 2008, the program will operate a network of 450 miles of Metro Rapid service, complementing light and heavy rail transit throughout Los Angeles County.

Key Metro Rapid Attributes:

- Simple route layout: Makes it easy to find, use and remember
- Frequent service: Buses arrive as often as every 3-10 minutes during peak commuting times
- Fewer stops: Stops spaced about a mile apart, like rail lines, at most major transfer points
- Level boarding: Low-floor buses speed-up dwell times
- Bus priority at traffic signals: New technology reduces traffic delay by extending the green light or shortening the red light to help Metro Rapid get through intersections
- Color-coded buses and stops: Metro Rapid's distinctive red paint makes it easy to identify Metro Rapid stops and buses
- Enhanced stations: Metro Rapid stations provide information, lighting, canopies and "Next Trip" displays



Metro Rapid expansion

Metro Art Program

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's art program has been hailed as one of the most ambitious and imaginative in the country - \$50,000 to \$500,000 has been spent per station and artists are involved early enough in the planning process that they can work with the architects and engineers to influence the stations very design. The decorative railings and arched entrances of Paris art nouveau stations are known the world over, and Moscows palatial subway stations, decorated with marble, mosaics, stained glass and precious metals, remain tourist destinations to this day. But in no other city has a different artist been involved in the design of every station, so that each becomes identified with a particular location and its community, establishing a sense of place and engaging both riders and residents.

Established in 1989, the Metro art program commits a half of 1 percent of the construction costs of a station to its artwork, an amount that is often supplemented through municipal and corporate support. Metro has commissioned more than 250 artists, who are selected by a five-member panel including three art professionals and two members of the community in which a station is located. But the MTA also commissions a wide variety of other art projects, including bus stops, bus interiors, construction fences, streetscapes and even performance pieces. A celebration of National Poetry Month in April 2005, for example, was a month-long moveable audio feast of live readings by poets in stations and on buses during rush hour. The poetry also appears on placards in 2,258 buses.

Docents are available to take the public on tours of Metros eclectic art collection; all works are expressly created for the transit sites. They include: A huge hand launches a paper airplane into the air at the Green Lines El Segundo/Nash stations, located next to Hughes Aircraft. The entrance to the Sunset and Vermont Red Line station below the Hollywood Hills and Griffith Observatory is open and curving as if it were the Milky Way, its stainless steel ceiling punctured with tiny holes and lit from above to provide a canopy of stars, its marble floor set with nine planets each inscribed with abstract medical signs -- instead of the signs of the zodiac -- in reference to the hospitals located on the street above. Next on the line, a giant outcropping of prefabricated boulders straddle the entrance to the Beverly/Vermont station, looming ominously over the escalators as if this were Raiders of the Lost Ark, everyones favorite Disneyland thrill ride. One of the better art tours in town can definitely be seen for the price of a ticket to ride on L.A.s rail lines.



Artist : Jonathan Borofsky; Red Line Civic Center Station



Artist : Robert Millar; Vermont/Santa Monica Station



Artist : Daniel Martinez; Green Line El Segundo Station

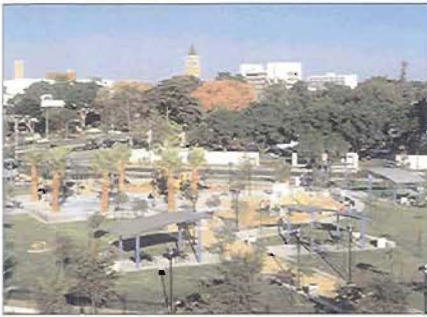
Exposition Park

commentary by Alan Loomis

Like the much larger Central Park or Golden Gate Park, the 160-acre Exposition Park in South Los Angeles is a Beaux Arts-style park, home to iconic cultural institutions. The park originated as a private agricultural fairground, passed into public ownership in 1885, and was officially dedicated on the day after Mulholland brought Owens Valley water to L.A. in 1913. The Rose Garden - the most recognizable and heavily used space in the park - is surrounded by the "City Beautiful" quad of USC, the Natural History Museum, the California Science Center and the former National Guard Armory (now part of a science charter school). With the completion of the massive 101,574-seat Memorial Coliseum in 1923 the Park also became

home to L.A.'s major sports facilities, and hosted two Olympics. South of the Coliseum is the '32 Olympic Aquatic Center and the late-modern Memorial Sports Arena, as well as a patchwork of parking lots and soccer fields.

By the early '90s, Exposition Park was divided north-south between culture and sports, and the Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership was hired to bring the disparate elements of the park into order. ZGF's first project was the restoration and reconfiguration of the historic Ahmanson Building on the Rose Garden into the 60,000 square foot California Science Center. The design creatively attempts to unite the Park into a singular entity - a public atrium through the new museum links the Rose Garden to a semi-enclosed rotunda and plaza facing a new IMAX theater and the Coliseum.



Corner Park



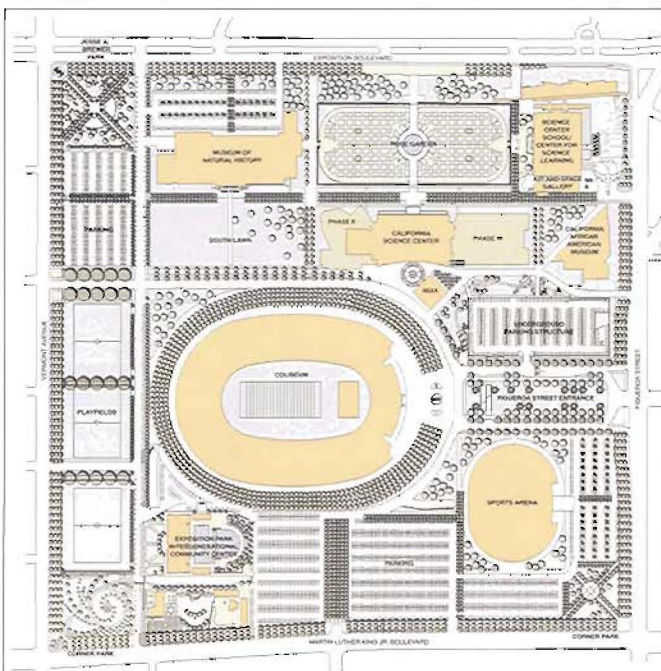
Edge Promenade



California Science Center Rotunda



Gateway & Signage



Additional elements of the ZGF master plan include the restoration of the Aquatic Center for community use, a consistent signage program, and an under-ground parking structure. The most transformative aspect of the master plan, however, has been the phased implementation of a coherent landscape strategy. Pathways within the park are being realigned and replanted according to the new circulation pattern; new soccer fields have been constructed; and important greens have been restored. Each of the park's four corners is planned as a small neighborhood playground - the northwest corner is complete and plans have been prepared for the southwest playground. On the park's perimeter a promenade in the form of a triple allée of trees is being constructed, in addition to streetscape improvements.

Exposition Park was once an allegory of Los Angeles - an open space resource diminished by a disordered landscape of parking lots and randomly placed buildings. Now, just as L.A. is changing course, Exposition Park is headed in a new direction - towards a cultivated garden that balances monumental and civic with the local and personal.

West Hollywood Park System

commentary by John Leighton Chase

West Hollywood is a tiny city, its 38,000 residents crammed into 1.9 square miles. Settled in 1897, the city was largely developed in the 1920s, and then redeveloped in the '50s, '60s and '70s. Vacant lots are virtually non-existent, and buying up land for additional parks would cost a fortune (single-family homes can sell for \$1 million a pop), not to mention that it would eat into the city's limited housing supply and displace existing residents. But just like Los Angeles, West Hollywood is, in a manner of speaking, "under-parked." But the only answer to this dilemma was to take better advantage of existing park space, and to try and ensure that new housing development also creates new parks.

Two proposed projects would include miniature parks: The controversial "Tara" project on Laurel below Sunset Boulevard consists of a 1914 mansion that was donated to the city, with 35 units of HUD-financed senior housing slipped behind the house onto the site of what had been the mansion's garage. The project achieves several city goals by providing for affordable housing as well as park space, meantime preserving a historic house intact. The combination of senior housing and park space is a particularly appealing combination that provides seniors ready access to a lovely garden, and provides a live-in constituency to watch over the park. The second project is by Richard Loring, the developer who is constructing a building next to R.M. Schindler's 1922 Kings Road House and Studio, now the site of the MAK Center for Art and Architecture (and which caused a great deal of unnecessary handwringing on the part of MAK head Peter Noever). Half the lot will become market-rate condos designed by SPF Architects, and half will become a park designed by Katherine Spitz Associates, providing for a new kind of mixed-use that shows great promise as a paradigm to replicate in other already built-up park-poor sections of the city.

West Hollywood's two largest parks are Plummer Park, between Santa Monica and Fountain opposite Martel Avenue, and West Hollywood Park, between Robertson and San Vicente Boulevard, opposite the west flank of the Pacific Design Center. The strategy for these parks is to consolidate the patchwork of small open spaces - now broken up by buildings and recreational facilities - into a critical mass of green space that's large enough to provide visual respite from the concrete and stucco streetscape.

Plummer Park is an extraordinary "people place," and the heart of the Russian Jewish immigrant community. People come here because other people come here, and they play cards, kibitz, stroll, watch their children frolic and engage in every form of socializing appropriate for a town square and park. There's a terrific Community Center designed by Koning Eizenberg Architecture. The new plan removes other buildings at the center of the park and reorganizes activities so that the active uses have less impact on the surrounding residential neighborhoods.



Plummer Park Community Center

The plan creates a comprehensible ordering of the space that gives meaning to what is at present merely an ad hoc conglomeration of spaces. Additional property would be acquired along Santa Monica Boulevard in a final stage of the plan to create a stronger presence for the park on the boulevard, which is currently connected only by a small parkway in front of the park's parking lot. The additional property would allow for some intense programming of people-oriented activities that could activate Santa Monica Boulevard and enhance its status as a great street by giving it a green border.



West Hollywood Park as proposed



West Hollywood Park proposed



West Hollywood Park today

At West Hollywood Park, the swimming pool, recreation buildings, library, multipurpose auditorium and restrooms will be removed from the middle of the Park and rebuilt on a site is currently occupied by a one-story government building housing social services, a parking lot, tennis courts and commercial buildings. All will be combined in one giant edifice being designed by MDA Johnson Favaro, the firm that also did the master plan, and which will stretch across the southern border of the park. The plan takes advantage of the site's slope to the south, burying part of the parking underneath a newly leveled surface of landscaping over structure. Tennis courts, swimming pools and the library are all raised up over other programmatic space.

The resulting building is scaled so that it is impressive enough to stand up to the big-boned Pacific Design Center across the street on San Vicente, while the gymnasiums located on Robertson will fit in with the lower scale of that street. There will be new parking and retail space at the north end of the park, so that cafes and other commercial establishments can front park and provide vitality.



West Hollywood Park as proposed



West Hollywood Park

The Enacted Environment

"The simplest means for creating a personal place is simply to mark an area off as a space that is yours."

-*The Sense of Place*, Fritz Steele, quoted in James Rojas' "Enacted Environment"



The great numbers of immigrants who settle in Los Angeles tend to use space differently than those who have lived here for a longer time. The built environment in which they live may not change - these new residents seldom have the resources that would be required for significant remodeling. But they often retrofit their homes and neighborhoods to make them more comfortable, familiar and usable, often with objects as simple and inexpensive as yard decorations, fences, tables and chairs. This tendency to use space differently, especially in L.A.'s many Latino neighborhoods, has been called Latino New Urbanism by some. Planner James Rojas favors a term he calls the "enacted environment," a concept he developed in his 1991 M.I.T. masters thesis "The Enacted Environment: The Creation of 'Place' by Mexicans and Mexican Americans in East Los Angeles."



The changes wrought by the simple interventions he describes can provide for a much richer public life than that found in the typical suburban or middle-income neighborhood, even though the immigrant neighborhoods are often very poor. Neighbors typically converse over fences or walls while members of the extended



family sit on front porches, either to escape the heat inside or to be near the action outside. Children play in driveways and in front yards, while teenagers congregate in groups on the sidewalks and in the alleys because indoors is too cramped and too personal, men work on their cars, and street vendors travel door to door to sell food and sundries from small pushcarts or trucks while neighbors gather around - the latter achieving a mix of residential and retail uses and minimizing the need to travel without alterations to the built environment.



There are often alterations to the environment, however, and most typically these involves the addition of a waist-high fence or wall to the front yard. These are added for the same reasons as in other neighborhoods - to add security and a sense of privacy - but also to transform the front yard into a semi-private space that acts as threshold and that extends living space out to the street and provides a place where people can congregate informally and for parties. Whereas front yards in most suburban or middle-class neighborhoods are typically impersonal spaces that serve mostly to distance the private space of the house from the public space of the street, front yards in Latino neighborhoods are often very personalized. Because they are so often filled with people they also have a transformative and civilizing effect on the street, allowing those inside the walled-in front yard to feel comfortable and secure while engaging in a dialogue with those who are less familiar on the outside.

These fences also serve to help mix the commercial with the residential, providing a place where people can sell clothes or flowers or produce or things that they have made to sell. There are likely to be more people passing by on foot than in a suburban neighborhood, because walking, biking and public transit are important means of transportation. These pedestrians also help support numerous neighborhood shops and corner groceries, laundromats and hair salons. Bus stops are typically major nodes of activity, and are frequented by street vendors who on holidays like Mothers Day often create stands with things to sell. Outdoor barbecues and food stands are often set up outside the small neighborhood markets, enlivening many

streetcorners in neighborhoods like this all over town. Blank wall space near these corners often becomes space for murals, graffiti and hand-painted billboards the paint and graphics add a strong visual dimension and often extend around the corner onto residential streets.

A dramatic increase in the number of Latino households in California is occurring at the same time regions across the state are having to deal with the unhappy consequences of sprawl and are contemplating a more sustainable model of growth. By 2020 the number of Latinos will exceed the number of Anglos in the state; by 2040 Latinos will become the majority population group at nearly 50 percent. In a master's thesis entitled "Latino Lifestyle & the New Urbanism: Synergy Against Sprawl," MIT graduate planning student Michael Mendez noted in 2002 that Latinos have always shown a preference for urbanism: preferring to live in compact cities; walking, biking and taking transit instead of driving; living as multigenerational households in multi-family housing; using shared public space. Because of these historic preferences, he argued, the growth in Latino households presents policy-makers with a strategic opportunity to adopt more sustainable land use and transportation plans and policies.

He wrote that Latinos have always felt pressure to assimilate into mainstream culture and adopt the dominant lifestyle choice, if for no other reason than because until very recently policy and the market have provided no other choices. It's always been assumed that the American dream of a suburban single-family home with a two-car garage is the dream for every American. Similarly, policy and investments have prioritized travel by automobile, even though this had made streets unsafe for pedestrians and made public transit inconvenient. Demographic analysis hasn't played much of a role in the planning process, thus ensuring that all demographic groups are viewed as a single population.

But in fact this country is already diverse and getting more so, and this diversity is finally beginning to effect the market. Mendez quotes USC demographer and planning professor Dowell Myers: "Multiculturalism would argue that those who prefer compact cities should live so while those who prefer low density should be allowed to pursue it . . . It brings into focus a fundamental philosophical question that all planners and policy makers must confront in themselves: Am I advocating a pluralist or assimilationist city?"

Latinos and new immigrants, as well as other ethnic groups, have long sought to retrofit their houses and neighborhoods by simple interventions - walling off front yards to create courtyards that provide for more social interaction (see "The Enacted Environment"), for example. Mendez writes that New Urbanist development is an almost perfect fit for the Latino market of homebuyers and renters because of its emphasis on more compact development, more housing choices, and more shared public space. However, he argues, it would be better if the New England style chosen for much of the New Town development would be replaced with the California mission style or Southwest adobe style, with courtyards or patios at the center of the house and verandas across the front, for example.

Latino New Urbanism was the topic of a 2004 Dialogue Series hosted by Kathryn Perez and the Transportation and Land Use Collaborative. See www.latinonewurbanism.org to find out more.



But perhaps the most obvious difference between these neighborhoods and those that are more well-off is the presence of so many people on the sidewalks and the street, in part because the street is viewed as shared public space and not the sole province of cars.

People activate the environment with their presence and with their social interactions, and don't require the interventions of architects, planners and elected officials at all. Rojas closes his thesis with a quote from Cesar Chavez, taken from a speech Chavez gave at MIT, when he was asked how to organize communities. "Let the community do it themselves," he said, "because it becomes their organizing, therefore they will believe in it."

- by Gloria Ohland

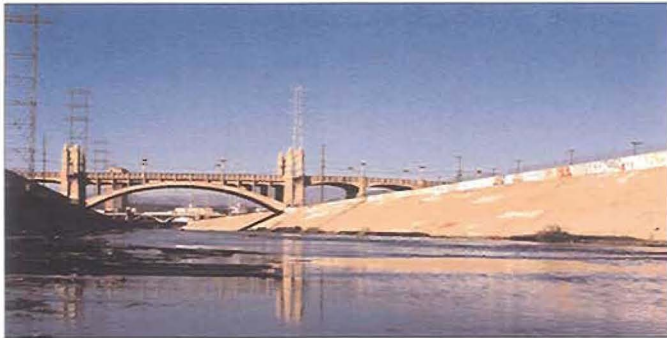
Natural Corridors

commentary by Alan Loomis

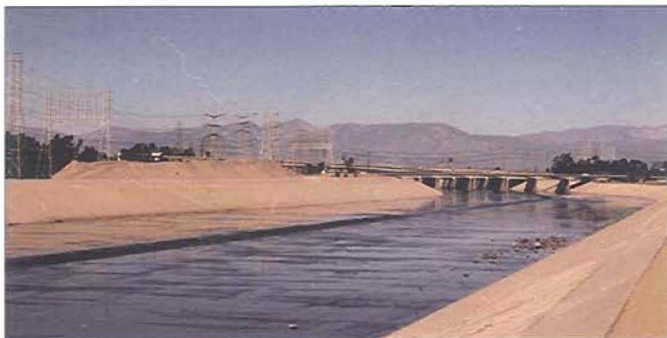
A common perception of Angelenos is that the freeway is their only shared urban experience. This truism seems confirmed by an aerial view of greater Los Angeles, as the basin and valleys are criss-crossed by a series of linear, concrete paths. Surprisingly, these are not the freeways but the rivers, arroyos, and washes of the region's flood control system. Although visually dominant from the air, the rivers are largely invisible and unseen to the everyday life of the city at the ground level, contained in concrete storm drains located in back alleys and behind industrial sites. Excluding the mountains and beaches, the water channels of the Los Angeles area - the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers, the Arroyo Seco, the Tujunga and Verdugo Washes, Ballona and Dominguez Creeks, among others - are the central natural fact of the region.



Los Angeles River, Sepulveda Basin



Los Angeles River, Downtown LA

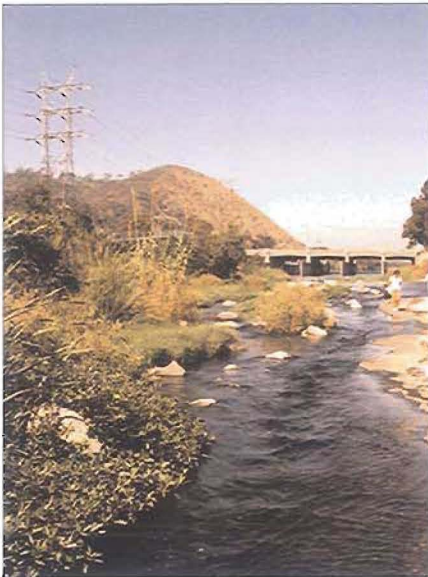


Los Angeles River, South Los Angeles

These rivers and streams drain some of the steepest, fastest-growing and most unstable mountain ranges in the world. When the winter monsoon storms arrive - after the fall fires remove the chaparral vegetation - the rainwater cascades out of the mountains and their picturesque arroyos, delivering mudflows, rocks, and debris into the valleys and coastal plains. (A sequence made famous by John McPhee's essay "Los Angeles against the Mountains"). Millenniums of this natural rhythm created an alluvium plain one mile thick, filled its sandy soils with an aquifer of such pressure that freshwater geysers were common until the early 20th century, and delivered sands down the coast to create Southern California's famous beaches. But these floodwaters also overwhelmed the usually dry channel of the Los Angeles River and its tributaries, spreading across much of what today constitutes the urbanized area of greater Los Angeles. Following the disastrous flood of 1938, the Army Corps of Engineers fixed the river's course in concrete channels, in what remains one of the largest public works projects west of the Mississippi. The result is a river that looks more like an empty freeway than the "beautiful, limpid little stream" William Mulholland described in 1877.

Thus, the hydrology of the Los Angeles basin today is drastically different from the riparian landscape of arroyos settled by the Spaniards in 1781. Now, the Los Angeles River and its tributaries are artificial from their source in the San Gabriel Mountains to the river's mouth in Long Beach. The course of the river is permanently constrained by concrete channels, designed to move winter storm waters to the ocean as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, the river's dry season flow is predominately treated wastewater originating from two water reclamation plants (and indirectly from northern California and the Colorado River). As a result, the river is a largely forgotten landscape, except for the occasional appearance in movies (*Them!*, *Grease*, *Terminator 2*) and storm coverage newscasts ("Rain Pounds the Southland"). Not surprisingly, the watershed of the Los Angeles basin contains some the most environmentally degraded and maligned streams in the country.

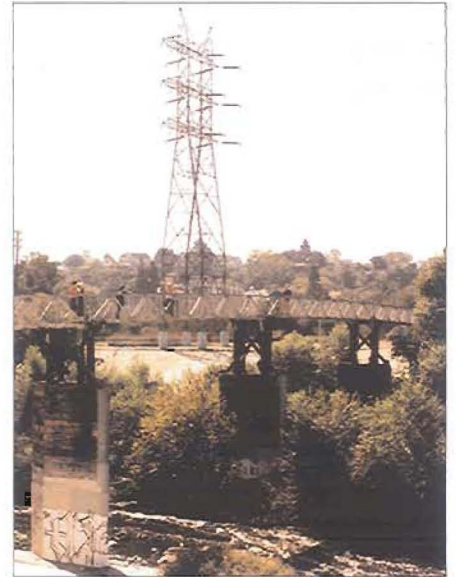
But in the water-hungry and park-poor region defined by the river basin, interest in the river's potential to create regional recreational space and supplement water supplies is increasing. In the past twenty years, a growing constituency of people has imagined a new future for the rivers. They have argued that the present condition of the Los Angeles River and its tributaries can be reversed, transforming from banal concrete ditches into a network of linear waterfront parks and public urban spaces. The remaining riparian landscape of the river as it passes through the Sepulveda Dam Basin or the Glendale Narrows is the precedent cited for the first vision; the San Antonio Riverwalk is the model for the second. However, achieving this imagined future will require a radical reconception of the river's status, as its present condition along much of its 51-mile long course seems to render the vision suggested by these precedents a utopian fantasy.



The Glendale Narrows



De Anza Gates



Footbridge over Glendale Narrows

Although most of the river is encased in concrete, sections of it have a more river-like appearance. A thicket of sycamores and cattails grows in the Glendale Narrows, the eight miles between Griffith and Elysian Parks, where the high water table forced the Corps to accept cobblestones and sand instead of concrete as the river bottom. With the scenic hills of Griffith Park as a backdrop, it is possible here to imagine what the historic landscape of the river looked like, notwithstanding sloped concrete embankments and the noise from the adjacent I-5 Freeway. Here North East Trees and other non-profit organizations have pioneered a series of pocket parks, employing local artists and at-risk-youth. Located in odd leftover spaces between the public works flood control fences, private property and the concrete embankments, these parks demonstrate that no site is too small for river greening. These parks - just big enough for one or two benches - are scaled to the individual or small groups. One, a passive fitness course, is a linear series of shaded stops, each with a plaque describing a yoga position. Other sites, like Rattlesnake Park in Frogtown and Anza Picnic Area at Los Feliz Boulevard, are simply landscaped gateways to the river, literally marked with formal gates and wildlife sculptures. Paralleling this necklace of mini-parks is a Class-I bike path, the first leg in what is hoped to be a 51-mile long bikeway connecting the mountains and the ocean.

Natural Corridors

Upstream in the San Fernando Valley, where the river is contained in an all-concrete trench, Valleyheart Park has just opened. Designed by local 4th and 5th graders under the guidance of "The River Project," one of the many non-profit groups focused on river revitalization, the park was completed in 2004. The park's entrance is gate in the shape of a toad, created by student Michael Harris and artist Lahni Baruck. Other amenities include the Butterfly Bench - inscribed with a quote from Thoreau, and the Snake Wall - engraved with the names of children who participated in the park's design.



Valleyheart Gateway Park, San Fernando Valley



The Confluence

Just downriver from the Glendale Narrows, plans exist for the Confluence Park, at the intersection of the Los Angeles River and the Arroyo Seco, under the 5 and 110 freeways and three separate rail lines. Where today there is an industrialized parking lot for County and CalTrans trucks, river advocates see the hub of a future 51-mile long L.A. River Greenway. This is river central - within walking distance is the present L.A. River Center and Gardens - from here, gardens and paths will reach north through the Glendale Narrows up to the San Fernando Valley, northeast to Pasadena via the Arroyo Seco, and south to Downtown and the working class cities



Confluence Park Plan

of south Los Angeles.

Reclaiming the confluence site is as much as a park-building exercise as an effort to renew communities' connections to each other. It is also an attempt to renew the city's historic connection to place - the confluence was the only site in the region where a year-round supply of water could be located, the impetus for founding El Pueblo de Los Angeles

downhill in 1798. At Confluence Park the real ambitions of river restoration become evident - hopes that greening the river will not only produce bike paths and shaded benches, but also create physical and psychic links between neighborhoods, history, and nature. As environmental historian Jennifer Price writes, "It is at once one of the most hopeless and hopeful spots in L.A."

Currently local community groups and the City are working with the State Parks department to create two large urban parks from abandoned rail yards adjacent to the river. Both sites will create significant recreation areas for crowded neighborhoods with a shortage of parks and public space. But more importantly, both projects are underway because river groups joined with broad-based community coalitions to resist typical industrial development schemes. At the Cornfield and Taylor Yard, the river became a common umbrella for groups committed to historic preservation, ecological restoration, watershed management, and social justice. The Los Angeles River has become a "civic" space, gathering the city's diverse populace.

At Chinatown Yard (long known as the Cornfield), just downstream from the confluence, the connection to the river is of high symbolic and historic significance since it is here that the Zanja Madre, the city's original aqueduct, delivered river water to the pueblo and its agricultural fields. While final plans are prepared for what is officially known as the Los Angeles State Historic Park, the entire 33 acre site will be planted with corn in summer 2005. Funded by the Annenberg

Foundation and created by artist Lauren Bon, "Not a Cornfield," will be an ephemeral public art project akin to the work of Christo, and result in a fall harvest festival.

Taylor Yard, upstream from the confluence in the Glendale Narrows, features over two miles of river frontage. Named Río de Los Angeles State Park, the project will include much needed soccer fields and other normative park amenities. Conceptual drawings for future phases of the park suggest breaching the concrete walls to create 60 acres of wetlands, indicating ambitious plans to restore the river as a productive landscape - to create multi-functional public spaces that integrate flood-control engineering, recreation fields and wildlife habitat. The yearly cycle of water in the river will flow in and out of the park, renewing its landscape. If this is successful, the Taylor Yard project will be more than a river-overlook located atop the concrete embankments, and become "of" the river, not merely "on" it. It will be the first of the new parks to physically engage the river's ecology, and merge it with the public life of the city. It will begin to renew the relationship between the ecological and civic life of the region, a relationship that has arguably been lost since the Americanization of Southern California.



The Cornfields today



Conceptual plan for Taylor Yards Park

Further plans to renew the Los Angeles River are even more ambitious. The City of Los Angeles has set aside \$3 million to commission a master plan for the entire river - the design team will soon be selected from a pool of

international practitioners of architects, urban designers and landscape architects. Perhaps the master plan will incorporate studies created by students from Harvard's Landscape Architecture program for the Union Pacific Rail Yard just east of downtown L.A. Commissioned by the non-profit Friends of the L.A. River (FoLAR), these conceptual studies range from diversion channels to temporary dams to create ponds, lakes, and new wetlands in what are currently some of the most industrialized areas in the city. The prospect of river-nourished parks, community gardens, and recreation trails, fishing ponds, and even beaches running along the east edge of downtown requires a major leap of imagination. Yet this is the vision of FoLAR and other environmental groups in the Los Angeles region. They imagine a future where the restoration of the river also gives it a public face, civic presence, and cultural meaning.

Today's pocket parks on the Los Angeles River are portals on tomorrow's restored ecology, revived neighborhoods and renewed city. They are glimpses of an urban landscape where the river not only connects the mountains and the sea, but also neighborhoods and citizens. They have prompted a rethinking of regional stormwater management policies, leading to innovative and integrated watershed plans basin-wide. They suggest a city where the cycles of the natural world have presence, value and meaning in public life - where the expression of the genius loci and the civic realm are one in the same.

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Urban Corridors

commentary by John Leighton Chase

Los Angeles beautiful or ugly? If you've traveled the commercial boulevards the answer is "ugly." There is no discernable order on many stretches, and the businesses often don't depend on their looks for their livelihood. Bad signs overwhelm the buildings on auto-oriented strips like Lincoln Boulevard in Santa Monica. Moreover, the auto-oriented sections are often largely under-built with one-story structures and properties that are more parking lot than building.

So why is this state of affairs grounds for general merriment and exultation? Because things can, and will, get so much better for the big boulevards. Los Angeles has more commercial space than it needs and way less housing than it needs, and the burgeoning housing market provides incentives to include housing in new commercial development - housing that is close to services, transportation and stores. The need to locate housing along major corridors throughout the region has already been acknowledged and prioritized in regional planning documents.



Venice Boulevard



Lincoln Boulevard

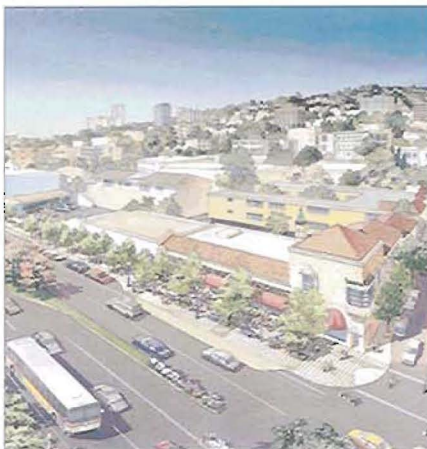
The regeneration of L.A.'s commercial streets can happen in two parts. One is the rejuvenation of the public right-of-way that is the street - property line across the street to property line. What could that look like? Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood is one answer. The \$34 million project included 2.9 miles of new trees, scientifically installed and provided for so they will be as happy as trees penned up in pavement can be. The old median, which was good for display but not for use, was replaced by very wide sidewalks with, wherever possible, a double row of trees that make a physical space, an enclosure for the pedestrian.

Ownership of Santa Monica Boulevard has been transferred from Caltrans to the City of West Hollywood, and the project reflects the resulting change in priorities for the street. Santa Monica Boulevard is the Main Street of West Hollywood, replete with neighborhood businesses including the many small Russian grocery stores and delicatessens. The intent of the Santa Monica Boulevard project was to create a place to be in as well as a corridor to pass through, and to maximize the benefits for all users, from bicyclists to bus riders (who make approximately one third of total trips everyday on the boulevard).

The priorities were very different for the \$685 million that was spent improving the 2.5-mile section of Santa Monica Boulevard that runs to the west of West Hollywood through the City of Los Angeles (on its north flank) and Beverly Hills (on its south). This stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard has for a very long time been split into two streets - a multi-laned "big" Santa Monica Boulevard and a two-laned "little" Santa Monica Boulevard - which were separated by a substantial grade difference to the west of Culver City. The new boulevard retains this grade split and differentiation into an arterial and a neighborhood road. Along some parts there is a neighborhood-serving street on either side of the main six-lane highway. Bicycle lanes are incorporated and there are double rows of trees.

However, what has been made here is more of a metropolitan driving boulevard and less of an urban promenade, and pedestrians will have to find their way across six lanes of traffic. This new boulevard will speed up traffic for the time being, but in an increasingly populous Los Angeles where traffic, like water, finds its own level, it won't be long before traffic backs up once again. It would have been a better choice to create a linear parkway from Beverly Hills to the little downtown of West Los Angeles that one day could have provided right of way for an above-grade transit line.

The City of West Hollywood seized the opportunity to reclaim the 2.7-mile stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard, historic Route 66, that runs through it from Caltrans, the state highway agency of California, in 1998. Under Caltrans, the boulevard was notorious for its poor vehicular and pedestrian accident record, and lack of maintenance. In accordance with a growing trend of community initiatives across the country to "take back the street" and create livable corridors and neighborhoods through better planning, West Hollywood launched a master planning effort of the Boulevard. Through a process of community design that involved a series of public workshops and a 42-person steering committee, the City reinvented this vital public amenity.



The **Santa Monica Boulevard Master Plan** reflects the changing social values of public space in Los Angeles. The redefined Boulevard is one where residents safely conduct daily business on foot and on bicycle, and where regional visitors travel safely across the city while enjoying its shops, restaurants and public amenities. The City hosts two annual parades that attract over a quarter-million visitors to the Boulevard's newly created public plazas and widened, tree-lined sidewalks. Innovations emerged that will set a precedent for major urban streetscape projects. Faced with its toughest decision, the community elected to remove hundreds of existing trees that were damaging sidewalks and to plant one-thousand new trees using a structural soil system method, developed at Cornell University. The method, now proven on the large urban scale in West Hollywood, allows urban trees to flourish and mature without compromising infrastructure investments. The completed first phase includes major road and sidewalk realignment, trees and landscaping, and the creation of new public spaces, as well as the new Veterans Memorial near La Cienega. The City is working to acquire funds to realize the bus stop gardens, public art, and new street furnishings.

Urban Design : Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, Los Angeles



Urban Corridors

The second part of regenerating L.A.'s un-fair commercial corridors, once the public right of way has been fixed, involves the often woebegone miscellany that lines either side. If it's not historic, cities should bring on the bulldozers and replace it with mixed use, though some stretches of major boulevards should remain exclusively residential.

There are residential buildings along major streets in big cities around the world. If locating residential along corridors works in Paris and New York it can be made to work in Los Angeles. Commercial boulevards - like houseguests - get tiresome if they over stay their welcome. Commercial streets are more vital if residential is added to provide a break along the overextended commercial stretches. Adding residential also gives these corridors a constituency: I am Pico, hear me roar.

Allowing mid-rise mixed-use and all-residential buildings along commercial corridors makes a lot of sense. Buildings higher than five stories require more expensive building technology, which is usually only profitable with high-rise structures. Four- and five-story buildings don't create as much density and the consequent need for parking, which can necessitate excavating deeply for underground parking. Five-story buildings can be constructed with wood instead of steel, which is far more expensive. And these buildings are not so tall that they shut out the light.

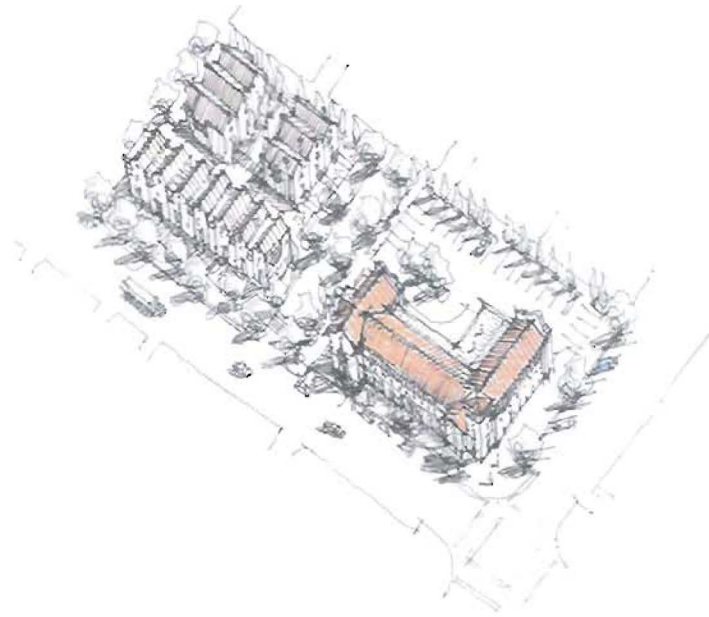
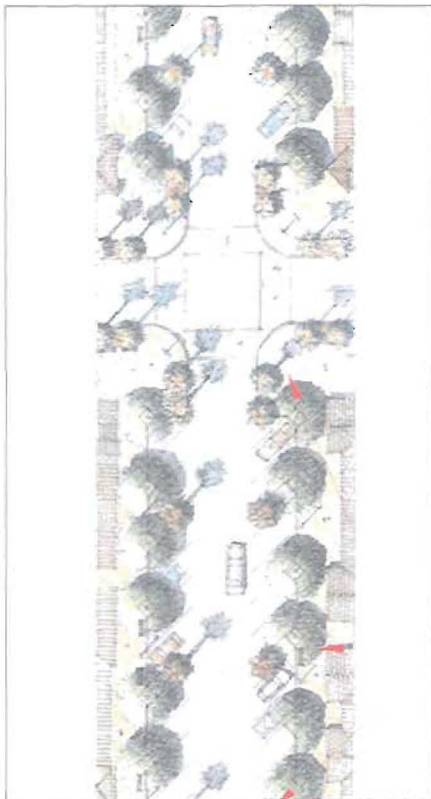
They aren't taller than the width of a boulevard, and consequently make a contained but non-claustrophobic outdoor public space

Residential Accessory Service Zones

Two new zones were created by the City of Los Angeles Department of Planning in January 2003 to encourage mixed use development along under utilized commercial and transportation corridors. Residential Accessory Service (RAS) zones provide increased floor area and height and reduced setbacks for 100% residential or mixed use projects constructed on commercial corridors. The two zones differ only in the number of units permitted: RAS3 permits 54 units per acre; RAS4 permits 108 units per acre. It is anticipated that RAS projects will help transform the City's under-performing transit corridors into beautiful boulevards, while improving mobility, reducing traffic, and upgrading neighborhoods.

But the prospect of change can be scary, and in Santa Monica, for example, the construction of one small district of five-story buildings has caused some residents to behave like a primitive tribe that believes that when the sun goes behind the mountains it will never come back. These Santa Monicans have revolted at the process of what they call "canyonization." However, there will be millions more residents soon in the greater metropolis, and in addition to plowing up greenfields we are going to have to intensify existing sections of the city.

Those who choose to live in higher-density housing along our new and improved corridors and boulevards, with services and shopping nearby and ready access to transit, will be able to get by without a car in what will surely be much worse traffic. And these vastly improved corridors, with their strong constituencies of residents who will demand continued improvements, will provide a much-needed facelift for Los Angeles.

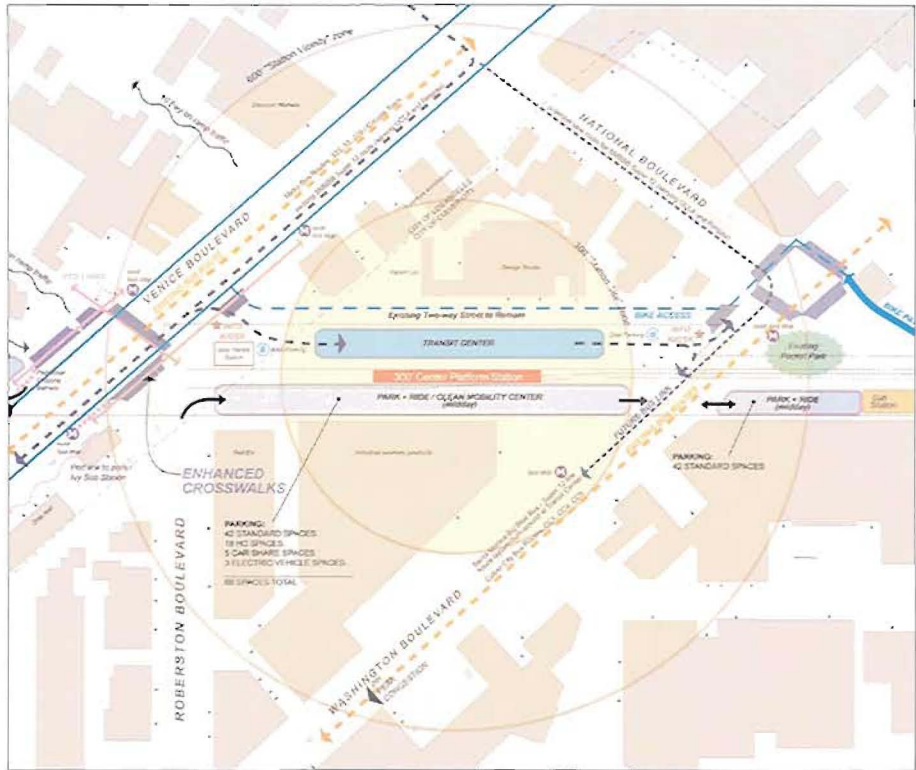


The three commercial corridors of Maclay Avenue, Truman Street, and San Fernando Road formed the major access ways and business corridors in the 2.4 mile-square City of San Fernando for much of the 20th Century. As in many communities, economic trends of recent years have led active businesses to seek out highly visible locations clustered at regional freeway and arterial junctions, away from shallow-parcels on older commercial strips. Over-zoned for commercial use and auto-dominated in form, San Fernando's corridors consequently suffered from a lack of upkeep and new private investment. The resulting physical deterioration of buildings and spaces reflected poorly on the community.

The **San Fernando Corridors Specific Plan** recommends public improvements and reshapes policies to transform these three corridors into livable and economically vital places. The Plan's focus is on shaping commercial centers and nodes, with a focus on Downtown at their junction, linked by stretches of mixed-use corridors. The Plan transforms the undifferentiated uses and built form of the corridors with walkable neighborhood retail and service clusters, and supportive streetscape design. Against a backdrop of astonishing leaps in housing prices and a wave of second and third generation Latino residents desiring to "come home" to live amongst family and friends in San Fernando, the Plan also addresses the lack of varied housing opportunities in the built-out "R1" suburban city. To appeal to singles, young couples, empty-nesters -age and household demographics that previously had to look outside the city for housing - new architectural types are proposed, including new mixed use and multifamily units not seen previously in the San Fernando. Development standards and guidelines ensure that new buildings draw from local architectural heritage and foster comfortable pedestrian environments. By doing so, investment value and place identity could be refocused, thus better representing the hidden quality of proudly maintained residential neighborhoods immediately behind the corridors.

The project was funded by a grant from the California Downtown Rebound Capital Improvement Program.

Urban Design : Freedman Tung & Bottomley with Conley Consulting Group
 Client : City of San Fernando
 Completed / Adopted : 2004



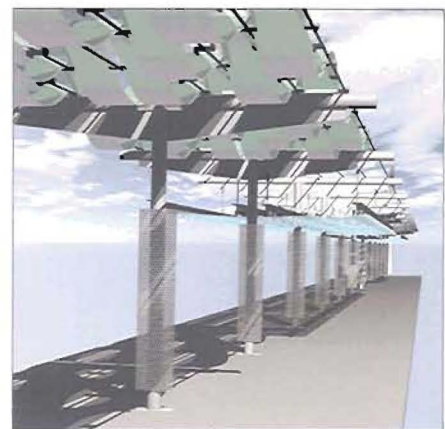
The Exposition Transit Parkway is a planning and design concept that expands upon the proposed ten-mile Light Rail project from Downtown to Culver City to more actively incorporate adjoining neighborhoods - the USC/Exposition Park area, Jefferson Park, Baldwin Village, and Culver City. The Exposition Transit Parkway was inspired by the 1930 Olmsted and Bartholomew "Parks, Playgrounds and Beaches for the Los Angeles Region" master plan. This visionary report identified a pleasure parkway connecting Baldwin Hills and Downtown Los Angeles, providing an idyllic cross town thoroughfare for vehicles and people on foot and on horseback. The Exposition Transit Parkway reinterprets the 20th century vision for the 21st century, integrating vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and light rail travel in a landscaped parkway. The design team integrated urban design, station architecture, public art and landscape into a singular vision for the new light rail corridor that would sensitively "weave" into the existing urban fabric. Station area planning and development opportunities were identified and conceived as a critical component of the project.

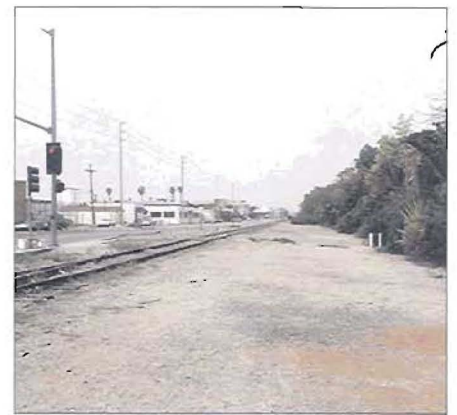
Specific design elements include:

- The Exposition Transit Parkway will take on a more urban character within the Downtown segment that serves the Figueroa Corridor, LA Trade Tech, Orthopedic Hospital, USC and Exposition Park.
- The right of way will be "rebalanced" in the Mid-Corridor segment to accommodate the new pathway and bikeway, and to provide enhanced transit service to residential neighborhoods, religious institutions and local parks and schools.
- In Culver City, the abandoned right of way along National Boulevard will be transformed with the addition of an off-street bikeway adjacent to Sid Kronenthal Park.

The first phase of construction is scheduled to be completed by 2008, and a second phase is planned to extend the transportation pathways to the beach at Santa Monica.

Urban Design : Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, Los Angeles





First Street, Los Angeles

commentary by Gloria Ohland

The social compass downtown, and its major streets, have for many years been oriented N-S, and then from downtown to the west, but not east. The decisions to lay the freight railroad tracks down alongside the river, and then to encase the river in cement, created an effective barrier between downtown and Boyle Heights, on the other side of the river to the east. L.A.'s first suburb, Boyle Heights was long home to a lively mixed-race mixed-use community because it was one of the few suburbs without a racial covenant. It was connected to downtown by a trolley that frequently clanged over the First Street Bridge, carrying passengers from the theaters and big stores on Broadway downtown to the diners, markets, dancehalls and homes that crowded First Street.

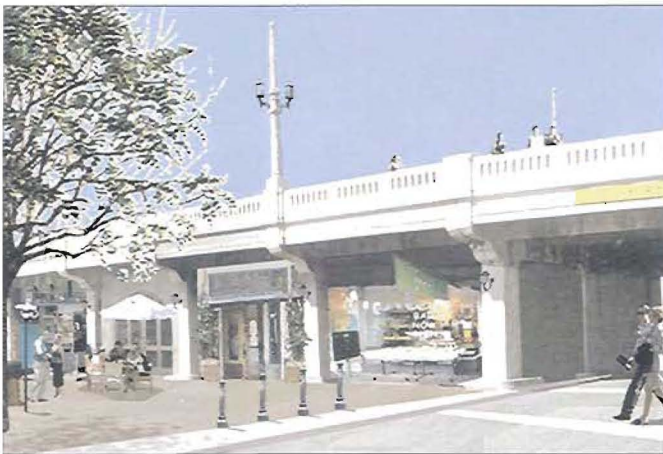
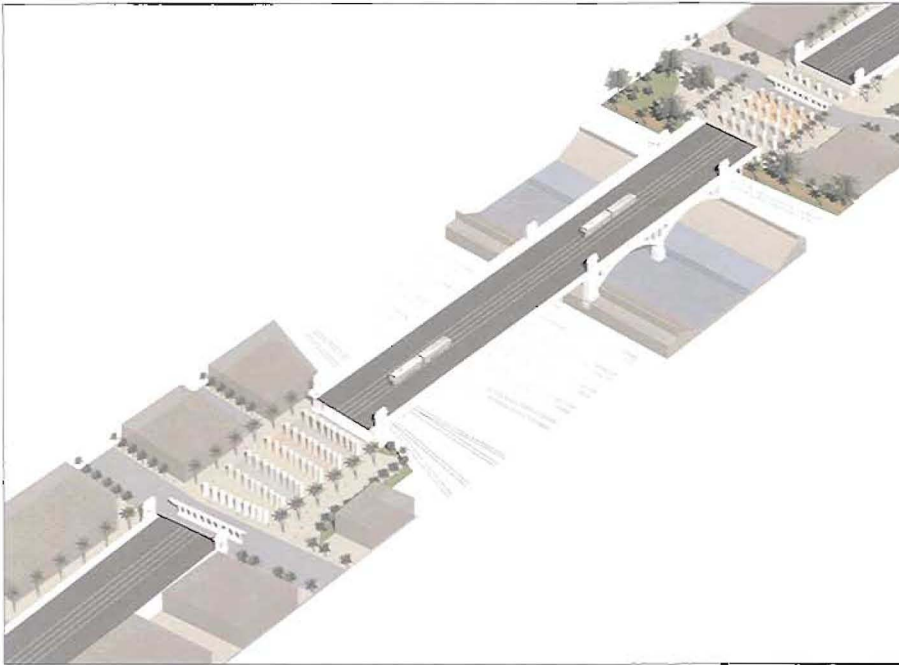
But one neighborhood after another in Boyle Heights and nearby East L.A. was razed for the construction of no less than five freeways, and for "slum clearance," and then for construction of what was the largest, and what became the meanest, public housing project west of the Mississippi. The decline of the projects - the modernist Lloyd Wright designed Aliso Village and adjacent Pico Gardens - and of the river, and of the warehouse district that was located next to the train tracks on the river's east bank, all served to further isolate Boyle Heights

Bands and musicians have always gathered on Mariachi Plaza at First and Boyle in Boyle Heights to parade in costume and with their musical instruments in the hopes of getting hired to play weddings, parties or celebrations of any kind. For many years it lacked the traditional kiosks found on many Mexican plazas, but in 1998, the year the Metropolitan Transportation Authority committed to build a rail line to East L.A., the Mexican State of Jalisco donated a kiosk made of cantera stone, which was shipped to L.A. along with artisans sent to assemble it. The annual Mariachi Festival is held here every year in November.

But federal HOPE VI funds have been used to renovate the projects as a mixed-income community, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is reconnecting downtown and the East Side with a light rail line and nine stations, and a masterplan has been created for a two-mile corridor along First Street. The bridge over the river and the tracks is the landmark centerpiece, and will connect Boyle Heights and its Mariachi Plaza on the hill on the east side of the river valley with Disney Concert Hall and the Music Center on the hill to the west.

In the continuing attempt to reclaim space for recreation on the park-poor Eastside, and given the huge success of the jogging path built around Evergreen Cemetery to the east, the masterplan would recreate the bridge as a fitness center. The quarter-mile-long bridge is being widened to accommodate the light rail line. Wide sidewalks would be added to either side to also accommodate a jogging path that would go across the bridge, down staircases on either side, and back up and across for a continuous half-mile loop that could accommodate the fitness routines of firefighters at a nearby station as well as young athletes at a high school being constructed at the renovated public housing projects.

But the real appeal of the masterplan is the intent to reclaim 30,000 square feet of public space enclosed by the arches and columns underneath the bridge for a park and maybe cafes and shops - like the Viaduc des Arts in Paris, Hackescher Market in Berlin, or Queensborough Bridge in New York. Currently the bridge is pedestrian-hostile and the area underneath is a No Man's Land, bombed out, graffitied, a homeless encampment. The masterplan, which would also add landscaping, street lights and street furniture along the two-mile corridor, would turn what was a formidable barrier into a link, and give a routine bridge widening greater meaning. The master plan is being prepared by a consortium of Susman Urban Design, Campbell and Campbell, and Rios Clementi Hale Studios.



This mega project has the potential of being the largest mixed-use development in Los Angeles, creating a high-profile gateway to East Los Angeles. The developer is MJW Investments, creators of the Santee Court Lofts complex in downtown Los Angeles. The plan by Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists addresses a historically important commercial center, the large and underutilized Sears & Roebuck Building (George C. Nimmohs, architect 1927) and surrounding grounds in this historic Boyle Heights neighborhood at **Olympic Boulevard and Soto Street**. The plan unifies eight separate parcels into a traditional neighborhood development (TND) with reuse strategies for the existing nine-story, 1.8 million-square-foot Sears & Roebuck Building. The design includes 620 housing units, 750,000 square feet of retail, parking for 3,100 cars, and other supporting uses. A large public plaza would be the centerpiece of the complex, with extensive landscape amenities and roof decks highlighting views of downtown Los Angeles. An envisioned large park would link the Los Angeles River and Gold Line light rail to the site.

Urban Design : Moule & Polyzoides w/ RTKL
 Client/Developer : MJW Investments

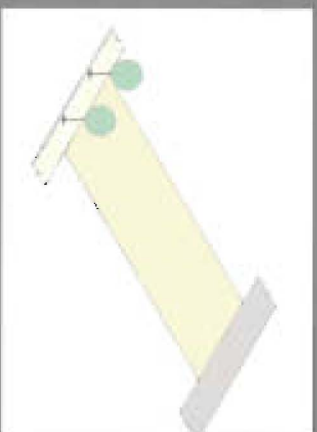
The Missing Link in Community Parking

What's Wrong with Our Older Commercial Districts?

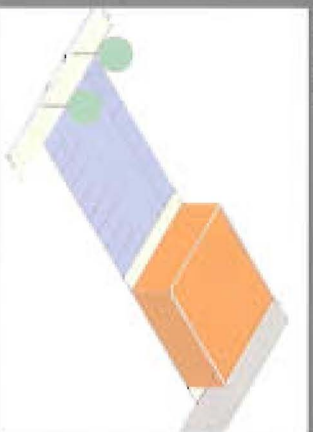
Eagle Rock, an L.A. community of Craftsman homes, postwar hillside and engaged residents, has reached a crisis. Its main street, Colorado Boulevard, has lost its pedestrian character over the years. And the hip residents moving into rapidly appreciating homes around the boulevard haven't brought the torrent of bistros and galleries many had hoped for. To be sure, some hip businesses have reclaimed old storefronts. But Colorado's mile-plus commercial district remains a hodge-podge of strip centers and fast food establishments amidst some beautiful but underutilized street retail. The community's wish to remake Colorado as a more urban street is arrested by years of visioning facade programs and planning. But the dream remains largely unfulfilled, as it does in many older commercial districts, largely because of a parking problem, but it may not be the problem you suspect.

Onsite Parking and the Death of Neighborhoods

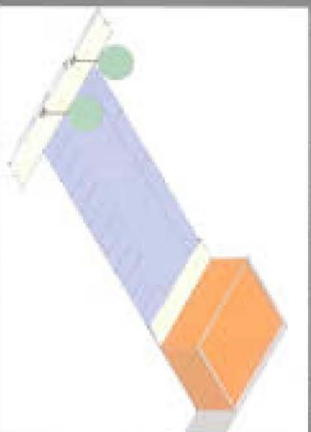
Pick up any parking study and you will likely find a supply and demand analysis: is there enough capacity in a neighborhood to park all the drivers who may visit? It is interesting that supply and demand is so often the focus of parking planners because that's often not the defining problem for streets like Colorado. Entitlements are:



Typical lot in old L.A. commercial areas (7,500 sq ft.)



Maximum one-story retail build-out (8,100 sq. ft.) with onsite parking (4 stalls / 1,000 sq. ft.)



Maximum one-story restaurant building (1,665 sq. ft.) with onsite parking (70 stalls / 7,000 sq. ft.)

Municipalities typically apply current onsite parking standards to all project applications, whether they're for changes of use or new construction. The intent is sound—make sure there's enough parking to serve what will be built. But the consequence, probably unintended, is that sprawl-type buildings become the only real option for new projects on most older commercial properties.

Why this is so is simple geometry. A typical old L.A. commercial site is little bigger than a single-family lot. On Colorado, for example, the median parcel is about 7,500 square feet. In the days when visitors accessed buildings from the sidewalk no matter how they got to the neighborhood, an owner could build-out most of that 7,500 square feet with little if any of it devoted to parking. And pedestrian-pleasing forms would be rewarded with more business.

But post-World War II onsite parking requirements began to force owners of smaller properties to give up over 50 percent of their land area to parking—up to 75 percent if the ultimate use is a restaurant. This puts an owner in a place like Eagle Rock in an unenviable position. If there's already a building on his land, chances are it's bigger than a new one could be given onsite parking rules. So a choice to change the use of his building means losing most of its leasable area, so he is unlikely to select this option. If his land is vacant, he will have the choice of building code-compliant structures like convenience retail or trying to do something more urban. If he chooses the latter, he will be forced to run the long and unpredictable gauntlet of discretionary review—a major disincentive to most people trying anything outside the box.

The result of this dynamic is continued deterioration of traditional buildings, a proliferation of auto-oriented new uses, and the occasional gem of revitalization when a property's owner is unusually savvy and determined.

What's a Community to Do?

At this point, experts often propose eliminating parking requirements altogether, engaging in redevelopment, and/or building public parking structures to serve dying areas. The first option is unrealistic where the majority drives-to build parking-free zones is tantamount to building people-free zones. The second is a wonderful tool when used judiciously, but the temptation must be avoided to create monolithic super-blocks that solve the parking problem by taking over whole neighborhoods. The final option, building parking, is a great start. But for it to have the desired effect, municipalities must create an over-the-counter process through which owners and occupants of typically-sized parcels can access entitlements for changes of use or new construction that contributes to the neighborhood fabric.

Old Pasadena provides a great model of such a system. The City built parking structures in the 1990s that added much-needed spaces to a district whose buildings, for the most part, occupied much of the surface area of their sites and left little room for onsite parking. Developers and business owners who previously had no choice but to tear down older structures in order to accommodate the car now had a better option: purchase "zoning credits" from the City in exchange for the right to build or rebuild on their existing footprints.

Several other California cities, notably Santa Monica, have community parking systems that function in similar ways. But Los Angeles, like most other municipalities in the nation, has no such system yet. And the consequences can be seen throughout the city, where super-block redevelopment often appears to be the only viable alternative to auto-oriented sprawl.

Cities like Los Angeles needs to start looking at parking in a new way. Beyond simply providing waivers for historic revitalization and other special projects, such cities need to provide parking spaces in numbers sufficient to serve the neighborhood they want to create. They must also create systems that allow building and business owners to purchase "shares" of this community parking in order to secure entitlements for new uses.

Ironically, cities that go down this road may find that well-planned neighborhood parking can have the same effects as a transit station. As long as visitors to a commercial area become pedestrians before they reach their final destination, building owners and businesses operators will have a strong incentive to build street-oriented projects. And as long as infill developers can purchase parking credits generated by well-planned off-site facilities, they will be more inclined to make investments in smaller properties and projects, and they will be hard-pressed to use precious site square footage to accommodate the car when a café, shop or apartment is viable instead.

Such a system would have untold benefits to the many older commercial districts in L.A. and beyond whose futures are held at bay by the expectation that parking must be provided onsite. Imagine a world made more pedestrian-friendly and more ready for transit by accommodating the car at the neighborhood level today.

- by Mott Smith

Districts : Town Centers

commentary by Gloria Ohland
& Alan Loomis

Metropolitan Los Angeles has long been composed of multiple centers and downtowns. Cities like Santa Monica, Pasadena, Long Beach, Riverside, Anaheim, and Santa Ana have existed as independent towns and centers with unique cultural and civic identities almost as long as the Pueblo de Los Angeles itself. As the region developed, it did not expand concentrically from downtown L.A., but in a mosaic of subdivisions that were incorporated as cities independent of L.A., each with their own localized downtown - the proverbial "sixty suburbs in search of a city"

Today, most of these sixty suburbs have found their city. The past fifteen years, has seen the rediscovery of these historic town centers, many of which have good "bones," walkable streets and blocks that were laid out in the heyday of the street-cars. The preservation, revival and continued development of these downtowns and neighborhood centers is without question one of the most stunningly successful and impressive trends in the region.

A variety of factors have contributed to this trend. The passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 - which set property tax rates at 1 percent of assessed value and capped increases at 2 percent a year (until a property is sold and reassessed) - caused cities to have to search for other revenue, particularly from sales taxes. In the worst case scenario this has led cities to mortgage their futures on high-volume big box retail stores or auto dealerships - which isn't good for either the pedestrian environment or civic identity. But in the best-case scenario Prop 13 has prompted cities to revitalize their downtowns by bringing back retail and creating lively, walkable shopping districts with sidewalk cafes and nightlife.

Moreover, traffic is causing people to live in smaller and smaller geographies - working at home when possible, shopping in the neighborhood - rather than having to buck traffic at every intersection across town. (Two thirds of those working in central Pasadena reportedly live in Pasadena as well.) While this region has always prized mobility, it turns out that living locally isn't such a bad thing after all and town centers are becoming desirable places to live, with attractive and relatively affordable "new" real estate products - the loft, live-work space, condo, row house, courtyard housing.

Suburban sprawl continues lapping at the far edges of the metropolis, but at the same time the center of the city - the centers of L.A.'s many cities - is contracting and densifying as people move back to the urban core. Not just in downtown Los Angeles, where 10,000 new housing units are in the pipeline, but also in downtown Pasadena (2,500 housing units in the pipeline), and downtown Santa Monica (1,500 units). And people are moving into downtown Culver City, downtown Hollywood, West Hollywood, San Fernando, Santa Ana, and even Anaheim. Nine thousand people registered for the Central City Association's downtown L.A. loft tour in March of 2005, and the *Downtown News* counted 122 projects underway, declaring "What was a murmur and then a buzz is now nothing less than a roar."



Downtown Los Angeles

commentary by Jack Skelley

The city in search of a center has, it could be argued, a center in search of a city. There are so many things that are “wrong” about downtown Los Angeles. Vaunted goals such as creating “24-hour activity,” and “critical mass” have often seemed just out of reach for as long as business and civic leaders had stretched to grab them... for at least the last three decades.

Unlike other successful California downtowns - San Diego's springs to mind - Los Angeles' city center has often struggled against itself, with colossal mistakes committed right and left. To choose the most notorious example, there was the misguided “urban renewal” of the 1970s: Bunker Hill was given a flat-top and its classic Victorian homes of Bunker Hill were bulldozed to make way for sterile corporate plazas and the aloof acropolis of The Music Center. (Couldn't they have kept just one of the majestic Victorian mansions? Imagine how valuable it would be today.)

These sins were committed all over again in the 1980s when the Community Redevelopment Agency created mega developments such as the millions of square feet of California Plaza. Here pleasant public uses such as The Water Court are elevated and isolated from the Historic Core teeming below, while the international cultural destination of the Museum of Contemporary Art suffers from an entrance buried beneath street grade, for some reason.

This debacle was the result of the city displacing its financial district from aging Spring Street to the de-Victorianized Bunker Hill. Parallel errors happened to the old Theater District (Broadway) when the Music Center appeared, and the old shopping district (Seventh Street) when new malls appeared to the west along Figueroa.



The clearance of Bunker Hill

But, ah, here is the first of several silver linings. For while Spring, Broadway and Seventh were vacated, they were also preserved, with their pre-World War II elegance and coherent street planning lurking underneath years of grime and neglect. And this made possible Downtown's current residential resurgence.

Building upon historic building are now undergoing that magically utilitarian concept of “adaptive reuse,” starting with Grand Central Square (the brainchild of loveable visionary Ira Yellin) proceeding through the Old Bank District and Santee Court (respectively by Tom Gilmore of Gilmore Associates and Mark Weinstein of MJW Investments, downtown's two most beneficent and gregarious dudes), to the literally dozens of condo conversions. These thousands of lofts are blooming now not only in historic zones, but in newer buildings that may finally find their real identity. (One star-crossed tower west of the 110 Freeway, 1100 Wilshire, virtually never had a commercial tenant because of poor design, but is now becoming a luxury high rise)

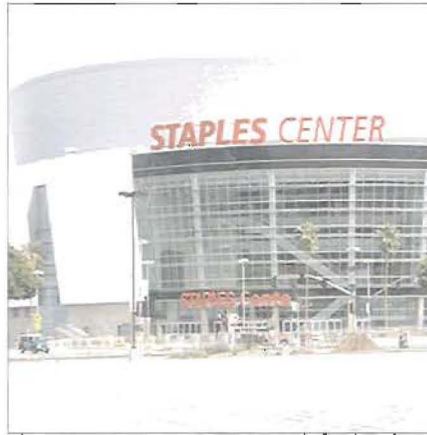
Districts : Town Centers

And more opportunities await. When the Walt Disney Concert Hall (finally) got built, it cemented an emerging Grand Avenue Cultural Corridor stretching from the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angeles on Temple Street down to the Central Library on Fifth Street. A legion of architects, urbanists, journalists and public officials demanded that the city not waste this opportunity by letting Grand Avenue remain a single destination for theater goers. And now The Related Companies is creating a mixed-use district on the street, with the results still to be seen. Likewise with the new Staples Center. It is currently a place that Lakers fans and U2 concert goers simply drive to and drive from. Surrounding restaurants are lucky to get some spillover business. The planned L.A. Live is an attempt to correct this with an adjacent entertainment district. But will its design simply corral the populace, or will it allow people to filter to destinations further up Figueroa?



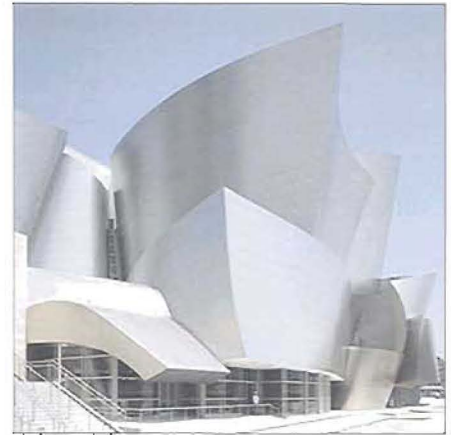
Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angeles

Design Architect : Raphel Moneo
Project Architect : Leo A. Daly Associates



Staples Center

Architect : NBBJ



Walt Disney Concert Hall

Architect : Frank O. Gehry & Partners

These mega projects seem to overshadow Downtown's dozens of successful sub-zones. The Fashion District is mercantilism run amok, thriving with activity on both weekdays and weekends. Ditto for Broadway: While some of its theaters still await full reuse, and its upper stories are ghost floors, its street-level stores are reputed to achieve higher rents per square foot than Rodeo Drive. The Toy District prospers despite its uneasy relationship to Skid Row. Little Tokyo has had its setbacks, but a wave of new residential projects may push it forward again. The same with Chinatown, which is benefiting from the new Gold Line Light Rail and new development.

And yet, and yet. .

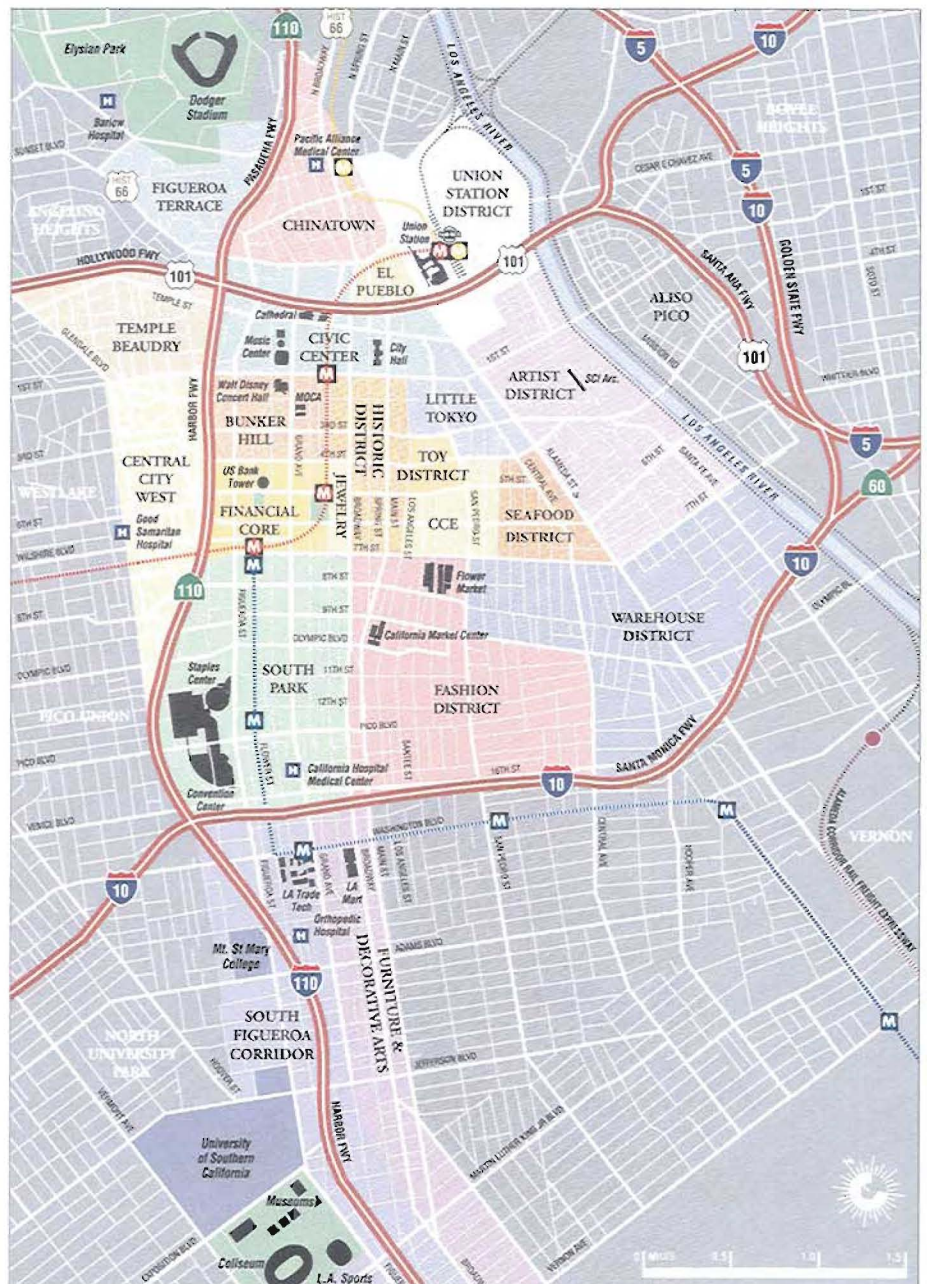
These districts still suffer from isolation and disconnection, and from the fact that Downtown is a huge area. If you're a resident of Santee Court are you really going to hike up to Disney Hall to catch a concert? You're more likely to drive. And if you're a Bunker Hill office worker and you want to buy a bouquet in the wonderful Flower District, well, sorry, you can't easily walk there. In some ways, it's as if the constellation of suburbs that circle throughout greater Los Angeles is microcosmed in downtown's multiple boroughs. A planned trolley may help in that regard.

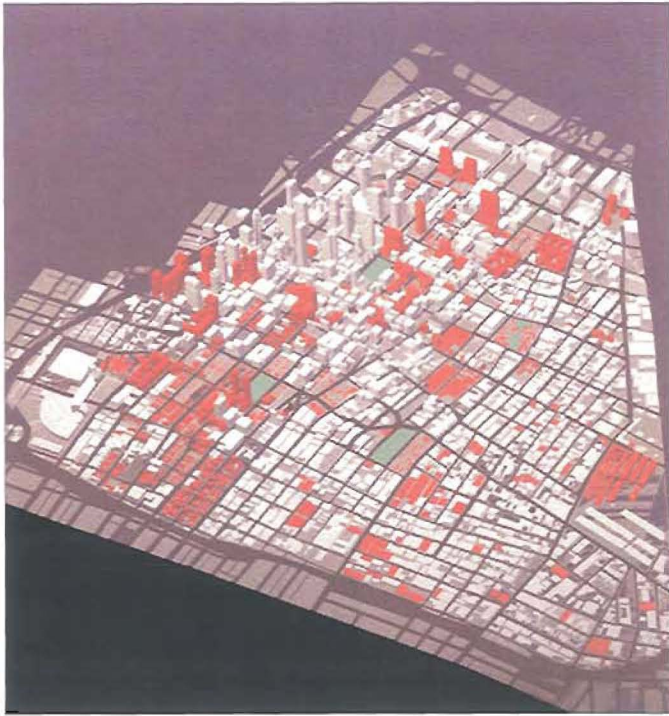
And dozens of other ideas, places and programs are helping as well. The “safe and clean” patrols of various Business Improvement Districts uplift morale all over the place. The Central Library expansion and restoration reaches out to neighborhoods in all directions. Enlightened developers such as Rob Maguire and Jim Thomas included inventive pedestrian linkages such as the Bunker Hill Steps in their plans. The *Los Angeles Downtown News* under Publisher Sue Laris has for over three decades given the area a united voice. The Red Line, Gold Line and Blue Line all converge in the heart of the city. Corporate makeovers such as those at Union Bank Plaza were careful to incorporate attractive public spaces. Even dreary bunkers such as the retail catacombs of Arco Plaza are undergoing attempts to add light and openness.

As always, the most important component is people. Tenant by residential tenant, as lofts and condos appear and fill up, there emerge new restaurants, hip hangouts, neighborhood associations, fill-ins, street life, night life, architecture schools (SCI-Arc in the Loft District east of Alameda), music conservatories (The Colburn School, which will soon add a dormitory), barber shops. A real grocery story is next.

Angelenos are often stunned all over again every time they visit San Francisco (not to mention Tokyo) because every square inch of street front is seemingly packed with activity. The multiple delis of Manhattan have every kind of food you could ever desire - an economy of plenty propelled by the sheer numbers of pedestrians.

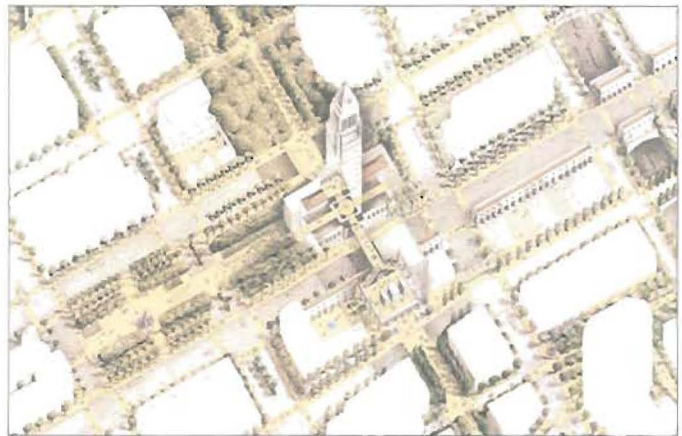
Downtown Los Angeles is not there yet. And it may take a long time. But it's definitely moving forward.





The Downtown Strategic Plan (DSP) represents several years of intense effort by many talented individuals and was endorsed by Los Angeles City Council in the final term of Mayor Bradley. The plan's recommendations were never implemented on a large scale, but several components and much of its philosophy endured. Perhaps most notable was the plan's insistence that, in the words of DSP Committee Chair Robert Harris, "downtown build a strong residential base, since otherwise the working population of downtown had homes, interests, voting rights, and ambitions elsewhere." With thousands of residential units either built or in the pipeline, this recommendation has been embraced by private developers and the city. Also important to the DSP were "safe and clean" programs of security and maintenance, created by various "business improvement districts."

Urban Design : Moule & Polyzoides w/ Duany Plater-Zyberk, Solomon Inc, Peter deBretteville, Susan Haviland, & Hanna/Olin
Client : Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles
Completed : 1989



Partly because the Downtown Strategic Plan project area did not penetrate the Civic Center area, urban advocates including Suisman Urban Design and Melendrez Design Partners created the **10-Minute Diamond** pedestrian plan. L.A. City Council adopted the report by Diamond planners in 1997. Among its ideas were using the City Hall spire as a marker and employing pedestrian linkages through the building as a crossroads of Downtown. The 10-minute diamond envisioned a path from the Music Center on the west, through City Hall, all the way to the Geffen Contemporary on the East.

Urban Design : Suisman Urban Design, Melendrez Design Partners



The **Standard Hotel**, once the Superior Oil office tower built in 1952, was transformed under the artistic vision of hotelier Andre Balazs. With the design collaboration of Koning Eizenberg Architecture in Los Angeles, and Shawn Hausman, a former production designer, Balazs' desire to make the project a cultural take-over and a revival of downtown has been a success. Perhaps most significant is that the Standard, with its 207 rooms, has made Downtown Los Angeles a chic destination for business travelers. The 12-story modernist landmark is a fusion of old and new. Original features are preserved such as the steel 15-time zone clock and the green marble floors of the lobby. The rooftop bar is the place to be seen and take in the scene with a 360-degree view of downtown Los Angeles.

Architect: Koning Eizenberg Architecture
 Developer / Client: Andre Balazs
 Program : 207 rooms



CIM Group has invested \$5.9 million of mezzanine financing and provided project oversight with The Lee Group of Los Angeles for the development of the **Flower Street Lofts**. The project consists of an existing three-story structure situated on approximately 1.03 acres in the newly designated Sports and Entertainment District of Downtown Los Angeles, steps away from Staples Center and the Los Angeles Convention Center. With its high ceilings and large open floor plans, this former UPS distribution warehouse was well-suited for conversion to residential lofts. Flower Street lofts offer 91 units ranging in size from 1,315 to 2,410 square feet with prices from \$395,000 to over \$1 million.

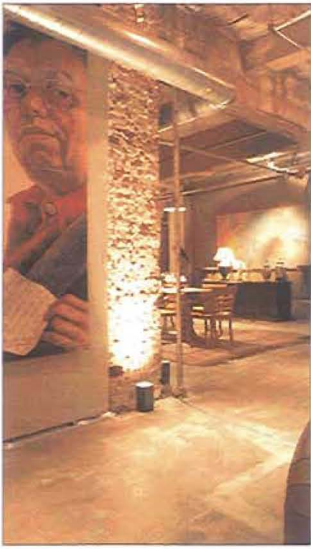
Architect : Johannes Van Tilburg & Partners
 Developer / Client : CIM Group
 Program : 91 residential units



The Lee Group and CIM Group, along with Killefer Flammang Architects, also partnered on the new **Grand Lofts** development. Following the team's previous collaboration, the Flower Street Lofts, the Grand Lofts development is a transformation of a building that dates back to 1923 when George Pepperdine, founder of the university, built the four-story Western Auto Supply building. The renovation includes an addition of four levels with a collection of 66 two-bedroom residences ranging from 1,181 to 2,609 square feet, and starting at \$500,000. Design highlights feature vast ceilings up to 25 feet, expansive windows, stone countertops, and concrete and wood flooring.

Architect : Killefer Flammang Architects
 Developer / Client : CIM Group and Lee Group
 Program : 66 condominiums

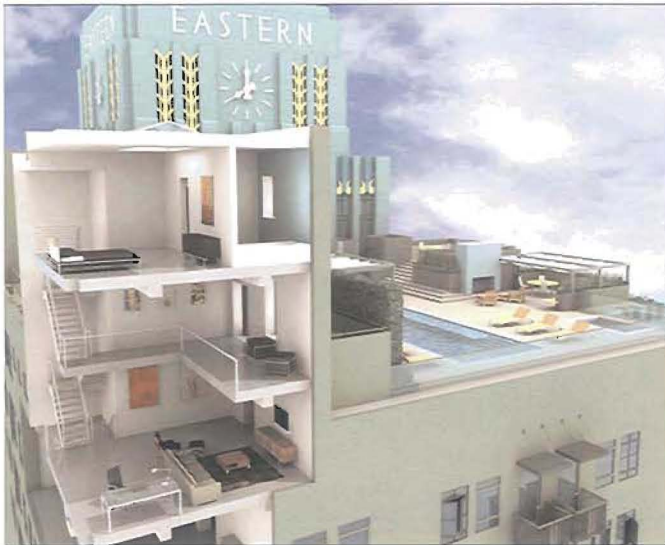
Districts : Town Centers



Developed by Gilmore Associates and designed by architectural firm, Killefer Flammang, three distinctive turn of the century buildings have been converted to residential as the cornerstone of the Old Bank District Lofts. The project includes: The Hellman Building, a six-story structure with 104 loft units including two penthouses; The San Fernando, an eight-story 1906 building with 70 units including penthouse; and The Continental, which is considered "LA's first skyscraper," with 12-stories and 56 units. In the heart of Los Angeles' Historic Core on fourth street between Spring and Main, the project is comprised of 230 live/work lofts and set the stage for a series of successful conversions throughout downtown. The lofts feature high ceilings, large windows and city views; while the growing neighborhood offers restaurants and cafés with outdoor patios, a small market, a gallery and other retail uses.

Adaptive Reuse Ordinance

The Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Economic Development established the Adaptive Reuse Ordinance in 2001 to revitalize the Greater Downtown Los Angeles Area and encourage the conversion of downtown's underutilized or historically significant buildings into new residential and live/work spaces. This rejuvenation is also expected to facilitate the development of the "24-hour city" and help create a balance of housing and jobs in the region's primary employment center. The Adaptive Reuse Program works by significantly reducing the time it takes to obtain a building permit when converting an industrial or commercial building to a new residential use. The program originally covered the historic suburbs of Hollywood, Chinatown, Lincoln Heights and Wilshire Center Business district but was expanded citywide by Mayor James Hahn in 2003. With 230 units, the Old Bank District was the first project to be completed, and since then, the ordinance has enabled thousands of housing units to be produced citywide.



Once a historic showplace for fashion and furnishings, the KOR group has transformed the 13-story art deco **Eastern Columbia** building into a backdrop ideal for urban living. The interior of the Eastern Columbia received a polished redesign directed by interior designer and author Kelly Wearstler. The 147 loft condominiums, ranging from 720 to 2,750 square feet, have windows stretching 14 feet high and newly constructed kitchens and baths. Roof-top terrace includes a swimming pool, spa, lounging cabanas plus a fitness studio.

Architect : Killefer Flammang Architects
 Developer / Client : KOR Group
 Program : 147 loft condominiums
 Completion : under construction



The **Pacific Electric Building**, Los Angeles' first skyscraper and the largest building west of the Mississippi until the 1950s, was erected in 1905 by Henry Huntington. The Huntington Building, as it was first known, shifted the downtown business district to 6th and Main Streets from the original corner of 2nd and Spring, contributing to LA's downtown growth. The Pacific Electric Building was considered a model of its kind both in beauty and stature. The historical site has endured many changes over the last hundred years. ICO Development now plans to combine the turn-of-the-century architecture with the modern amenities of 314 loft-style apartments equipped with fitness center, rooftop pool, spa, dog run, business center and more. The 20,000 square feet at ground level will have new restaurants, shops, but will also retain Cole's, the oldest continuously operated restaurant and bar in Los Angeles.

Architect : AC Martin Partners
 Developer / Client : ICO Development
 Program : 147 loft condominiums
 Completion : under construction



The **Cathedral of St. Vibiana** was built in 1876 and designed by Ezra F. Kysor after a Baroque-style church in Barcelona. For over a century, the cathedral, near the corner of Second and Los Angeles streets in Little Tokyo, was the headquarters of the Los Angeles Archdiocese, receiving several hundreds of worshippers weekly. The 1994 Northridge earthquake left the structure damaged and later condemned. Cardinal Roger Mahony began the process of tearing down the decrepit site but was halted by the Los Angeles Conservancy in high-profile fight to preserve the relic. In 1999 developer Gilmore Associates purchased the cathedral, its rectory and school buildings for \$4.65 million with the vision of creating a residential/entertainment compound. Gilmore proposes to transform the cathedral and adjacent buildings into a performing arts center for California State University, Long Beach, as well as add a small hotel, a new apartment building and a restaurant. The complex, "Cathedral Place," is estimated to cost about 40 million dollars.

Downtown Los Angeles / Skid Row

commentary by Gloria Ohland

Downtowns have historically had a concentration of affordable housing for the low-wage workers, mostly single men without families, who live and work there. As the fortunes of downtown L.A. began to decline and hundreds of single-room occupancy hotels and boarding houses were to be razed for urban renewal in the '60s and '70s, advocates for the poor mounted a concerted campaign to save the SROs. The non-profit Skid Row Housing Corporation, Skid Row Housing Trust and other non-profit organizations have since renovated about 50 classic turn-of-the-century hotels that now house upward of 3,000 residents in the 50-block neighborhood known as Skid Row. It's a varied population ranging from low-income seniors and veterans from the Korean, Vietnam and Gulf Wars to the more down-on-their-luck populations of addicts, convicts, alcoholics, mentally ill, disabled and chronically unemployed - the total number of residents and homeless is uncertain, though a count undertaken in 2004 should be publicized soon.



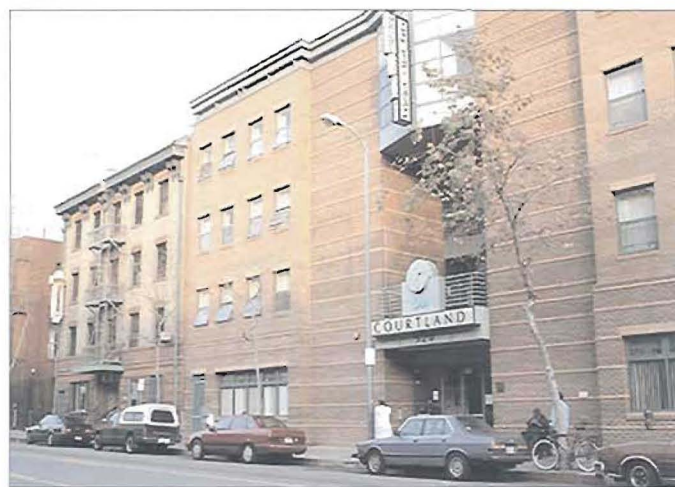
In its best light, Skid Row along San Julian between Fifth and Seventh is a vibrant, mixed-use community with two pocket parks, corner markets, classic hotels almost all of which have been respectfully renovated and include landscaped private and semi-private courtyards, walkable streets with little traffic, and some new residential buildings. It truly is a "community" in so far as those who live in the subsidized SROs are matched with case workers and services ranging from counseling to hot meals to health screenings, education and recreation opportunities. Streets are washed frequently. People know one another on a first-name basis. There are chess tournaments, card games, basketball and concerts in the park, tenants advisory councils, fairs, community clean-up efforts. Many employees are former SRO residents or the homeless, their life experience serving as inspiration for those still on the streets

And there's award-winning architecture by Michael Lehrer. His James M. Woods Community Center, named after the former Community Redevelopment Agency board chairman who founded the SRO Housing Corporation, has 18-foot ceilings, large skylights and western-facing windows that provide an airy and welcoming space, and a bright red balcony and rooftop sun deck overlooking San Julian Park. Lehrer's Downtown Drop-In Center a block away provides an emergency shelter that's more like a cheery youth hostel or YMCA. Fronted by a promenade-lined courtyard and light-washed "clubhouse" - where staff provides clean sheets and towels, beds and showers - the center's entrance is a linear garden, with a portico that's open to the sky on the streetside and a covered portico to the rear that's backlit with natural light.

If it weren't for the omnipresent and undeniable undercurrent of dysfunction, this would be a showcase low-income New Urbanist neighborhood. But development pressures downtown are putting the squeeze on Skid Row, bounded on all sides by the flourishing Fashion District, Flower Mart, Produce District, Toy District and Little Tokyo, where every landmark building is turning into high-priced lofts. Lehrer's Drop-In Center, designed to accommodate 200, attracts 800 to 1,400 daily. Several years ago the Union Rescue Mission was moved away from City Hall and located in the

midst of this already intense cluster of hotels and social service providers, including the Weingart Center and Volunteers of America. Now the Midnight Mission has just been moved here, away from the tony residential neighborhood at Fourth and Main where it was located.

This intense concentration of people and services provides the city and service providers to maintain control over the omnipresent crime and drugs and prostitution. But there are too many problems in too small a space -- the Downtown Drop-In Center, designed for 200, attracts between 800 and 1,400 people daily -- and Skid Row Housing has begun developing clusters of housing and services further south and east. Some of these newer renovations include lofts and studios for artists and others who can sell their wares out of their live-work space. The future of Skid Row is in flux, but advocates for the poor point out they're not moving; by law the SROs must remain affordable for 55 years.



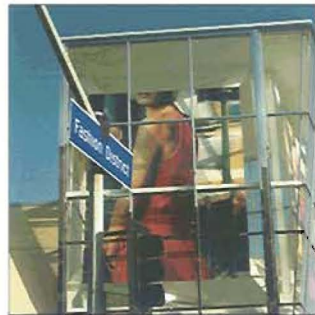
Downtown Los Angeles
The Fashion District

commentary by Gloria Ohland &
James Rojas

If you're looking for really lively street life in downtown Los Angeles, the Fashion District has it in spades. Ninety blocks big and encompassing landmark neo-Gothic skyscrapers from the '20s, the Flower District, Gallery Row, and part of the Produce District, the Fashion District devotes 20 blocks to low-end but extremely high-volume retail sales. Weekend pedestrian counts exceed those on Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade, rival counts in Manhattan, and are up 23 percent in 5 years, and groundfloor rents approach rents on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills. And the scene along the series of alleys and covered passageways and sidewalks - where shops spill out into the street and vendors from all nations hawk their wares, some even climbing ladders in order to maximize visibility over the elbow-to-elbow hubbub - is vivid, tactile, like an outdoor bazaar.

This is where the immigrant underclass shops, arriving on foot and by bus, buying everything from designer seconds to samples to overstock to bootleg DVDs and lovebirds, and eating sliced mangoes, watermelon and cucumbers with lime, salt and chile powder, while the tantalizing smell of sausages cooking with onions and peppers on sidewalk grills wafts over the crowd. There are no chain stores here. Ninety-five percent of retailers are Mom and Pop enterprises employing five or fewer people, and proprietors are from the Middle East, Mexico, Korea and everywhere. Even St. Joseph's Catholic Church has exploited its location here, having built out its property with retail stores and paying its monthly dues to the active Fashion District Business Improvement District, which has the distinction of being California's first BID.

But while retail sales are estimated at an impressive \$1 billion annually, it's the \$7 billion wholesale industry that booms. "The Intersection," as it's called, at Ninth and Los Angeles has more square footage devoted to the fashion industry than anywhere in the universe: On one corner is the vast California Market Center, the largest apparel showroom in the U.S.; on the second is the New Mart, a showroom run like a non-profit, with proceeds helping to fund hospitals and health clinics; the Cooper Building, which houses showrooms and design studios, is on the third, and the Streamline Moderne Gerry Building is on the fourth. During the past decade the region lost 30,000 fashion manufacturing jobs, mostly to China, but these were replaced with higher-skilled better-paying jobs in the wholesale business, and L.A. now boasts more apparel jobs than New York.



L.A. has become the industry leader in "contemporary women's fashion," the largest segment of the business, and the department stores and chains are opening buying offices nearby to stay on top of the trends. The industry is supported by two big design schools - the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) located next door in the neighborhood of South Park, and Otis - both of which have classrooms in the district. Interspersed throughout are textile shops catering to the clothing designers as well as costume designers from around the U.S. - including Michael Levine's vast empire that sprawls on either side of Maple Avenue. And there are more than 70 restaurants.

The Fashion District is probably undergoing its biggest transformation at present as the loft building boom rumbles

through downtown. Eleven historic buildings are being converted to a total of 1,000 lofts, live-work spaces, flats and condos, including the Pacific Electric building that used to house L.A.'s famous trolley system on the groundfloor and the exclusive Jonathan Club for men in the penthouse. Santee Court is comprised of four buildings arrayed around a courtyard and three more adjacent buildings, all of them being turned into market-rate, affordable, for-rent and for-sale units with amenities including a pool, basketball court, and a putting green connected by walkways from roof to roof. The courtyard includes a commemorative fountain to L.A. architect Paul Williams, who was born in a house located on the site. Almost a third of the units are open and already there's a residents association that is beginning to crusade for more nearby amenities including parks.

There are few surface parking lots left in this part of downtown, though there is one, over a subterranean Department of Water and Power electrical station, that is being considered as a viable though problematic site for a pocket park. Other former lots have been used for a building type that may be unique to the Fashion District and that typically includes one or two floors of retail topped with several levels of structured parking - serving to maximize the amount of rentable ground-floor space while still preserving parking and participating in and contributing to the vitality of the street.

Downtown Los Angeles
Gallery Row
commentary by James Rojas

The last heyday of the downtown L.A. art scene was circa 1982, about the time that Gorky's Restaurant opened and stayed open, 24/7, kitty corner from the Flower Mart, and studios and galleries flourished on either side of Alameda from the Santa Monica Freeway north to Chinatown and the River. Then came the real estate boom, and then the bust, and then fast forward to 2003, when the L.A. City Council designated the area long Main and Spring streets between Second and Ninth as Gallery Row. There may have been only four downtown galleries in existence then. Now there are 14, and an art walk the second Thursday of every month from noon to 9 p.m. The fine old financial buildings lining Spring Street - which served as the "Wall Street of the West" until urban renewal offered new opportunities in neighborhoods further west - provide excellent gallery space with their ornate beaux arts exteriors, huge windows and 20-foot ceilings.

The *L.A. Times* may have summed it up in an article in April of 2005 headlined, "Scruffy? Yes. Stuffy? No. Diverse Galleries and an Edgy Vibe Draw a Crowd to the Downtown Art Walk." Gallery Row is still a work in progress, but new residents are providing an audience for art and a 2005 demographic survey by the Downtown Central Business Improvement District indicates they have the money to buy it - the median income is \$90,000. But will escalating property values push artists and galleries out once again? Residential development downtown is far ahead of the provision of amenities including stores and entertainment, and empty groundfloor space abounds in a landscape that's still pretty bleak in most part of town. The art galleries provide a welcome diversion for pedestrians, and the downtown Gallery Row Organization points out that because its located in a federal Empowerment Zone many incentives apply, including: a waiver of the city's business tax, wage credits, special financing opportunities, a reduction in electrical bills, and special business assistance and loan programs

Hollywood

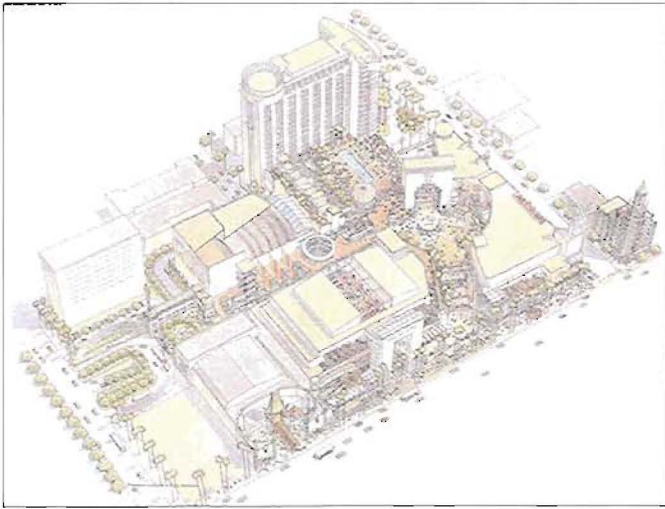
commentary by Jack Skelley

Unlike downtown Los Angeles, or other city centers in Southern California, Hollywood has never suffered an identity crisis. It has understood what it is and what others should think of it. It's simply Hollywood. The dream machine. In concept, at least, it thrives on the ideals and hopes of international multitudes, which almost by definition makes it urban and cosmopolitan. And it will always be connected in this way to the entertainment industry, even though it has long since ceased being a physical home to major movie studios.

Hollywood has tremendous urban assets. It boasts supreme foot traffic on two major east-west corridors - Sunset and Hollywood Boulevards. It benefits from the Red Line subway running diagonally through it. Its movie palaces, nightclubs and live theaters seem to ensure a continual flow of entertainment dollars. It's one of the most densely populated sectors of Los Angeles, with a stock of classic courtyard and bungalow apartments and residential mid rises. Its denizens - many of them - are free-thinking, culturally diverse, creative individuals who thrive on 24-7, polyglot urbanism.

As Ed Rosenthal, the poet/broker of CBRE states, "Hollywood has in place the young adult nightlife that downtown had to struggle to create. It already has a substantial residential community which gives a boost to its development as a 24-hour city." But all these plusses have not prevented problems. The Los Angeles Redevelopment Agency's revitalization barrage includes some economic misfires. In the early 1990s - to take one example - it was the Hollywood Galaxy cinemas. This new development seemed to steal patrons from the older theaters on Hollywood Boulevard. It became a victim in turn with the arrival of the high-tech Arclight Hollywood film complex.

Probably the biggest white elephant of Hollywood redevelopment was Hollywood & Highland. This polymorphous urban entertainment center, developed by Trizec Properties, Inc., was a foot-traffic and retail-leasing disappointment almost from the day it opened. (It didn't help that that day was just weeks before 9-11.) Trizec was forced to slash rents and parking prices before selling the development to CIM Group. That it was such a flop surprised some people, because Hollywood & Highland seemed to do many things right: It combines a variety of uses (hotel, retail, entertainment, the new home of the annual Academy of Motion Pictures Awards). It is also at the heart of a busy auto and pedestrian intersection that also includes a Metro Red Line subway stop. But its elaborate pedestrian design was confusing. Jon Jerde is famous for coining the concept of "safely lost," for projects such as Horton Plaza in San Diego... i.e., a mall that creates an experience that is disorienting but comfortable at the same time. Hollywood & Highland did not achieve that. But CIM Group, before its discount purchase of the property, had already enjoyed several successes along Hollywood Boulevard. The developer is currently reconfiguring Hollywood & Highland and has high hopes.



Hollywood & Highland has always been two places: a real place and a legend, the home of the film industry and the myth of glamour and fame. The regional retail center at the intersection of the same name evokes both historical and fictional elements of Hollywood Boulevard's 1920s heyday. The site occupies 1 1/2 city blocks at the foot of the Hollywood Hills, along a boulevard famed for its historic theaters: Mann's Chinese, El Capitan, Pantages, and the Egyptian. The design revives the original pedestrian-friendly streetscape of Hollywood Blvd, with simple and restrained facades that respond to the Art Deco, streamlined, and modernist buildings that neighbor it, respecting their height and emphasizing vertical articulation in the pilasters and marquees. Public spaces within the project serve as outdoor stages, and three promenades link the buildings and spaces together. Each promenade is designed with a distinctive character and narrative, creating a complex circulation pattern meant to surprise and inspire discovery. From Hollywood boulevard, flowing upward and extending the sidewalk into the site, the Monumental Stair leads visitors to Babylon Court, the central public space designed as a recreation of the epic set of D.W. Griffith's "Intolerance." The court is dominated by a dramatic arch, framing the famed Hollywood sign in the hills beyond. Further down the boulevard, the Orchid Walk processional arcade leads to the central rotunda and, beyond it, the state-of-the-art Kodak Theater, home of the Academy Awards and the heart of the reality and the myth of Hollywood.

Architect : Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn
Developer : TrizecHahn

Many of Hollywood Boulevard's finest live theaters and movie palaces have recently been restored, bolstering the attractiveness of the area.

Built as a vaudeville theater in 1918 by Alexander Pantages, the **Pantages Theater** was converted into a movie theater in 1932. After years as a first run movie house (under the moniker of the Roxy), the theater closed. It reopened in 1983 for stage shows and concerts and is today a top venue for live events.

The **El Capitan Theatre** made its debut on May 3, 1926, as "Hollywood's First Home of Spoken Drama." Walt Disney Company has restored its original elegance, including Spanish Colonial exterior and a colorful East Indian interior designed by San Francisco architect G. Albert Lansburgh. This includes the stage (returned to its 1926 legitimate-theater dimensions), a newly installed high-speed lift center stage, lights, remodeled dressing rooms, and state-of-the-art special effects. The theater offers 1,000 seats and a Dolby SR-D audio system.

The 1922 **Egyptian Theater** renovation has earned high honors from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which declared it a 2000 National Preservation Honor Award Winner. It is now the permanent home of American Cinematheque.

The 1927 **Grauman's Chinese Theatre** has also received a complete renovation, including restoration of the theatre's original interior including balcony, and new state-of-the-art audio and projection equipment.

And to the south of Hollywood Boulevard on Sunset, the 1963 **Cinerama Dome** escaped demolition in 2001 when it was preserved and incorporated into the new ArcLight Hollywood entertainment and retail complex.

In the meantime, successes are piling up at other intersections. Take the intersection of Hollywood and Vine. Residential developers are converting two historic structures here: the 1929 Hollywood Equitable Building and the 1927 Broadway Department Store. The latter is a nine-story Renaissance Revival gem which developers The Kor Group is transforming into The Broadway Lofts at Hollywood and Vine.

Considering everything going on in Hollywood, the approach of these kinds of projects may be the most enlightened because they excel on several levels. They attempt to transform defunct structures into those that return economic vitality to the corner. They retain high-density usage while they bar the potentially intrusive presence of a new building. They connect the future of the area with its past. And these buildings make the most of their position on one of the best-traveled intersections of the city, a true crossroads now also served by subway.

Especially in older neighborhoods, redevelopment should proceed confidently but carefully in this way. It is crucial that developers work closely with responsible community groups to ensure that what emerges is something that enhances, not detracts from, the existing neighborhood fabric. At the same time, these are just the opportunities that tend to benefit everyone. In a region that is growing like crazy, here you've got a corner full of buildings that can fill up with residents right above the Red Line. This is not only a responsible community strategy, it's part of a good regional growth strategy.



Multi-use development made a return appearance in Hollywood with the area's first large-scale residential project in over 50 years. **Sunset + Vine** adds 300 apartments to large retailers and specialty shops in a square-block complex. The apartments offer large (7x7) windows, and an elevated courtyard with pool deck including outdoor theater hosting social events. Outdoors areas are also WiFi-connected for all fresco web surfing. The developer of the project, The Bond Companies, calls the concept "Hollywood urbanism," and it includes street-level restaurants such as a re-introduced Schwab's and an oyster bar by the creators of Lucques on Melrose Avenue. Like other busy corners in Hollywood, Sunset and Vine is about more than just the anchor development: Sunset + Vine is steps away from the Hollywood Metro Rail station, ArcLight Cinemas, ultra-cool Amoeba Records, and gobs of nightclubs and theaters.

Architect : Nakada Partners
Client/Developer : The Bond Companies

Central Pasadena

commentary by Marsha Rood

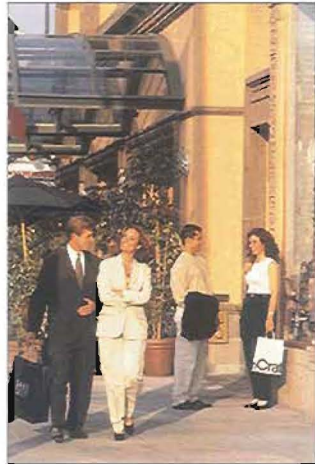
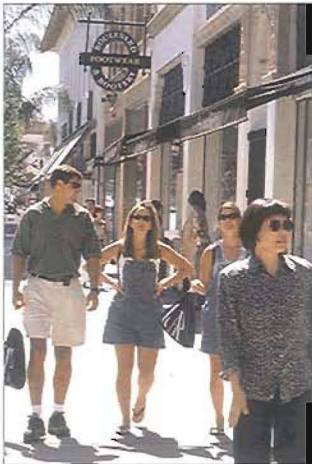
A strong and committed public, private and community-based partnership made and continues to make downtown Pasadena a model for emerging 21st Century downtowns in America. In this new century, commercial mixed uses and more compact and denser living will be happier in a 19th century setting in terms of design and scale than in a large block, auto-oriented 20th century cityscape. The rebirth of Pasadena's downtown or "Central District" from an auto-dominated, single purpose and suburban-style land use redevelopment effort to a transit-based, compact, walkable mixed use revitalization program is astonishingly successful example of this trend.



Pasadena's nearly two-mile-long Central District is centered on Colorado Boulevard and South Lake Avenue and is comprised of four distinct subdistricts: *Old Pasadena*, *Civic Center/Mid-Town*, *Playhouse*, and *South Lake Avenue*. These subdistricts separately and together are characterized by a compact, safe and friendly environment that works for people who live, work, recreate and walk in the Central Area.

The New Urbanism in the Old Urbanism: Pasadena's Central District

Although the renaissance of Pasadena's Central District was well underway by the time the Charter of the New Urbanism was signed in 1996, the planning, development, and redevelopment principles that shaped the Central District's revitalization over the past 25 years validate and reinforce the value of the New Urbanism. The Central District typifies the "Urban Center" in the New Urbanist Transect typology. The Urban Center is described as functioning as the focal point of activity and energy of a small city. It benefits from substantial traffic, both pedestrian and automotive; a mix of different uses and structured parking, and good design that allows pedestrians and automobiles to share the streets in a human-scale environment.



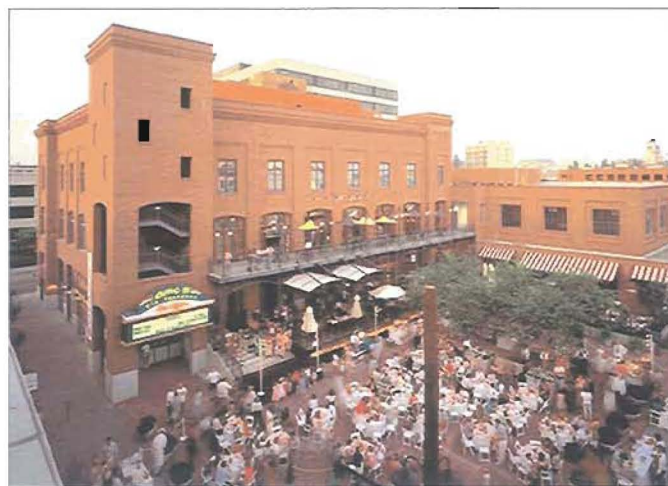
One of the early efforts to redirect and to reshape the City's large block-oriented redevelopment efforts was the "Downtown Pasadena Urban Design Plan," adopted by the City in 1983. Essentially, the Plan, together with the implementing land regulation adopted in 1986, were an early expression of what later became the "New Urbanism." The Plan called for, among other things, a range of diverse uses in distinctive subdistricts, retention and expansion of existing and new residential development; protection and enhancement of the civic center; creation of a gracious downtown environment in harmony with Pasadena's natural setting and the existing built environment; the development of retail shopping and entertainment areas oriented to pedestrian activity; promotion of street activity and amenities oriented to the individual; provision of employment opportunities close to home for City residents, and the promotion of development decision-making oriented to community and public interest.





Key to Map

1. One Colorado
2. Central Park
3. Del Mar Station
4. Memorial Park
5. Holly Street Village
6. Public Library
7. Paseo Colorado
8. One Colorado
9. City Hall
10. Plaza las Fuentes
11. Madison Walk
12. Heritage Walk
13. Trio Apartments
14. Vromans Bookstore
15. Granada Court
16. Archstone
17. Shops on Lake

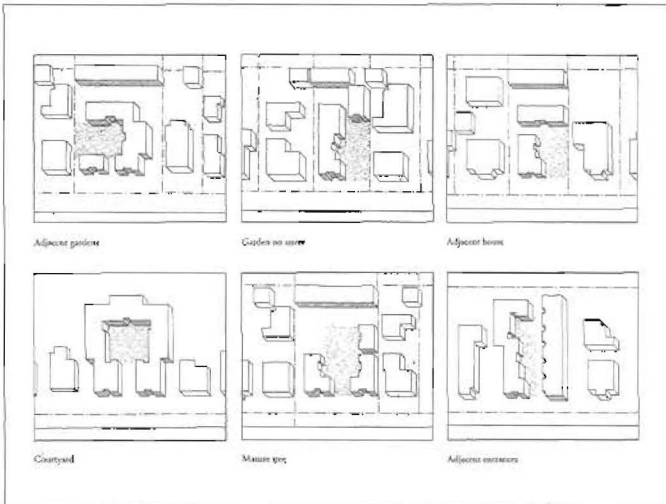


One Colorado (see "The Block")

The City formally recognized the growing new urbanist movement with the adoption of the Ahwanee Principles-based General Plan in 1994. Most recently, these principles were reaffirmed with the adoption of the Central District Specific Plan in November 2004. As a result, the entire revitalized Central Area now represents an excellent "urban laboratory" for testing New Urbanist principles.

New Urbanist Principle #1: Allow a variety of uses and bring activities of daily living within walking distances of homes. Community-driven, market-based visions for the Central District subdistricts have resulted in the development of market niches unique to each subdistrict, but complementary to the Central District as a whole. Each is aimed at retaining/recruiting local retailers while accommodating national and regional retailers and entertainment uses in buildings and complexes with ground floor retail and a mix of

uses on upper floors. The Central District now represents a full range of uses including large and small-scale retail, restaurant, and professional businesses; commercial office; cultural and entertainment; in-town, higher density mixed use urban housing of various types; neighborhood-serving uses; schools; enhanced civic ceremonial spaces; urban parks; governmental, public and civic ceremonial spaces. Importantly, these uses are all located in a compact, walkable environment with a significant and growing in-town population



Pasadena City of Gardens Ordinance

The City of Gardens Standards - written by Dan Solomon, Phoebe Wall, and Christopher Alexander - are the development requirements for constructing multi-family projects (apartments, condominiums, additional units) in Pasadena. These standards are an innovative set of zoning regulations that encourage designs that typify the garden character of earlier apartments and bungalow courts within the city. In February of 1989, the City Council adopted the City of Gardens ordinance with the intent that high-density development would continue to be permitted, but would incorporate design features of the past, principally large, landscaped gardens. This approach would promote new development to be more in scale and character with existing neighborhoods. A central garden is viewed as a coherent, useful space, and now a primary component of multi-family development. The City of Gardens regulations apply to all multi-family projects in the City with a minimum of three units. It does not apply to projects in the downtown Central District, which are built on a density of 87 units per acre.



Romano Village (top right)
 Developer : Toledo Homes
 Program : 8 condos



Meridian Court (bottom right)
 Architect : Moule & Polyzoides
 Developer : Meridian Properties
 Program : 10 condos

New Urbanists Principle #2: Develop urban design guidelines and standards to ensure that new development and rehabilitation responds to the traditional architectural styles and to the existing urban form. As early as 1979, design guidelines were adopted for Old Pasadena to provide a guide for the conservation, adaptive use and enhancement of buildings and streetscapes in Old Pasadena. They addressed building types and basic architectural elements and focused on how the network of streets and alleys throughout the area could be revitalized for pedestrian use. These guidelines served as the model for the design guidelines subsequently adopted in 1983 for the entire Central District and 21 years later for the recently adopted 2004 Central District guidelines. The newly refined and elaborated guidelines are aimed at making streets multipurpose; minimizing pedestrian and auto conflicts; unifying and articulating building façade with an emphasis on human-scale design; respecting existing urban development patterns; developing compatible parking structures with ground uses; protecting and shading pedestrians through streetscape improvements; providing way finding signs and visitor orientation graphics, and incorporating “outdoor rooms” as well as functional communal spaces within residential projects.

New Urbanist Principle #3: Stimulate infill and rehabilitation of vacant and underused sites, and of older historically important structures. In the Old Pasadena historic district alone, over 100 historic buildings - about 1.6 million square feet - have been rehabilitated since 1980. The development of three parking structures in the mid-1980s allowed long-planned projects to proceed which, together with the development of a six-screen movie theater in 1986, paved the way for the area’s long-term economic success. The One Colorado complex, one block of historic buildings rehabilitated in the early 1990s, introduced national and regional retail and restaurants into the area. These and other rehabilitation and infill activities benefited from a shared or “communal” parking strategy developed in the mid-1980s (called “Park Once” by New Urbanists) that did not result in the demolition of any historic structures. Also, in the greater Central District, vacant parcels and underutilized buildings have been and are continuing to be “infilled,” “backfilled” and “refilled” with viable commercial use oriented to the street. Examples include the development of Plaza Las Fuentes in the late 1980s and the transformation of the Plaza Pasadena into the Paseo Colorado in 2001 in the Civic Center/Mid-Town; the renovation in 1995 of the J.W. Robinson Department store into a Target Store and the introduction of a Laeminle theater and expansion of Vroman’s Bookstore in 1998 in the Playhouse; and the renovation of the former Bullocks Department store into a more pedestrian friendly, and street-related retail, restaurant, and grocery store complex, The Shops on Lake [South Lake Avenue]

Shops on Lake (below)
 Architect : MDA Johnson Favaro
 see: Buildings



Vroman’s Bookstore (above left)
 Architect : EPT Design
 Completed : 1998

Plaza las Fuentes (above right)
 Architect : Moore Ruble Yudell
 Developer : Maguire Properties
 Completed : 1988

Districts : Town Centers

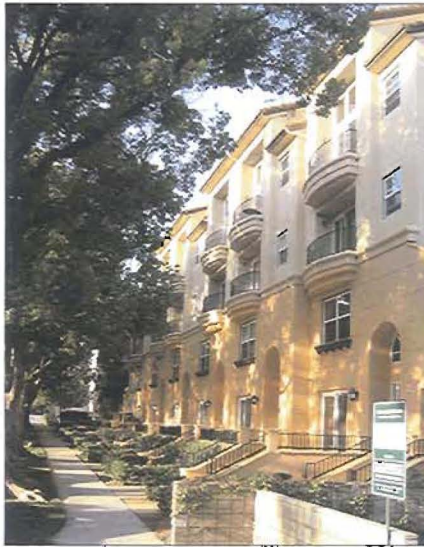
Pasadena's trendy Playhouse District is receiving yet another breath of revitalization with Shea Properties' **Trio Apartments** (right). Pasadena's high-density community has undergone an immense revival due mostly to the hustle and bustle of Colorado Boulevard with its shops, restaurants and art culture. Trio Apartments includes 304 luxury apartments with modern amenities... an increase of rental housing supply in an area of ever-growing demand. The structure, which rests on 3.4 acres, will also provide 14,500 square feet of ground-floor shopping and restaurants.

Architect : Thomas P. Cox Architects
Client/Developer : Shea Properties
Program : 304 apartments, 14,500 sf retail
Status : under construction



Archstone (far right)

Architect : VTBS Architects
Client/Developer : Archstone Smith
Program : 120 apartments, 8000 sf retail
Completed : 2004



Madison Walk (immediate right)

Client/Developer : The Olson Company
Program : 48 townhouses
Completed : 2000

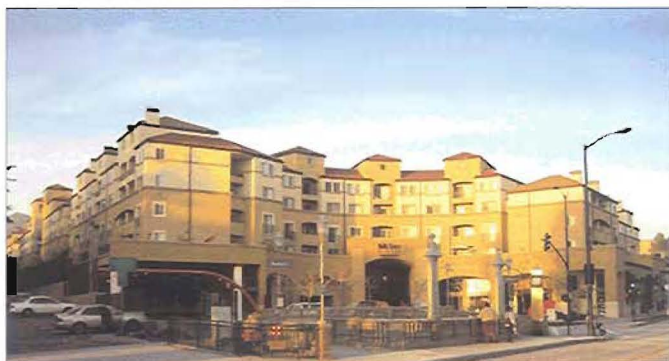


The Olson Company's **Heritage Walk**, (right) an award-winning for-sale home development, injects the charm of mission-style homes into an already pedestrian-friendly environment. The 38 residences are within walking distance of all the action Pasadena has to offer with the Pasadena Playhouse District, Colorado Boulevard and Old Pasadena.

Architect : Bassenian-Lagoni Architects
Client/Developer : The Olson Company
Program : 38 townhomes
Completed : 2000



New Urbanist Principle #4: Create compact, walkable mixed-use centers and neighborhoods served by public transit. Public policy adopted in the City's 1994 General Plan called for targeting the City's growth to the Central District, with the highest densities and concentration of development allowed and encouraged within one-quarter mile radii of the light rail transit stations. This in-town compact development policy has been extremely effective, particularly for new residential development adjacent to Gold Line light rail stations serving the Central District including the Holly Street Village Apartments at Memorial Park Station and the mixed use project at Del Mar Station. From 1994 to 2004, nearly 75% of the City's total additional residential units (1700 out of 2300) have been built within the Central District, with the vast majority built in mixed use developments on or within two blocks of Colorado Boulevard and on or within easy walking distance of light rail stations and/or bus transit stops. This trend is continuing, with approximately 2,200 units either under construction or in the planning stages in the Central District. In the Central District, walkability is encouraged by providing parking in shared parking structures for uses within walking distance ("park once"). The development of multi-level, above and below-grade pedestrian-friendly parking with ground-floor retail uses are linked to the rest of the area through streetscape and alley walkway improvements. Shared use parking reductions and parking caps limit the maximum number of parking spaces required for development.



Holly Street Village (see "Transit Oriented Development")



Del Mar Station (see "The Block")

New Urbanist Principle #5: Enhance the streetscape, public spaces and public places. Community-driven streetscapes plans have been developed for all four subdistricts in the Central District, and have been installed in a substantial way for Old Pasadena, Playhouse and South Lake. As individual projects move forward in the Civic Center/Mid-Town area, elements are being installed incrementally in accordance with approved streetscape plans. The plans for the four subdistricts are aimed at making streets amenable and safe for walking, meeting, dining and conversing. Elements include street trees, pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, trash receptacles, way finding and directional signs, visitor directories, pedestrian-friendly uses and human-scale buildings. In terms of public buildings, the City Hall, Central Library, Civic Auditorium and Convention Center, the Senior Center and the Post Office are all located in the Central District, as are several major churches, religious institutions, and public and private schools. Two urban parks - Central and Memorial - have had adopted renovation plans since the early 1990s, and have recently been improved with renovated structures and improved walkway paving and lighting.

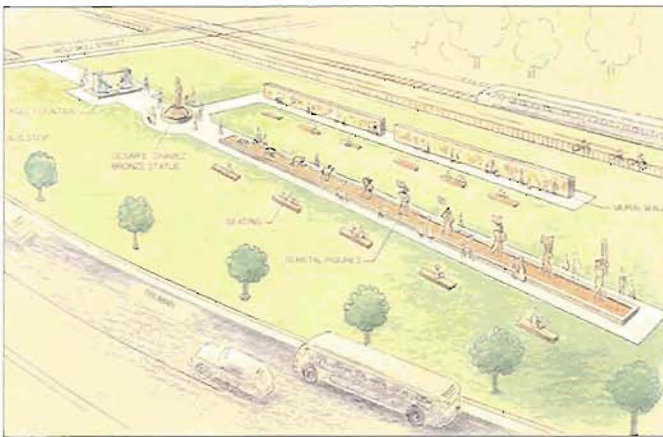
The Future To ensure its success into the future, the Central District needs a conscious strategy aimed at ensuring the provision of neighborhood-serving commercial uses as the construction of higher density housing continues: increasing investments in "city comforts" and walkability for pedestrians; reinforcing transit ridership through improved pedestrian way finding signs; strengthening private sector-based management districts for all subdistricts; continuing efforts to retain independent businesses; enhancing and expanding urban parks and public spaces in the Central District, particularly in the Civic Center; and avoiding "cookie-cutter," formula-based development that disregards local history and the Central District's uniqueness of place.

San Fernando

commentary by Will Cipes

The synthesis of cultural preferences and design elements has manifested itself in one of the oldest communities in the state. In the City of San Fernando officials are marketing the art, history and culture of this California mission city (the Mission San Fernando del Rey was founded in 1797) to attract housing, retail and services, so residents do not have to travel to other communities for shopping and entertainment.

The City of San Fernando, a small suburban city located outside of Los Angeles (the city population is 90 percent Latino), plans to develop parks, apartments, homes and condos in the downtown. About 15 percent of new housing will sell below the city's single family home median price. In 2002, the city's first major Latino New Urbanist project opened. Library Plaza is a redevelopment project on the main downtown thoroughfare that expanded and modernized the county library, and provided an additional venue for new businesses to locate within the city.



The **Cesar Chavez Memorial Plaza** honors the great civil rights leader and labor organizer and consists of a fountain, bronze sculptures of Chavez and ten farmworkers, and a 100-foot mural in a park-like setting that provides a space for reflection on the significance of his life. The plaza was built on a piece of vacant land sandwiched between railroad tracks and major streets in this Latino community in the San Fernando Valley. The effort to create the plaza was led by community members who worked with local government to find \$150,000 in government funding; residents raised an additional \$120,000.

Keeping with the city's history and Latino New Urbanism principles, the design of Library Plaza incorporated mission motifs in the architecture of the building and dedicated a large plaza and water fountain at the center of the complex. The incorporation of the plaza as the focal point of the complex facilitates an atmosphere where consumers and residents can shop and socially interact. On nights and weekends the Latino themed coffee house holds musical and cultural events in the plaza.

The City of San Fernando also recently completed the Cesar Chavez Memorial Transit Plaza. The transit plaza includes a memorial to the farm worker hero, a public rest area for MetroLink commuters and bus riders, and a bikeway connecting to the transit-oriented housing development of Village Green to the MetroLink commuter rail station. The City is also scheduled to complete Heritage Park, which is intended to provide needed park space that acknowledges the contributions and histories of the indigenous people in the region.

The city's efforts are even leading the way for non-Latino communities in the San Fernando Valley in regards to historic preservation. A recent survey found that 228 properties in the city may be eligible for historic land-



mark designation (215 are residential). The City is working closely with local residents to draft a historic preservation ordinance. Currently, no other community in the San Fernando Valley including, the wealthier communities of Tarzana and Encino are attempting historic preservation at the magnitude of the City of San Fernando.

The city of San Fernando, accordingly, functions through the strength of the community, which is founded on the traditions maintained from generation to generation. These traditions are sustained through the rich cultural history associated with the development San Fernando Mission.

In San Fernando, similar to Latin America, Roman Catholic churches are centrally located throughout the city. The centrality of the churches provides residents a place for social gatherings and celebrations. Sustaining Latino tradition, the churches of San Fernando ring their bells (as in small towns in Mexico), calling thousands to masses, many of whom walk from nearby homes to celebrate mass in Spanish and English each weekend.

This strong tradition attracts enthusiasts from throughout the San Fernando Valley, establishing the city as the Latino cultural and religious hub in the region. The churches and their centrality also lead to other types of social interactions and compact city behavior. Many individuals assemble after mass at nearby parks or at the local mall. For example, directly across the Saint Ferdinand church lies the San Fernando Mall where many people often go after mass to shop or stroll through the open air shopping center. Such traditions have evolved from Mexico where churches are situated adjacent to plazas and major commercial districts.

The maintenance of traditions, moreover, has become a form of cultural expression for residents and provides a basis for celebrating and renewing the cultural heritage of San Fernando. The festivals of San Fernando, such as Heritage Days (which take place throughout the month of June), the Mayor's Menudo Cook-off & Fall Fiesta, and the Cesar Chavez Commemoration Day all provide opportunities for residents to further assert their culture and history.

Thus, the maintenance of history and embrace of culture appears to have given San Fernando a comparative advantage over other cities in the region. The projects in San Fernando, reveal that cities can successfully develop adaptable environments that allow residents to express their cultural preferences. The City of San Fernando's adherence to principles of Latino New Urbanism has facilitated an opportunity for residents to retain their cultural identity in a well functioning community that is consistent with achieving success in America.



Downtown Cathedral City

As was true for many towns in the Coachella Valley, the prewar 2-lane version of Palm Canyon Drive (State Highway 111) was Cathedral City's original downtown "Main Street." With the Valley's resort growth came successive roadway widenings that added multiple lanes, eliminated curbside parking, and destroyed the original small shops' relationship to the road. The result was disinvestment, blight, and the replacement of downtown with marginal strip development.

To answer the community's desire for a reestablished downtown, a workshop process created a vision for the revitalization on Palm Canyon Drive. The ensuing urban design and revitalization plan rebuilt Cathedral City's historic downtown with a new civic, retail services, and entertainment core. It structured new streets, plazas, and public buildings as private development catalysts and created an action plan for redevelopment agency land acquisitions and developer negotiations. It also contained development controls to guide the form of new investment and identified opportunity sites for development in and around the new Town Center. The streetscape design for Palm Canyon Drive leveraged a county- and state-funded Highway 111 widening project to create a mixed-use "Grand Boulevard" with landscaped medians and protected frontage parking as an exciting address for the new downtown. The design included a landmark bell tower, formal date palm tree and other desert landscape plantings, high quality decorative lighting, and pedestrian-oriented street furnishings.

Today the revitalized 500-acre Town Center district includes a new city hall and town square, multiplex cinema with an IMAX theater, and supporting mixed-use developments.

Urban Design : Freedman Tung & Bottomley



Before revitalization



Before revitalization

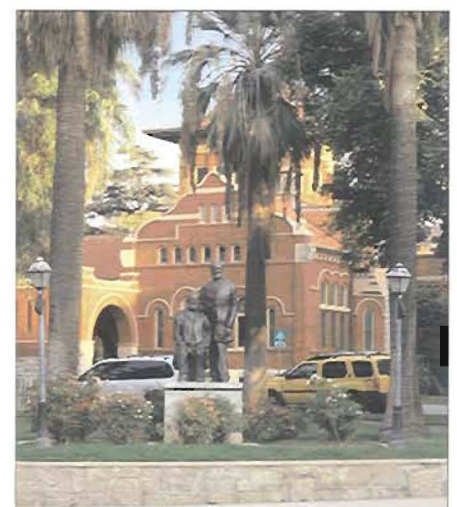
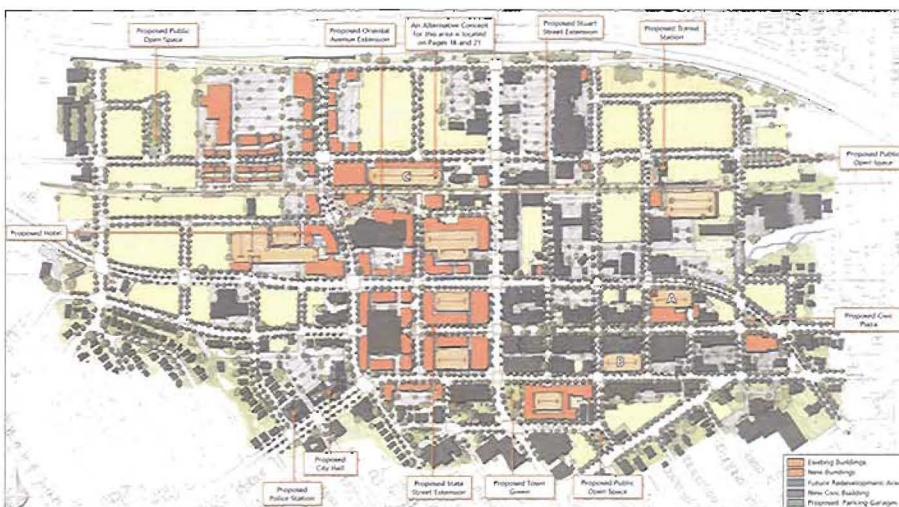
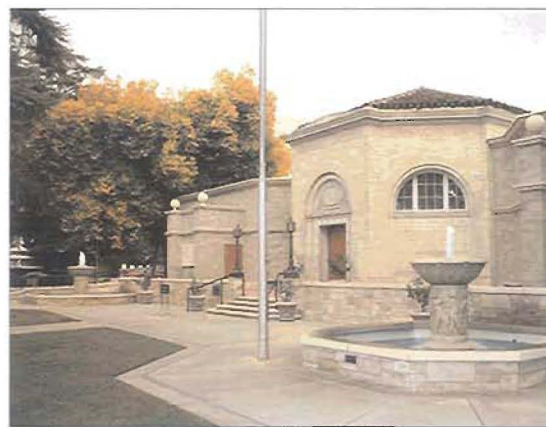


Downtown Redlands

Named for the color of the local adobe soil, Redlands continues a rich tradition of civic amenities and local character, and has long been a special place in the Inland Empire. The A.K. Smiley Public Library, Old City Hall, the Santa Fe Depot, the University of Redlands and surviving orange packing houses reflect the town's foundations and quality of civic life.

But like most suburban communities, Downtown Redlands was in decline from competition by the freeway and auto-oriented development. Fortunately in Redlands, the community has capitalized on its compact historic center to keep the economic base healthy and to promote the downtown as a center of community life. The historic library has been rehabilitated and expanded, and State Street was improved as a walkable outdoor retail and service district. A trellis provides a shaded walkway between State Street and the Redlands Mall, over coming pedestrian barriers on busy Orange Street and the mall parking lot. Special events like the weekly Market night bring residents from all of Redland's neighborhoods.

A Downtown Master Plan by Torti Gallas and Partners envisions expanding the compact-scale of the downtown area toward the I-10 Freeway to discourage auto oriented sprawl. The plan creates a proactive strategy for future growth, and provides the City and its residents with a unified vision for a pedestrian-friendly, amenity-rich mixed-use environment in both the immediate and long-range future. Concepts include a mix of development to promote a pedestrian-friendly 24-hour atmosphere - a small hotel, movie theater addition, office and retail space, and a variety of residential possibilities. These strategies are supported by a locally-funded central parking structure for existing land uses as well as new potential development. The plan reflects a motto engraved on the ornate façade of the historic Redlands Bowl amphitheater - "Without Vision, A People Perish."



Downtown Culver City

commentary by Jack Skelley



The three most important things in real estate are location, location, location. Unless you're trying to revitalize your downtown. Then the three most important things are location, location and figuring out a way to prevail against powerful but shortsighted interest groups. That, at least, has been the case in Culver City which, following the examples of Santa Monica, Pasadena and Glendale, has waged a long battle to bring back vibrancy. (I write this as a Culver City citizen)

The endeavor has had several successes and a few setbacks. Most of the latter have involved Town Plaza. This is conceived as the cornerstone of downtown redevelopment, across from the historic Culver Hotel at Washington, Culver and Ince Boulevards. The initial phase of Town Plaza is now complete with a new Pacific Theaters complex, shops and al fresco restaurants. The Redevelopment Agency also successfully moved a popular Trader Joe's store to a larger location in the Town Plaza district.

But a second phase of Town Plaza is yet to arrive. Plans originally called for a commercial project created by San Diego-based developer Oliver McMillan. This portion of Town Plaza has been indefinitely thwarted by a dour office market. And the proposed site for the commercial component remains a forlorn parking lot. Urbanists have urged that the parcel be turned into residential development instead. This would surely add street life to the area, which, despite new movies and food, still tends to roll up its sidewalks at night. But, because of the larger share of property tax revenue commercial development would provide, the city seems keen on sticking to its original plan.

As for the Pacific Theater complex, it almost didn't get built as well. Homeowners groups such as Citizens for a Livable Culver City loudly protested that the new development would spoil the small-town feel of Culver City. They even mounted an aggressive, accusatory initiative campaign to stop development. Others suspected that these NIMBY groups were not so much concerned about preserving Culver City's Mayberry-esque charms as they were guarding against "those people" - you know, outsiders encroaching from beyond the city's borders.

But in the end, as former Culver City Mayor Edward Wolkowitz told me, "More people wanted to see our downtown animated than didn't. And a lot of people got turned off by the in-your-face tactics of the 'Yes-on-No' people." So the city prevailed with the theater and retail. And it has invested at least \$50 million in other downtown infrastructure and renovations. This includes a network of parking structures that successfully concentrate cars so that the sidewalks are alive with people (at least on weekends.) Streetscape

improvements include landscaping and a public art program, which also lend downtown a sense of vitality.

Besides new restaurants, the city has attracted significant art spaces - including The Project and Blum & Poe - to complement existing destinations such as the eccentric Museum of Jurassic Technology. And Center Theatre Group, the arts institution which programs downtown Los Angeles' Music Center venues, has worked with the city to restore the Culver Theater into a beautiful new place for live productions, the Kirk Douglas Theater.

Does Culver City now boast a thriving downtown? Not quite. There remain many empty storefronts, even in some lovingly restored historic Art Deco buildings. Restaurants have still not received the boost they hoped for on weeknights. But the bones are now in place for downtown to grow in the right direction.

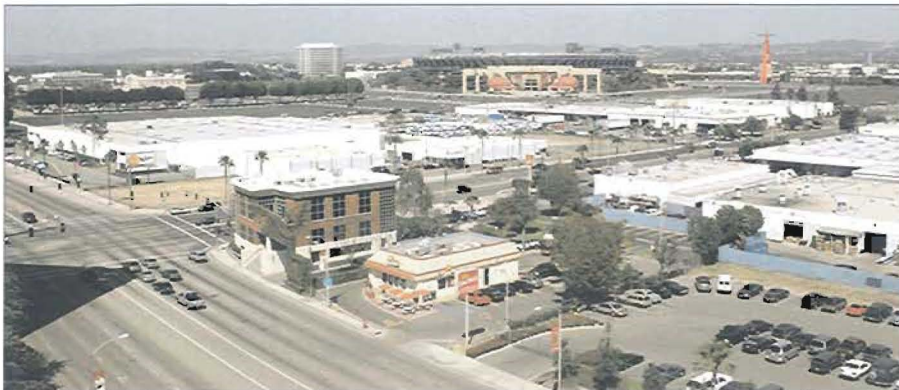
Of course, building some homes on the forlorn parking lot across the street from the theater would certainly help.

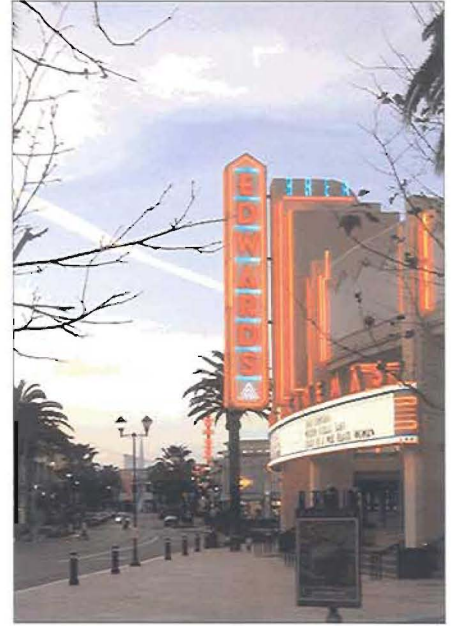


Platinum Triangle, Anaheim

The City of Anaheim is undergoing a transformation due to dramatic population and employment growth seen in Orange County. The result is a demand for a central live, work and play area. The City has answered this need by adopting a plan to redevelop the Platinum Triangle and passing zoning overlays to allow for higher-density projects in areas that are not zoned for residential. Introducing mixed-use projects to the city is a key component of

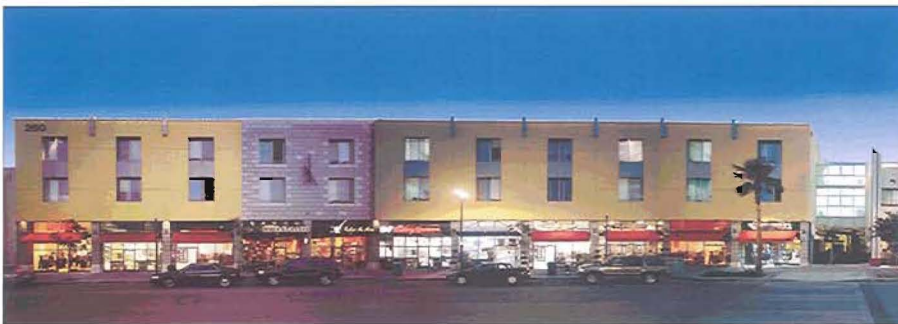
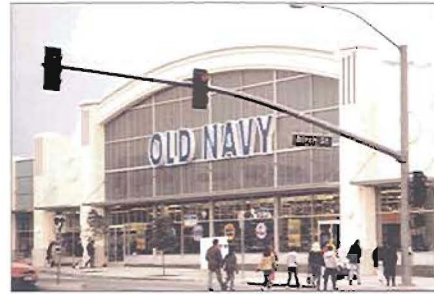
the revitalization efforts of downtown Anaheim. Platinum Triangle is an 820-acre urban development that will include five million square feet of office space, up to 9,175 residential units and over two million square feet of additional commercial space. To complement this 24-hour, high-density, urban environment, the City Council approved the Stadium Lofts developed by Windstar Communities and Style Interior Design Inc. architects. The 390 luxury urban lofts and stacked flats will be part of a 63-acre community with 8,100 square feet of restaurant space and 9,817 square feet of retail use.





Downtown Brea

Brea, whose name means "tar" in Spanish, is northern Orange County's regional transportation and retail center whose numerous housing types and award-winning schools have made it one of the County's most desirable communities. Following the decline of the oil operations that once defined the City, Brea's town center activity faded as regional malls were developed elsewhere in Orange County. In the late 1990's, Brea launched a \$100 million effort to redevelop 25 acres of its Downtown district into a vibrant mixed-use project. The neo-traditional master plan designed by the city and RTKL architects, recalls the ambiance of a classic Main Street with 'round-the-clock vitality and an emphasis on pedestrian activity along the street. The District includes a 22-screen Cineplex, more than 220,000 SF of retail including restaurants, anchor retail stores and inline shops, nearly 100 residential units with a number of housing types, two parking structures, civic spaces, and a year-round events program. Pedestrian amenities include street trees, seating areas, fountains and public art, and on-street parking protects the pedestrian and slows traffic. A District-wide parking authority allows shared parking solutions, thereby reducing demand requirements. CIM Group was another key player that worked closely with the City to develop the Birch Street Promenade, the retail and mixed-use portion of the redevelopment. In an effort to give Birch Street a sense of urban variety, CIM Group hired different architects for each of its building, producing a set of buildings that are unique to their setting and land use plans. Since the completion of the new Downtown Brea in 2000, the area has become the community meeting place and focal point of the City of Brea. The project has been the recipient of numerous planning and urban design awards.



As part of the City of Brea's \$100 million Downtown revitalization in the late 1990's, new residential units were developed alongside retail and mixed use projects to create a vibrant town center. The Birch Street Lofts (left), completed in 1999, is one of these projects. CIM Group led the



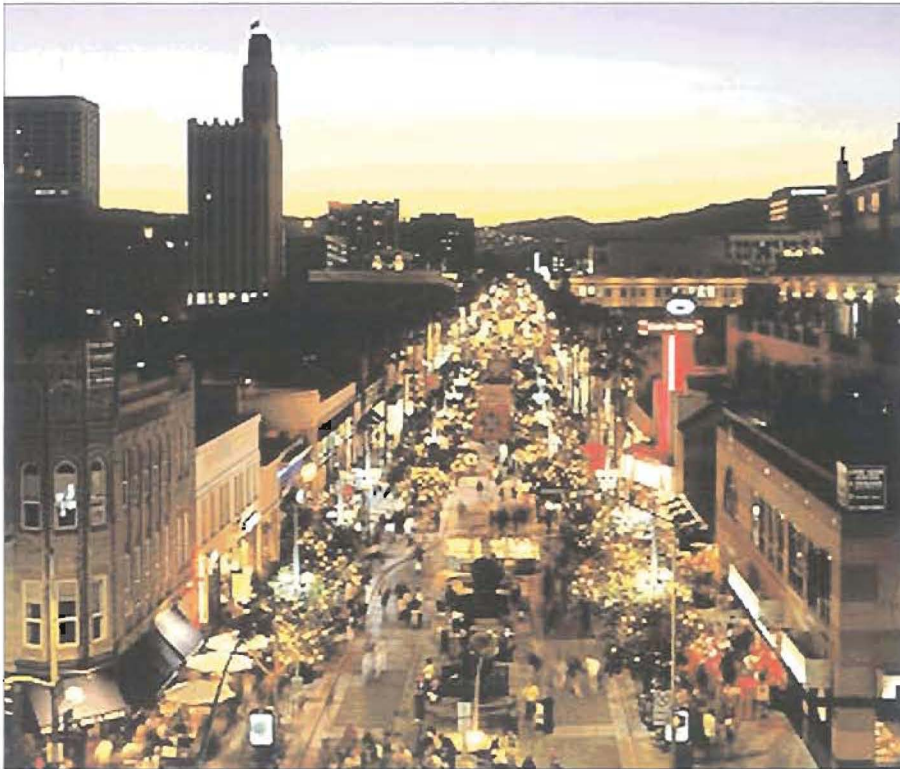
development of the retail and mixed-use portion of Brea's Downtown redevelopment, hiring a variety of architects to contribute to the buildings. Koning Eizenberg Architecture designed a multi-colored, three-story mixed use space with 12,300 square feet of ground floor retail space and 24 loft units above. The lofts average a small 750 square feet, helping the project achieve its minimal construction budget of \$65 a square foot.

Downtown Santa Monica

commentary by Darrell Clarke

Santa Monica's 1984 General Plan / Land Use Element and Zoning Ordinance embodied many New Urbanist principles before the term was coined, in reaction to earlier 1960s-style high-rises. Mixed-use buildings would be encouraged downtown, with pedestrian-serving retail required on their ground-floors. A "build-to" line was mandated, ending front parking lots along commercial boulevards. Heights were generally limited to four stories downtown, with upper story step-backs to protect light and air on the sidewalk.

After practicing New Urbanism for two decades, it is a good time to assess what worked, what could be done better, and plan mid-course corrections. We have begun to do just that - with the broad public participation Santa Monica is known for - in new Land Use and Circulation Elements and Zoning Ordinance. The vision articulated so far is for a diverse, pedestrian-oriented, small-scale city by the beach.



Third Street Promenade - Three blocks of Third Street in downtown were converted to a pedestrian mall in the 1960s, served by six parking structures on adjacent streets. Never very successful, with the addition of the Santa Monica Place indoor mall immediately south it further declined, and was known for used book, surplus, and fabric stores, and a couple of last-run movie theaters. Its 1980s redesign into the Third Street Promenade was anchored by three new multi-screen theaters. It featured restaurants with outdoor seating, a redesigned pedestrian street (designed to allow off-peak auto access, but not used), kiosks and vending carts, street performers, and signature topiary dinosaur fountains. The Janss Building at the south end is noted for its Broadway Deli and upper-story residential. More recently, the Transit Mall project rebuilt crossing streets with a dedicated bus-lane loop and wider sidewalks.

Janss Court (right) is the first project built under design guidelines that encourage mixed-use projects along Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade. Janss Court contains commercial space on the street level, topped by three floors of office space and three floors of high-end rental apartments. Restaurants and a movie theater encourage pedestrian traffic at night. A twenty-foot wide pedestrian corridor through the building connects the Promenade with a City-owned parking structure. The design incorporates the facade of an Art Deco movie theater located on the site. The third floor steps back from the perimeter to preserves the cornice line of the two and three story buildings on the Promenade, and provides terraces for the apartments.

Architect : Johannes VanTilburg
Client/Developer : The Janss Corporation
Completed : 1988





The highest-rated LEED green building in the United States, **The Robert Redford Building** - West Coast headquarters of Natural Resources Defense Council - is set within the urban context of downtown Santa Monica. This makes it conveniently walkable to public transportation and other neighborhood destinations. High-tech and low-tech green features such as light wells, reused materials, solar energy and recycled water exist in a "beach vernacular"-style structure consonant with the surrounding community.

Architect : Moule & Polyzoides
 Client/Developer : Natural Resources Defense Council
 Completed : 2003

Problems of Success - Upscale national chain stores - Banana Republic, Restoration Hardware, Pottery Barn, Apple Store - have replaced local retailers and restaurants. Some local residents feel, "no one goes there anymore, it's too crowded." As a response, the City recently enacted limits on large storefronts and incentives for second-story restaurants.

Santa Monica Place declined as the Promenade rose. Last fall, its owner the Macerich Company, proposed redeveloping it into a fourth block of the Promenade, topped with 300-foot condominium towers. Following a storm of critical reaction, a new public visioning process is underway.

In the last decade Santa Monica's mixed-use housing incentives led to a number of apartment buildings with some ground-floor retail on Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Streets downtown. But these have been accompanied with concerns. Built lot-by-lot, they missed opportunities for pedestrian paseos and courtyards within blocks. Although the 1984 Land Use Element suggested a park in the area, no public and little private open space balances their high densities. Local businesses have been displaced. And where do they fall on the spectrum of pedestrian-oriented to auto-oriented density?

As Santa Monica has become a major population center traffic congestion and neighborhood cut-through traffic have become major public issues. The City has implemented speed-humps, curb-extensions, landscaped boulevard islands, lighted crosswalks, and the downtown Transit Mall bus lane. But their critics decry Traffic Calming as making traffic slower.

Building on its original urbanism, the question now in Santa Monica isn't whether, but how to fine-tune New Urbanism to best achieve its benefits and maintain what residents cherish about our city.



The **Downtown Transit Mall** is a ten-block transit improvement project linking important civic places such as the library, the Third Street Promenade, Palisades Park, and Santa Monica Pier that was funded with transportation grants. Project objectives included improving traffic circulation, enhancing transit facilities, upgrades to the pedestrian experience, and better linkages to nearby areas. Sidewalks have been widened, and dedicated bus transit lanes have been established. The project demonstrates how public art can improve a major public works projects through the implementation of the artistic theme, "Where the Sea Meets the Land." Pacific Rim influences are also incorporated. The theme is developed through five primary design elements: paving, lighting, plant materials, arbors and furniture amenities. Examples of the artistic components include color-enriched concrete paving; new street lights and lighted arbors; interactive transit kiosks and custom signage; lighted transit shelters; ornamental drinking fountains; custom bike racks; new street trees; glass tiled stainless steel newspaper racks; and bollards with tile mosaic.

Downtown Santa Ana

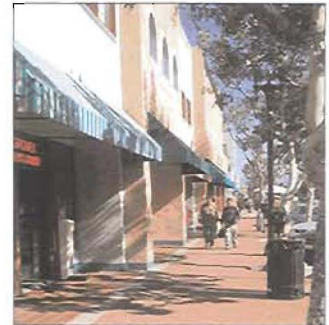
commentary by Will Cipes
& Katherine Perez

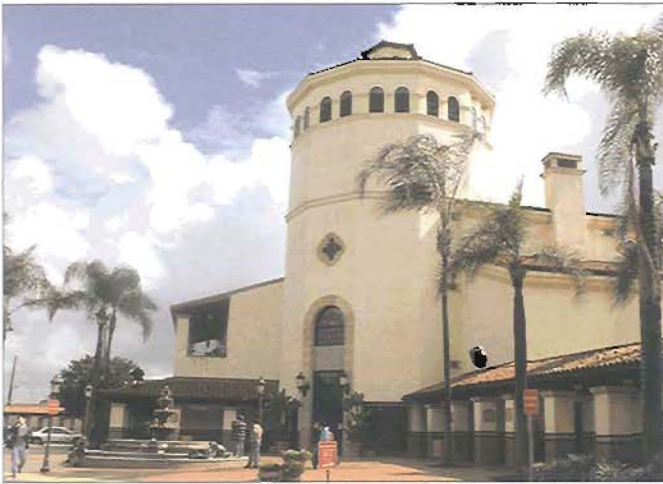
The City of Santa Ana is the poster child for all Southern California cities in the year 2020. It is one that is complex, diverse and rich in the qualities of urban alternatives. Early on its city leaders recognized that Santa Ana was not destined to become the next Santa Monica or Pasadena. Santa Ana was rapidly becoming Latinized by new residents, who brought with them an entrepreneurial spirit and ambition for better livelihoods for themselves and their families. These changes also presented great opportunities for development and growth in the burgeoning Orange County community.



Santa Ana is over 77% Hispanic, with a median age of 28 years and a median income of \$36,962. Nestled in the belly of traditionally master planned communities, Santa Ana was bypassed by much of the sprawl style development of the last two decades primarily due to an image of serving secondary markets and immigrant groups. However, two inter-related factors have benefited the City. First, because of the perception that it was less financially viable, the City retained its historic turn of the century downtown core, an area ripe for housing and retail reuse. Second, as land costs in Southern California have skyrocketed, cities once deemed less financially viable - such as Santa Ana - have benefited

Certainly, Santa Ana is in the midst of a transformative process merging the traditions of the past with the undeni-





able trends of the future. The City was faced the challenge of many cities in transition - one of relevance. How would Santa Ana evolve to meet the needs of a new era but still retain the cultural and traditional anchors of the past? Santa Ana responded by choosing to revitalize and invest in the historic downtown and embrace the booming ethnic population's economic development power.

The City of Santa Ana directed a multi-phased effort to reintroduce housing and retail (ethnic and traditional) into the downtown. This effort resulted in a series of targeted efforts to retain the character of its historic places while introducing contemporary retail, restaurants and art galleries.

In order to retain the area's thriving artist population, the Community Redevelopment Agency financed the reuse of vacant or underutilized historic structures within a designated arts corridor. This has resulted in numerous live-work artists' lofts, small independent art galleries, and large arts facilities affiliated with nearby Cal-State University Fullerton and the Orange County High School High School of the Arts.



Small business creation was buoyed by the creation of a city-wide enterprise zone in 1993. The Zone encompasses 98% of all industrial and commercially zoned land in the City allowing businesses to receive state tax credits. In addition, over 5,000 jobs have been vouchered for Santa Ana businesses as part of the Zone benefits. The success of the Enterprise Zone is evident in the many ethnic-oriented small businesses in downtown Santa Ana.



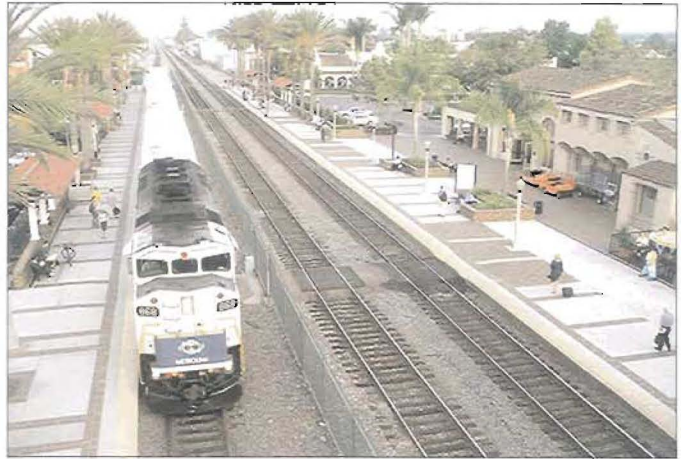
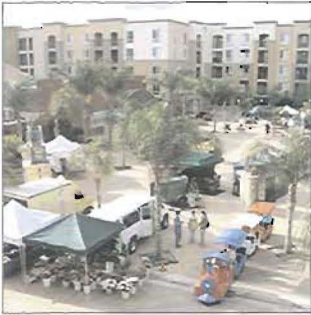
Additional pedestrian enhancements such as pavement treatment, street furniture, and pedestrian safety equipment such as bulb-outs and bollards were introduced to provide a safe environment. The City initiated an "Ambassadors" program that brought local high school students to the downtown to provide maintenance and hospitality support to visitors.

The result of Santa Ana's redevelopment strategy is the successful co-mingling of older, ethnic-oriented retail and services with new loft-style condominiums inhabited by artists and young professionals. Chic bistros and coffee-shops are right around the corner from Latino music stores, and bridal shops, while a vibrant streetscape features tattoo-ed young artists buying frutas frescas and doritos fritos from street vendors.

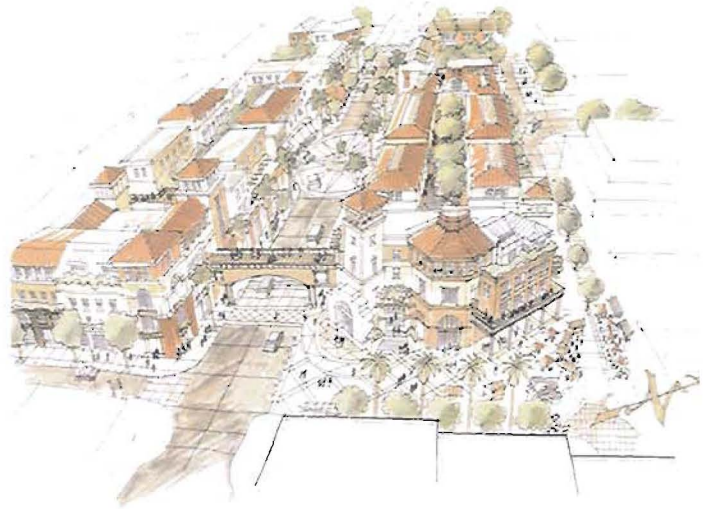
Downtown Fullerton - SOCO District

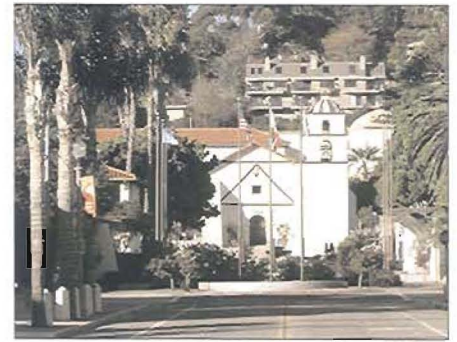
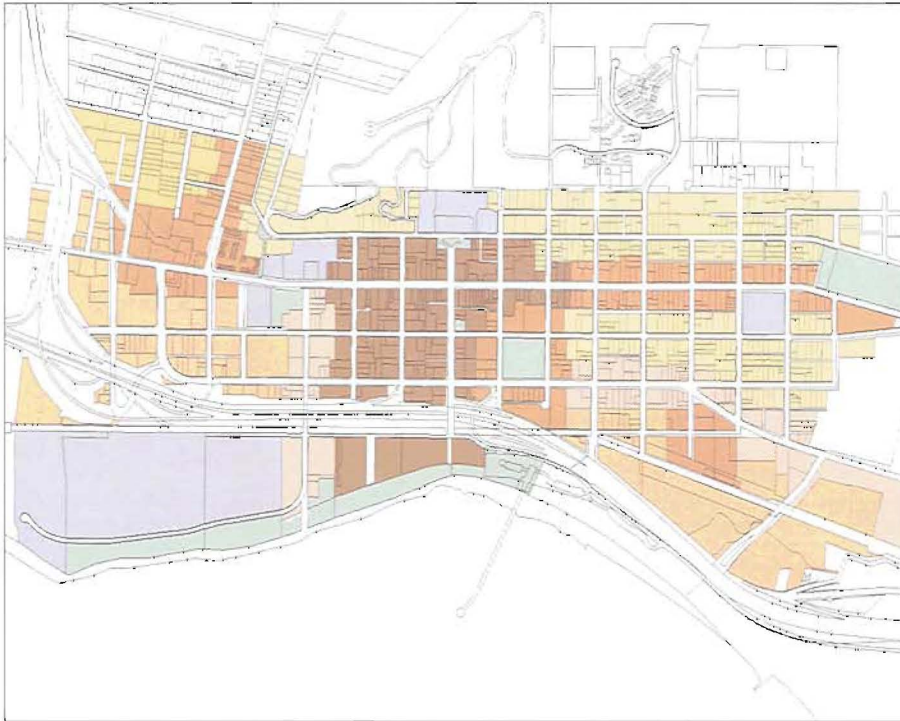
The SOCO District (South of Commonwealth) is a key element in the revitalization of historic downtown Fullerton. On Santa Fe Avenue, both east and west of Harbor Boulevard, SOCO offers an assortment of restaurants, bars, lounges, and shops designed to add to the economic growth that downtown Fullerton has been experiencing over the past decade. There are over 70 historical buildings and more than 35,000 square feet of retail space and

275,000 square feet of office space. City planners were able to give the old-town atmosphere a face-lift by converting historical buildings into mixed-use space instead of tearing down the history that is unique to downtown Fullerton. The area is now a combination of rich historical culture with contemporary urban conveniences.



John Laing Homes and The Pelican Group have partnered to develop the urban infill town center **Vintage Square** (right), the first for-sale mixed-use project in the heart of downtown Fullerton. The project is part of a commitment to revitalize the community by creating an elegant, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. The plan includes 106 residential units including flats, lofts, live-work units, town homes, brownstones, and penthouses ranging from 1,250 to 2,000 square feet. The proposed 30,000 square feet of commercial space will complement the vibrant restaurant and business district that surrounds the site. A new underground structure will increase parking up to 50 percent for local businesses.



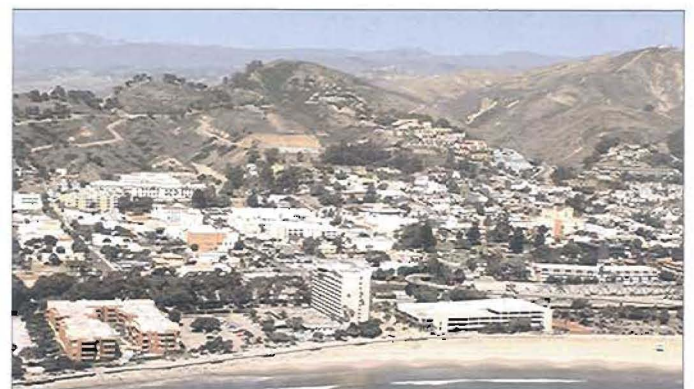


Downtown Ventura

Downtown Ventura has a coherent urban center - compact, mixed-use neighborhoods radiating from the urban core, a concentration of civic and community spaces, pedestrian accessibility and transit options - and a strong commitment throughout the community to adapt and grow while maintaining the city's unique urban character. Inclusionary housing requirements are in place, the City is developing an integrated transportation plan, and initiatives are under way for a new cultural center and commuter rail station. New Urbanist principles guide the City's planning. The City Council recently endorsed a form-based development code, the first of such zoning in California, that takes into account an extensive and detailed analysis of Downtown Ventura's existing streets, blocks, buildings, public open space, and landscape. The Ventura code provides a framework for expanding, enhancing, and protecting Ventura's rich urban and architectural heritage. The code is divided into four primary sections:

- 1) the Development Code portion stipulates the setbacks, eight, and parking requirements of a proposed building;
- 2) the Architectural Types portion describes the form, size, use, and disposition of a proposed building;
- 3) the Frontage Types portion explains the treatment of the street-facing facades of a proposed building with front porches, stoops, arcades, or storefronts; and
- 4) the Blended Type Development portion insures that large land parcels are developed according to the scale and character of Ventura's existing urban fabric through the introduction of streets, alleys, and a variety of buildings types.

In many cases, developers postponed new projects and redesigned them based on the new code so that new infill investment would integrate with the existing physical framework. The community further enacted regulations to preserve agricultural land and open spaces that define the urban edge (see SOAR). The legacy of Ventura's physical form, combined with dedicated city, community and private involvement, creates an authentic and growing downtown.



Huntington Park

commentary by Gloria Ohland

In the 1980s Huntington Park was overcrowded and impoverished, its main street was dying, its general fund was over-obligated, and its redevelopment agency was bankrupt, all the city's tax increment dollars obligated to pay for pre-existing debt. Moreover, existing land uses and zoning were seriously compromised by the fact that population had doubled while the housing stock remained static. Two or three families were now living in houses designed for one. Illegal modifications had turned garages and patios into residences, and two or more cars per household were parked on narrow streets that weren't designed for parking.



And the new population was using space differently. Shops lining Pacific Boulevard in downtown were being opened up to the street, with merchandise - Western wear, Quinceanera dresses and wedding gowns - spilling out onto the sidewalk and using up space. It was the Mercado style of retailing familiar to immigrants, but the city's third and fourth-generation Latino residents were leaving Huntington Park to shop in nearby Montebello at the Banana Republic and Gap instead. In short, Huntington Park's '50s-era general plan, zoning code and design standards were really out of whack with the reality of the place. Half the population was spending their money elsewhere. And the community was 99.9 percent built out with no land to develop.



So the city developed an aggressive redevelopment program and began identifying sites to recycle into other uses. And city staff began reaching out to the community, forming partnerships with residents and local businesses through "block watch" meetings and neighborhood improvement programs, the chamber of commerce and a business improvement district. In order to indicate the seriousness of its commitment to these partnerships, the cash-strapped city began dedicating 15 percent of federal CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funding to community groups for after-school programs and to the L.A. Unified School District to improve local schools.



There were many problems, including the fact that proprietors of the city's many Mom and Pop businesses had no time for meetings, immigrant residents worked odd hours and weren't inclined to participate, and there was a language problem. The challenges were such that then-Planning Director Jack Wong and his wife May Ying started a nonprofit, called Ethnopolis, to bring urban professionals together to discuss strategies for ethnic communities undergoing similar cultural and demographic changes. When it came time to revamp city zoning and design standards it's not surprising that the city decided to go New Urbanist: Higher density housing was encouraged all around downtown, where horizontal mixed use was permitted, and the transit and pedestrian orientation was enhanced. Downtown became walkable and well-connected to the region via transit; definitely a place where people could live and shop without a car. And residents were allowed to create accessory units and garage apartments, as long as they were brought up to code.



Pacific Boulevard became La Boulevard Tradicional and a mecca, like Broadway in downtown L.A., for visitors from Mexico. But the city also succeeded in accommodating those who wanted national chain stores by targeting industrial land on either side of Slauson Boulevard for redevelopment, which helped the city lure Home Depot, Staples and a big fitness center. The La Curacao Hispanic department store has created a wildly successful outdoor mall with a plaza and fountain

and lush landscaping, and a mid-sized “lifestyle center” is being built to accommodate a Costco and Walmart, Target, Cole’s and other chain stores.

It wasn’t long before the 600 small shops lining a half mile stretch of Pacific Boulevard began commanding rents as high as those in Santa Monica, and more riders were getting on and off buses there than there are riders on any of the stops on the Blue Line, the most heavily traveled light rail line in the nation. The Huntington Park location of El Gallo Giro, a popular Mexican deli, bakery and butcher, is regularly listed as No. 3 or No. 4 on the *L.A. Business Journal’s* list of highest grossing restaurants. The Daniel Jewelers store is the most profitable outlet in that locally owned chain. Huntington Park succeeded in capitalizing on its strengths - a strong retail sector of family-oriented Mom-and-Pop owned businesses and a burgeoning residential population of young families that shop locally. But there are still problems: The increased density has taxed existing infrastructure, and the lack of money to fund infrastructure improvements is causing the political pendulum to swing away from the pro-housing pro-development majority that has dominated city politics. It will be interesting to see how the next act plays out.



Old Town Monrovia

In the late seventies, nearly half of the storefronts on Myrtle Avenue - Monrovia's main street - were vacant. A committed effort was made by community leaders not to abandon

the city's historic heart, but to reinvest in it by improving the climate for local business and small-scale shopping. Traffic on Myrtle Avenue was reduced to two lanes through widened sidewalks, narrowed intersections, and mid-block pedestrian crossings with enhanced lighting, street furniture, and attractive signage. Street parking is supplemented with ample shared parking behind storefronts. The design of a Von's Pavilion supermarket fits in well with the pedestrian atmosphere in Old Town and a recently completed Cineplex adds more nighttime attractions to the area. At the end of the five-block long Old Town district, the city's library is located in a small park, along with play areas and a bandshell. City Hall, a fire and police station, the post office and community center are just around the corner. Surrounding neighborhoods within walking distance are known for their historic Victorian architecture and both they and Old Town are popular film and television settings. By making Myrtle Avenue an attractive walkable street, Monrovia created a fresh reason for residents to shop locally. A Family Festival held each Friday evening on Myrtle Avenue has become the largest weekly street festival in California.

Districts : Town Centers

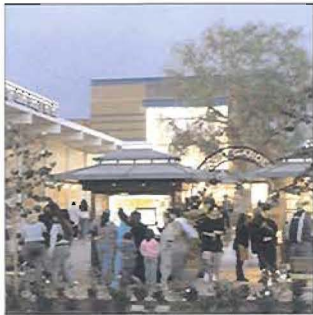
Victoria Gardens, Rancho Cucamonga

commentary by Alan Loomis

Rancho Cucamonga, on the eastern edges of metropolitan Los Angeles known as the Inland Empire, is one of the fastest growing communities in Southern California. Much of Rancho Cucamonga is isolated, single-use PODs typical of sprawl - apartment complexes, single family homes arranged by price points, and strip-oriented retail. It is a most unlikely place to find a pedestrian oriented town center, yet this is precisely what one discovers at Victoria Gardens.

Where the City's General Plan called for a conventional regional shopping mall, Forest City Development proposed an outdoors "lifestyle center" in the form of a traditional village downtown. Unlike other lifestyle centers in the LA region - such as The Grove in the Fairfax neighborhood - Victoria Gardens welcomes cars within its center. A variety of narrow streets balances pedestrians, slow moving vehicles, and on-street parking with meters. These streets define an urban pattern of twelve

300'x300' blocks, with the center of each block dedicated to shared parking - sometimes in structures. As with historic village centers, a variety of buildings can be found on each block - a team of four different design firms worked to generate a diversity of architectural styles and characters. Hidden in pedestrian paseos are vintage neon signs that generate the appearance of layered history. Entrances to large retail boxes - such as Macy's and Robinsons-May department stores and the cinema complex - terminate visual axes and streets, but their blank sides are "wrapped" with thinner and smaller retail storefronts. At the center of Victoria Gardens is a town square, surrounded by restaurants and family-oriented stores.



But importantly, unlike other lifestyle centers, Victoria Gardens is not entirely dedicated to shopping. A public community facility - Rancho Cucamonga's cultural center, a library and public theater - is under construction at the north end of the square. The mixture of commerce, entertainment, and culture makes Victoria Gardens more than a pretty mall.

What is missing at Victoria Gardens, however, are offices, housing, and pedestrian connections to surrounding developments. A second phase, a residential component under construction, may increase the mix of uses within the walking radius of Victoria Gardens' town square. As viewed from the neighboring arterial highways, Victoria Gardens looks just like any other regional shopping center - blank walls fronting large surface parking lots. Significantly, the urban pattern of streets and blocks extends into the perimeter parking, suggesting that future phases of development will replace surface lots with structures lined by retail, offices, and townhouses. It is not inconceivable to imagine Victoria Gardens expanded and redeveloped into richly mixed-use, heterogeneous and historically layered downtown, as authentic and lived-in as any historic town center in the region. It may seem contrived today, but it only opened last Christmas, and Victoria Gardens' urban structure should prove robust enough to absorb change incrementally over the coming generations.





Urban Design & Architecture : Altoon+Porter Architects, Elkus-Manfredi Architects, Field Paoli Architects, KA Inc, & SWA
 Client/Developer : Forest City Development California Inc. & Lewis Investment Company
 Program : 1.3 million square feet of retail and entertainment on 147 acres
 Completion : 2004

Victoria Gardens shopping center, located 60 miles east of Los Angeles in a neighborhood of the Inland Empire that has grown quickly from its agricultural roots into a low-density area characterized by sprawl, offers a unique pedestrian-oriented center to the town. The long-awaited addition of a "place" in the city of Rancho Cucamonga has been well received by residents. At 147 acres, Victoria Gardens is large enough to constitute its own neighborhood, a mixed-use project of 30 city blocks that incorporates major department stores and multiple civic functions as an integral part of the surrounding community's fabric. The project includes over one million square feet of retail, with future phases adding up to 200,000 square feet of commercial office space and 500 residential units. Twenty acres of housing on site will allow people to live within walking distance of all the amenities of Rancho Cucamonga's new downtown. A new Cultural Center, comprising of a library and children's theater, will overlook the town square and form the centerpiece of the project. Victoria Gardens is a leading example of smart growth for California, with shops, offices and residences all located within easy walking distance from each other. The Inland Empire's population of 3.2 million makes it the nation's 11th largest and 4th fastest growing metro area. Victoria Gardens' customer base is a combination of established affluent households and a large rapidly growing population of young, upwardly mobile families.

Downtown Long Beach

Over 100 years ago Long Beach established itself as a resort destination, drawing celebrities, dignitaries and tourists. For decades it remained a major coastal retreat and was dubbed "The Coney Island of the West." The city grew rapidly, particularly in the 1920s and '30s, with the coming of oil, port activity, and a strong military presence. The Pike amusement zone offered diversions for all ages and income levels, and many businesses lined Pine Avenue.



But in the post-war era the rise of urban sprawl that reconstructed Southern California - and much of America - also caused the decline of downtowns. Long Beach's urban core fell into blight. The Pike floundered just as Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm beckoned. By the late 1970s, Long Beach was among the most economically distressed cities in the country.

Now, after a decades-long identity crisis, Long Beach is poised for a big comeback. As one of the last affordable beachfront communities, with a population of rich cultural diversity, the city's downtown is emerging as one of the most vital urban centers on the West Coast. With its fabric of historic buildings, active transportation system (including light rail), and influx of residents, the city exhibits the progressive vibe of a Portland, and rivals San Diego as a residential boom town.



Nothing says more about Long Beach's new cityscape than its infusion of residents. One high-profile development is West Ocean, a luxury high rise with city and ocean views. The twin-story building, scheduled for completion in 2006, will feature 246 condominiums ranging in price from the mid-\$400,000s to \$1 million, and in size from 950 to more than 2,000 square feet.

The firm of Perkins and Co., noted for its work in downtown San Diego, designed this project. Other notable architecture firms are active as well. Pasadena-based Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists are involved in several Long Beach revitalization projects. In analyzing the intrinsic aspects of the city, Principal Stefanos Polyzoides states: "Long Beach has a dense urban fabric, which is a wonderful attribute. The city already has a framework that is designed in such a way as to accept new housing, offices and retail. This frame creates a dynamic mixed-use urban experience."



The reemergence of downtown can be traced to certain key components. The Long Beach Redevelopment Agency worked hard to stimulate growth and investment. "The idea was to create a new center for business, tourism and other forms of commerce," says Long Beach Redevelopment Administrator Otis Ginoza. "The area had been abandoned by the rest of the city and we sought to bring it back."

The first major revitalization effort was the development of five office towers in the West End area, followed by the cornerstone of the tourism industry, the Long Beach Convention Center. Completed in 1978 and expanded in 1994, it now attracts millions of visitors a year.

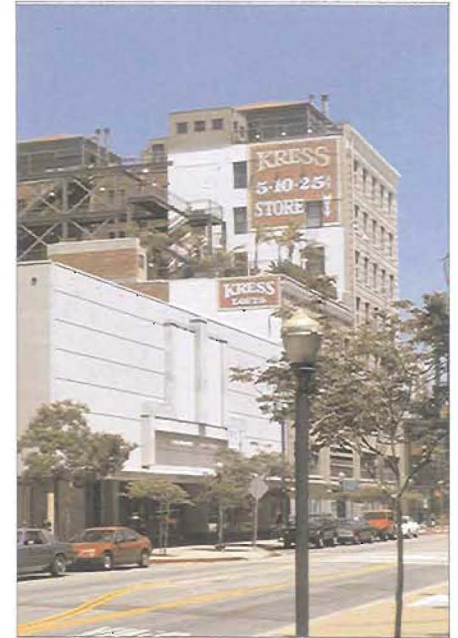
Other developments such as Downtown Harbor, a nucleus for boating, fishing, and sightseeing charters, which opened in the early 1980s, and the World Trade Center, which anchored the west end of downtown in 1989, played pivotal roles. The Aquarium of the Pacific, which made a splashy arrival in 1999, joined the Queen Mary as a regional tourist destination. Both of these latter, city-subsidized projects, however, have had their fiscal critics, and the Queen Mary's operators recently filed for bankruptcy.

Transportation plays a crucial role in Long Beach. Downtown is the terminus of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Blue Line light-rail system (which connects to Los Angeles), the city also provides a shuttle service (the "Passports") with a fleet of 28 busses linking major destinations.

Long Beach achieved greater appeal to outside investors and younger residents in the late 1990s. The role of loft developments cannot be underestimated. The infusion of creative individuals coupled with explorations of unconventional uses of existing infrastructure and housing types coincided with - perhaps even determined - the area's success.

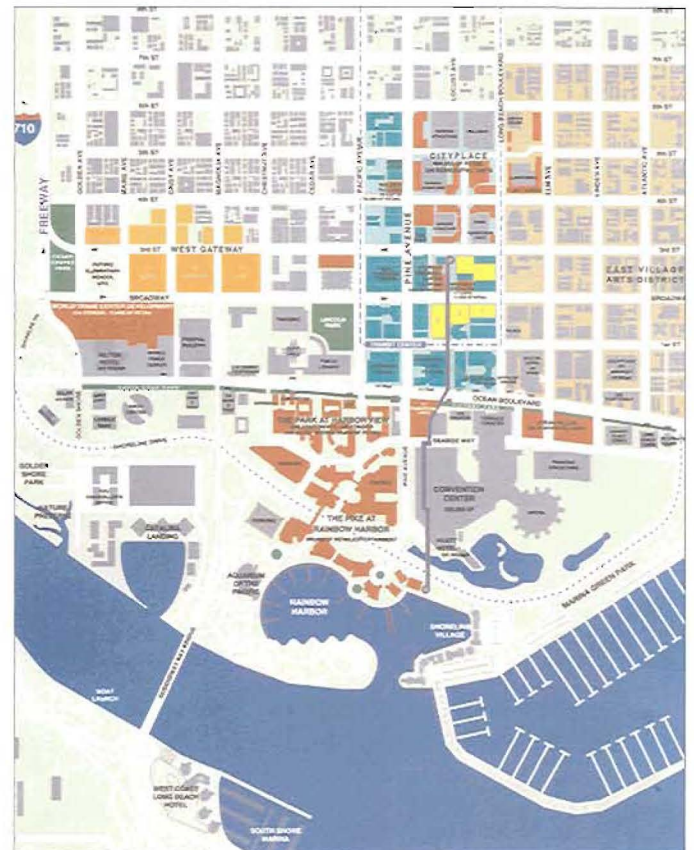
The first "adaptive-reuse" project of this type was the Kress Lofts at Pine Avenue and 5th Street. After years of neglect, the former 1923 five-and-dime department store was purchased by investors and transformed by the local architecture firm Interstices to accommodate 49 live/work units. Opened in 1995, the loft homes express great individuality within an exterior shell signifying the architectural legacy of Pine Avenue.

The 1929 Walker Building, renovated in 2002, followed suit. A labor of love for the developer Bill Lindborg, this undertaking represented local community investment, a belief that the soul of the neighborhood could be restored and revived. Lindborg reflects, "Long Beach has so much to offer, and the city plays an integral role in spearheading development." An eruption of loft projects soon ensued, including Lofts on 4th, Courtyard Lofts, Temple Lofts and Insurance Exchange Lofts. In various stages of completion, these projects include both ground-up construction and the adaptive reuse of historic structures.



To the south is the large-scale entertainment complex that includes The Pike at Rainbow Harbor, Shoreline Village, the Aquarium of the Pacific and the Long Beach Marina. Pine Avenue is the main street connecting these two poles of downtown. Here the city boasts its wealth of independently owned businesses. The challenge has been connecting the historic Pine Street corridor to the "urban outfill" of retail development created atop landfill on the other side of Ocean Avenue. This new component of downtown Long Beach is tenuously connected by the city's transportation system.

Long Beach is a city that embraces history but looks to inspiration and possibility. The historic structures provide direct links to the past and visual points of reference. At the same time, the large crop new developments confirm the city's role as a major urban center. The years of downtown decay have yielded a ripe environment, and the continuum of growth is nowhere near its saturation point. One of the oldest cities in Southern California, Long Beach is only how maturing into a metropolis of unmatched diversity and richness.



Districts : Campuses

commentary by Stefanos Polyzoides

For all practical purposes, Los Angeles as we know it is about 125 years old. During its early years, no effort or resource was spared to transform this isolated Pacific Coast village into a bustling city, and in the shortest period of time. Visionary developers and booster politicians alike promoted the region's polycentric form relentlessly.

Educational institutions were founded to attract new migrants to this culturally foreign land, and to effectively absorb them into the U.S. New colleges and universities projected an image of permanence and a state of culture sorely needed in a place that possessed neither.

Their founders and designers were inspired by Jeffersonian first campus principles, both academic and architectural. In all cases, these were translated into the specific functional, contextual and environmental constraints of Southern California. Occidental College, Pomona College, USC, UCLA, Scripps College, The University of Redlands, Whittier College, Chapman University and others were established at this time. They evolved under a common set of principles:



University of California, Los Angeles, circa 1935

1 Place - Overall plans were established to promote initial form and orderly growth. The design of each campus and its architecture was institution-specific. As they were incrementally constructed, buildings and the spaces between them projected an ever-expanding sense of place exclusive to each campus.

2 Compactness - Buildings and the spaces between them were built compactly, and in a pattern that encouraged social interaction through proximity. The edge of each campus was defined by the limits of pedestrian walkability.

3 Diversity - Buildings were designed of diverse types, academic, residential, laboratory, athletic, etc. This typological complexity and variety allowed for programs to evolve over time and to grow into available facilities. Buildings were made in a permanent form and of a high quality of construction. This allowed them to be used intensively over time, and for different purposes beyond their initial program.

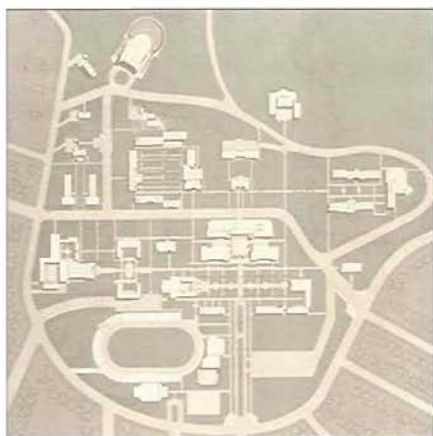
4 Livability - Campus facilities were so configured and programs so organized, as to enable social and academic life to unfold over the course of the day and night and into weekends. This promoted a sense of community in a relatively small physical space, thus ensuring visual richness and social vitality.

5 Connectedness - Perhaps the most important characteristic of early American and by extension Southern California campuses, was their pairing with adjacent settlements, in a town-gown relationship. This architectural and urbanist contrast clarified the character of both. The campus was cast as a civic place, and the town center or main street developed as a distinctly commercial one.

The history of the planning of campuses in Southern California coincides with the national development trends of the last hundred plus years. Subject to the same cultural forces as all city building, campus making here evolved through three distinct stages: Foundation, Erosion and Recovery.

The foundation years began with the actual establishment of each campus and lasted until the 1950's. Three principal steps were followed: Defining an exceptional development master plan and a foundation architecture in a particular style. Followed by a process of exemplary implementation, often led by the president of each college or university in partnership with the founding architect.

All great Southern California campuses began this way. A great example of such campus development is Occidental College in Los Angeles. There, between 1912 and 1948, the architect Myron Hunt designed three consecutive master plans and set up the classical vocabulary of its buildings. He followed up by designing 23 of them, of which 18 were executed. Another example is Pomona College, one of the Claremont Colleges. There, on a master plan by Myron Hunt as many buildings as at Occidental were designed but by at least a dozen architects, including Hunt.



Occidental College, circa 1935

All that is physically essential about this region's colleges and universities was designed and built before 1950. The imageable, memorable, and livable ensembles of buildings that this period produced are still the core of their institution's identity.

The sprawl years began with the great post-WW2 suburban expansion, and extend to our day. Campuses suffered explosive change fueled by the educational needs of first, returning veterans, and then of baby boomers.

During this time, the idea of campus making itself as a distinctive pattern of development was eroded. The art of designing complex ensembles of buildings and their corresponding figures of open space was lost. Original Master plans were diluted. Architects were obsessed with single, referential project-making. And their work destroyed the foundation architecture of every campus in Southern California, both as type and style.

On the implementation side, mysteriously, the passion of founding presidents and academic administrators towards matters of physical design and planning was replaced by indifference. The emphasis during this period on seeking the advice of specialists generated a vacuum of responsibility and leadership. The Jeffersonian vision of academic excellence depending on a corresponding physical place virtually disappeared.

The rate of campus growth overwhelmed the ability of institutions to control the quality of individual projects. With no one left in charge of the generalist-centered task of guiding campus change, the building process just happened. Budgets were set too low. Architects were allowed to act with aesthetic impunity. All kinds of decisions were made during the construction process favoring impermanence. Short-term goals overwhelmed the fundamental quality of the campus as a permanent urban district.

With no one in place to guide their aggregate form, campuses became incoherent, dysfunctional and ugly.

At UCLA, for example, the exceptional foundation plan of George Kelham, and the foundation architecture by, among others, Allison & Allison were abandoned. Arbitrary site planning and capricious buildings undermined the physical presence of a great national institution.

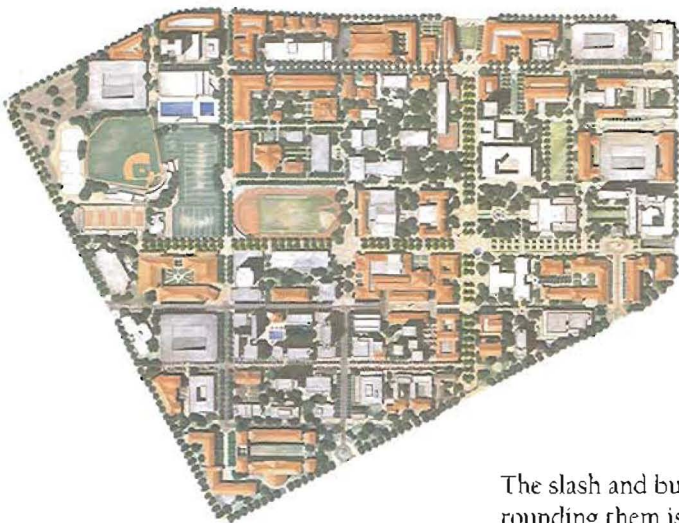
The recovery of the great campus tradition was as always the result of actions taken by enlightened individuals on behalf of their institutions, and began in the late 1980s. Aware of the greatness of the historic precincts of their campuses, these leaders, began to seek ways to direct the development process towards producing results to match those of their foundation period.

At UCLA, Duke Oakley and Mark Fisher, acting as campus architect, led an exceptional ten-plus-year planning/design/construction process. At USC it was President Steven Sample that advocated for a return to traditional campus form. At Scripps College it was James Manifold, Treasurer, who has shepherded the campus through twenty years of reconstruction. It did not matter exactly where the initiative came from. The results were always the same: Reconstruction brought about a marked improvement in the appearance and the performance of these campuses.

Reform in the last decade has followed a set of principles that have recast the physical ingredients of campus planning and architecture in Southern California. These have been applied to projects at all scales and have begun to heal the devastating consequences of sixty years of sprawl:

The primary goal of the Master Plan for the University of Southern California was to determine the optimum capacity of the UPC as it looks towards the 21st century. The tasks involved identifying which buildings and open spaces are removable based on criteria ranging from building life-span assessment, long term maintenance projections, and architectural quality or merit. The secondary goal is to extend the study area to the perimeter of the UPC to identify campus edge opportunities including parking, and to assess physical growth strategies outside of the UPC boundary. The objective of Phase II of the project is to develop a vision statement and design guidelines for future project development. The goal is to unify and integrate future campus development and to enhance the civic structure of campus open spaces.

Urban Design : Michael Dennis & Associates



Projects are being designed and built whose reach exceeds their strict programmatic and site boundaries. Typically, such projects have leveraged new buildings to build landscape, open space, transportation and sustainability improvements, and to demolish buildings that violate the order of each campus. The result has been dramatically improving existing places through any opportunity, major and minor. Such a level of improvement has not been seen in historic California campuses since the foundation years.

The ethic of completing campus precincts through infill, has precipitated a renewed interest in walkability. As more and more buildings and their academic programs are located within discreet pedestrian sheds, the role of the car on campus is diminished. Through limiting automobile traffic, reducing parking supply and promoting other means of circulation, such as bicycling, many campuses have recaptured their original pedestrian- dominant character.

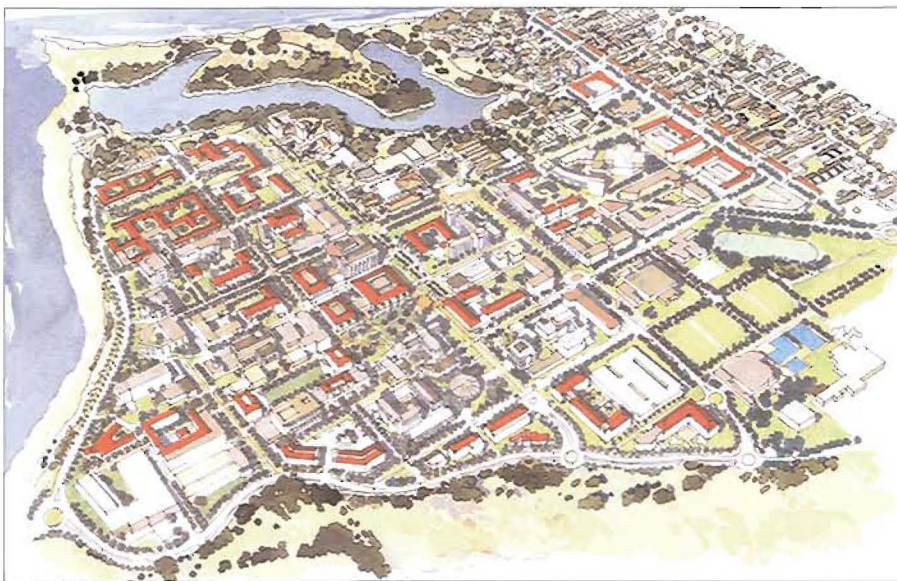
Whether in formal gardens, informal landscape or smart infrastructure, the greening of campuses has emerged as a principal priority. Water and energy are increasingly precious and limited resources in Los Angeles. And whether in the interest of conserving them for self interest, or elevating conservation into a moral obligation and key teaching subject, Southern California campuses are getting engaged with the process of sustainable design and planning.

The slash and burn relationship between campuses and the neighborhoods surrounding them is being reversed. In part because growth now depends on infill and not on mindless expansion, the neighborhood boundaries surrounding campuses are seen as its defining frame. Whether largely residential or commercial, this surrounding built fabric is being transformed through sympathetic infill and mixed use development, as much as the campuses themselves. And for the first time in two generations the design framework for reclaiming campuses and neighborhoods

is identical.

It has been difficult to believe that the devastation brought about by an overemphasis on isolated and self-referential building design could be easily reversed. We now know that the key to this reversal is dependence on a multitude of positive, small design changes. These can encompass any aspect of campus planning and design, from traffic control and parking, to landscape, building and infrastructure design. This is the kind of change that generates political confidence, economic effectiveness and visible physical results. Small changes can make a big difference.

Despite the dramatic physical improvement of Southern California's historic campuses, there is still a lot to do. During the age of sprawl, three different kinds of educational institutions were founded in California. There were dozens of campuses built at this time to service an expanding college-bound population: The Cal Poly System, the Cal State system, and the Community College system. All of these were founded without a great guiding campus plan, and were built incrementally and incoherently over time.



The challenge of the 21st Century is how to recast these modernist campuses in a form that respects their educational mission, while introducing projects that transform them in the direction of traditional campus place making.

The Campus Plan is a vision for the physical future of the University of California, Santa Barbara. The Plan was prepared in a process that engaged a broad cross-section of individuals whose lives are closely linked



with the campus, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, technicians, and consultants. The Campus Plan builds on the efforts of three distinguished urban design firms that created a series of smaller area plans in 2001. Each of those earlier plans contained important concepts which have been integrated into this Plan and are key to its form. The Campus Plan establishes a pattern of common open space that serves as a framework within which individual building projects can be developed. Regulating lines are used to define public spaces and are necessary to produce the intended vision for the campus. The buildings to be developed should be conceived as a means of creating public spaces as well as containers for academic functions. In this way, each new building becomes another step toward realizing the common vision. Three-dimensional images of the spaces that can be created were developed to visualize the Campus Plan. These images, included in the Plan, can lead the process and serve as a reference for evaluating all future proposals.

Urban Design : Urban Design Associates

The Architecture of the Everyday

Most of Los Angeles does not consist of civic monuments like the Disney Concert Hall, the Cathedral or the Central Library. But if what is unique, honorific and a special event is important -- the urban equivalent of a wedding or a funeral -- so are the small, regularly repeated events that make up the fabric of everyday life. These elements of the cityscape, and of human activity in the city, are less often the strategic result of official planning than they are the unofficial tactics of people trying to make a living. As planner James Rojas has explained in his examinations of Latino life in the public realm, it's not always the physical infrastructure that is the final determinant of urban sensibility; it's how people commandeer the space.



Planning is important in cities and in life. You have to remember to buy the tofu before the vegan dinner guest comes over. But sometimes spontaneity and the room to grow in unexpected ways create a more exciting and vital place than the great grey hand of bureaucracy could ever manage. In Los Angeles the most vital public life occurs where there is recreation (most importantly the beach), or where there is commerce. The Toy District in downtown Los Angeles, for example, and L.A.'s ubiquitous street vendors put it all out there -- for sale, right on the street. They provide access to food, merchandise and personal services, illustrating the convergence of convenience, globalization, immigration, and the continuing vitality of the public realm.



Street Vendors

Street vendors are L.A.'s grassroots New Urbanists, serving on the front lines in a sometimes hostile urban landscape, enlivening the street with their presence and making it more human and friendly by offering things to see and eat and buy. Whether selling roses that remind you it's Valentine's Day or Mother's Day, or strawberries and mangoes in early spring, or watermelons and cherries in summer, street vendors are the keepers of the seasons in Los Angeles, and mark the holidays with their offerings.



Many cities permit gatherings of street vendors in particular places - at San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf or in Boston's Faneuil Hall or along the Seine in Paris. L.A. tried, too, to create a street vending district near MacArthur Park west of downtown, but few vendors see the benefit in paying \$1,500 to rent one of the city's wooden vending stalls. Instead they fan out all over the city, temporarily transforming medians, major intersections, sidewalks, freeway ramps and vacant lots into ephemeral public marketplaces.

Street vending is illegal in Los Angeles, but it's booming - and it seems somehow appropriately American. In the words of Charles

Rapplee, writing in L.A. City Beat about one of the law enforcement's periodic street vending crackdowns, "I say leave them alone, along with day laborers and the rest of L.A.'s bootstrap capitalists. If the cops want to nose around, fine, but let them actually look for criminals and quit the petty harassment that makes our streets so mean."

The Toy District

The Toy District ratchets street vending up a notch. Storefronts in this district - wedged into downtown L.A. between Little Tokyo, the homeless services district and the Fashion District - don't really exist because they're rolled back so there's no boundary between the store and street. And the merchandise is packed in, piled up, hung from the ceiling. The Toy District goes way beyond the outlet center and strip mall to move the merchandise, and there's more merchandise per cubic foot. The global economy (nearly everything here is made in China) delivers not only toys but also tschokes, knick-knacks, and amusements of every stripe.

The Toy District is owned and operated by a multitude of different actors, so the scale is varied, intimate and engaging. It's not just an instance of adaptive reuse; there's also been a building boom with new high-ceilinged palaces of merchandising, complete with ornamental touches. This is exactly the kind of high-density, high-intensity urban environment that defies the clichés about L.A. You want some analog to the ferocity of street life in New York's Lower East Side at the turn of the century? You want to see the new face of Los Angeles and its global marketplace? Here it is.

- by John Chase & Gloria Ohland

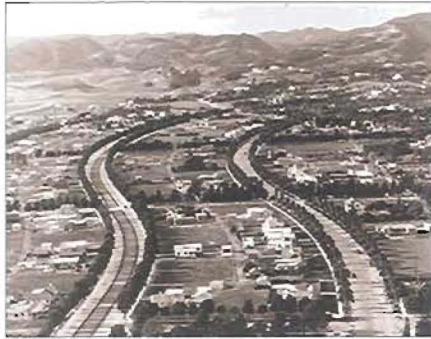


Neighborhoods

commentary by Alan Loomis

Although it is vilified for its apparent lack of planning, the suburban landscape of greater Los Angeles is actually a quilt of planned communities and neighborhoods. Viewed in sequence, these communities represent a veritable history in 20th century town design, from Victorian streetcar suburbs, neighborhoods of Sears-Roebuck mail-order bungalows, picturesque towns of the Olmsted tradition, mass-produced tracts for aerospace employees, to representations of the 1960s New Town movement.

Angelino Heights, located just northwest of Downtown L.A., and Boyle Heights, east of Downtown, are two of the city's earliest streetcar suburbs. The former is now a historic district and its Victorian houses are some of the most sought after properties in the City. The latter, maligned and neglected for years, and dissected with free-ways, is now experiencing a revival of investment. Its collection of public housing - rendered dysfunctional by the usual problems - has recently been rebuilt with HOPE VI funds. The Gold Line light rail will soon be extended on First Street from Little Tokyo across the L.A. River into the heart of East LA, with a station at the historic Mariachi Plaza.



Beverly Hills



Beverly Hills



Malaga Cove Plaza

Many of the other residential neighborhoods in the basin also trace their origins to the streetcars and interurban trains. Communities like Leimert Park, Carthy Circle and Torrance were designed in the traditions of any early 20th century streetcar suburb - an arrayed pattern of streets and houses converge on small squares and mixed use centers that once focused on Pacific Electric trolley stops (the trains - often financed by real estate sales - were removed in the 1950s). During this time, simple subdivision on rectangular grids also provided sites for the order-by mail bungalows - Bungalow Heaven in Pasadena, West Adams near USC., and Vinegar Hill in San Pedro, among other historic neighborhoods

In this early period of the basin's subdivision, there are town designs of stellar quality that rank amongst the best-designed communities nationwide. Rancho Palos Verdes, designed by the Olmsted sons from 1913 to 1922, is situated on the cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean at the southwest corner of the basin. Like Olmsted Sr's plan for Riverside, Illinois, Palos Verdes is a picturesque pattern of streets, arranged around pedestrian-oriented shopping courts and schools, including the romantic Malaga Cove Plaza. Further up the coast north of Santa Monica, Pacific Palisades represents yet another neighborhood designed in the Olmsted tradition.

From this time period, perhaps the iconographic tree-lined streets that create the City of Beverly Hills are the most famous. Subdivided in the early 1920s, historian Reyner Banham described the Beverly Hills street grid as "a regular pattern of lightly curved roads running north-west from Santa Monica Boulevard, maintaining an approximate symmetry about a double axis of Canon and Beverly Drives, which cross when they intersect Sunset Boulevard, exchanging position in order to create the triangular site for the Beverly Hills Hotel..."

The picturesque and curvilinear pattern of Beverly Hills provides prominent sites for civic buildings, gently absorbs the rising terrain in a pure transect from center to edge - from the angular street grid of its downtown to the secluded enclaves in the Hollywood Hills - and in all respects is a plan any mainstream New Urbanist planner would be proud of.

With World War II came a massive expansion in the defense and aerospace industry, and an equally massive influx of population in need of housing. Employing the same manufacturing methods used to build airplanes, tanks and ships, defense contractors like Henry Kaiser created new neighborhoods overnight on land near their plants according to the latest neighborhood planning principles as articulated by the Federal Housing Authority.

Industrialized and assembly-line production created communities like Westchester near the Los Angeles Airport, Panorama City in the San Fernando Valley near Lockheed's factories in Burbank, and Lakewood near Douglas Aircraft's Long Beach plant. Lakewood, twice the size of Levittown, went from bean fields to a town of 17,500 homes in three years.

This pattern of development would be characterized as "sprawl" in the 1960s through a variety of indignant books - *Gods Own Junkyard* by Peter Blake, and its California counterpart, *How to Kill a Golden State* by William Bronson. In response, the "New Town" movement produced Columbia, Maryland, Reston, Virginia; Lakelands, Texas; and on the edges of Los Angeles, Valencia and Irvine (designed by the offices of Victor Gruen and William Pereira, respectively).

By the early 1980s, a new approach to neighborhood design was emerging. Or rather, an old approach that sought to revitalize and reinvigorate the neighborhood planning and design techniques practiced in the 1920s thru 1940s. Less than 10 years after Seaside Florida, and some 1000 acres larger, the Playa Vista plan for West Los Angeles represented one of the most ambitious attempts to define traditional neighborhood design.

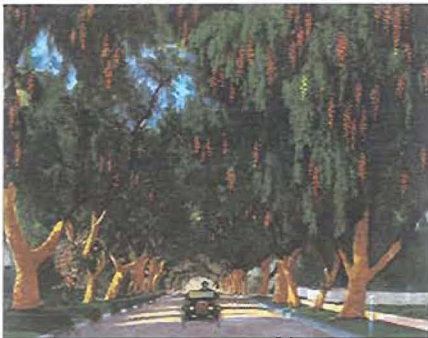
But the built results of Playa Vista fail to measure up to the intentions of the design. Whether blame should be laid at the feet of finances, environmental lawsuits, complicated city approval procedures, inflexible fire departments, or the lack of a binding architectural code within the plan itself, the legacy of Playa Vista looms large over neighborhood planning in greater Los Angeles. Other large-scale greenfield plans in the region so far seem destined to repeat Playa Vista's compromised history. In Azusa, an invited competition and public design charrette for the site of the Monrovia Nursery, led to a sophisticated and sensitive plan by the firm TortiGallas, but this design was ultimately reduced to a conventional suburban design through the engineering and approval process. RiverPark in Oxnard and Liberty at Lake Elsinore are now both under construction, although few of the original architects involved in the planning process will vouch for the integrity of the final design. Other neighborhood plans in the region that aspire to New Urbanism are even younger in the approval process, and it is too early to judge their veracity. Unfortunately, if recent history is any guide, none of these plans will be built as designed. In the Los Angeles region, the forces of conventional suburban development still dominate town planning, and reclaiming the traditions that brought us the region's most beloved historic neighborhoods remains an uphill struggle.



South Pasadena, bungalow neighborhood



Panorama City



Pasadena street



Playa Vista: A New Urbanist Bog

commentary by John Leighton Chase

The 1000-acre Playa Vista site is the New Urbanist Mothership for Los Angeles and could literally be said to be the birthplace of New Urbanism, since it was here, at a lunchtime discussion between Stefanos Polyzoides, Liz Moule, Andres Duany and Lizz Plater-Zyberk, that the foundation of a Congress for the New Urbanism was first discussed.

But then Playa Vista is so many things to so many people. It is the last vestige of Los Angeles wetlands. It is a sacred burial ground of unknown proportions for the indigenous Gabrielino Indians. It has long been exploited, dotted with oil wells at the turn of the century and then covered with giant parking lots. It was the site of Hughes Aircraft and home to the giant 200-ton Spruce Goose. And it has long been, and continues to be, a battleground for environmental groups and development interests.

Playa Vista is located on the ocean between Marina del Rey, Playa del Rey and Westchester, to the north of the Los Angeles International Airport. The first phase of development, which includes some 3,200 residential units along Jefferson Boulevard, is in 2005 almost completed. The second phase would include 2,600 more residential units, 175,000 square feet of office space and 150,000 square feet of retail space, but a coalition of Native Americans, environmentalists and the City of Santa Monica have sued to block further construction.

Howard Hughes had acquired large portions of Playa Vista in the early 1940s and made it the home of his aviation empire. The former Hughes Aircraft plant site was the manufacturing center for radar and missile systems, satellites, helicopters and airplanes. But after Hughes' death in 1976, his heirs created a subsidiary company named the Summa Corporation and began planning new development.

The site's history is chronicled on the www.xarch.tu-graz.ac.at/home website: In 1984 L.A. County and the Coastal Commission reached agreement on a plan for 5,600 new homes, 1,800 hotel rooms, a 40-acre marina with 700-900 boat slips and 1.3 million square feet of retail office space and visitor facilities. There was to be a public shoreline promenade; three view parks; more than ten miles of community-wide pedestrian and bicycle trails, and a 209-acre "habitat management area," to be managed by the National Audubon Society.

According to the website, "People living at the edges of the Hughes property, especially on the bluff top to the south, had grown accustomed to the relatively open



Perspective from Maguire plan



Playa Vista Park

space. Neighbors perceived the lands, in spite of the 2 million square feet of industrial and aircraft facilities, as a visual amenity. They imagined it almost like living at the edge of a scruffy Central Park.” The Friends of the Ballona Wetlands, founded in 1979, sued the Coastal Commission, Los Angeles County and City of Los Angeles to block the implementation of the approved plan. Hughes Aircraft and McDonnell Douglas moved to other facilities in 1994.

Playa Vista was the dream of one of Los Angeles’ most enlightened developers, Rob Maguire, who had earlier created a high-powered architectural collaborative including Charles Moore and Frank Gehry for a project that was to supply the missing soul for the redevelopment of Bunker Hill in downtown Los Angeles. In 1989 his firm, Maguire Thomas Partners, together with JBM Realty, gained control of the Summa Corporation. Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk were brought in to help plan the development, and Plater-Zyberk remained involved for years. Later Stefanos Polyzoides, Liz Moule, Ricardo Legoretta, Buzz Yudell, John Ruble and Laurie Olin were added to the team of architects.

Three charettes were undertaken in 1989 and it was decided that Playa Vista would be a pedestrian-oriented community with a pocket park or two within a short walk of each dwelling and a mix of services within strolling distance or a brief ride away on a clean-fuel shuttle. The average density of 24 units per acre in Playa Vista contrasts with the typical suburban densities of 4-12 units per acre. Fernando Guerra, director of the Center for the Study of Los Angeles at Loyola Marymount University, told the *L.A. Times* in December of 2003 that “People will look back in 20 to 25 years and say, ‘Playa Vista really began this trend toward more dense Los Angeles.’”

But Playa Vista has failed to meet nearly everyone’s expectations. Architecture critic Morris Newman summed it up in the November 2004 *Slatin Report*: “Nearly every project falls a little short of its initial promise and loses some of its visionary luster in the translation from idea to fact. Even with limited expectations, however, Playa Vista comes as an unpleasant jolt . . . The outlines of the elegant plan we first saw nearly 15 years ago are vaguely discernible in this cluster of newly made residential blocks on the Los Angeles waterfront. That plan had promised New Urbanist residential streets amid gardens and trees, sprinkled with small parks throughout.

“Today, Playa Vista’s streets are filled with blocky four-story apartment buildings that appear to have been extruded like ingots from some giant furnace. What’s more, the buildings are tricked out in gaudy dress, but the accessories are all out of scale. One building is a mediocre pastiche of Irving Gill, while another is a Saturday-morning cartoon version of Josef Hoffmann. Despite builders’ rigid compliance with rules requiring a continuous streetwall along the sidewalk, the narrow sidewalks - separated from the street only by a thin green margin - are intimidated by the massive buildings. Nothing here is charming or carries any conviction, not even the cheerful Babbitty of the homebuilder.”

Polyzoides was more than disappointed, telling the *L.A. Times* in 2003, "The buildings in Playa Vista are too big, too loud, too unfriendly. We wanted Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, Pasadena. We've been completely betrayed. They're not doing this magnificent site to its ultimate potential."

Its hard for me to evaluate Playa Vista as architecture, since it is really consumerist housing. Housing for most consumers is a basket of amenities, features and options. Buying a place to live is a lot like buying a car. When you buy a car you decide if you want the sunroof or the dvd players. For the residents of Playa Vista

buying a condo, the importance of the place comes from the inside out. The exterior architecture is a vessel for the amenities inside. Some of the features that buyers at the Villa Savona (by Warmington Homes California) are looking for are "Architectural Display Niche," "Recessed Media Niche with Universal Outlet," "Decorative Columns" in the dining room (as opposed to those pesky non-decorative columns). There are upgrades like "Caesar Stone Counter and Splash" and "Distressed Cabinet and Brushed Stainless Knobs." When all is said and done, for the consumer the individual buildings and collections of buildings may not have brilliant site planning or even human scale massing. What they have to offer is levels of comfort, elaboration of decor and interior floor plans choices just like any other conventional developer housing. The residents of this new L.A. neighborhood are simply looking at a different set and sense of amenities than the founding urban designers of Playa Vista envisioned. This is a long way to fall for what was going to be the New Urbanist flagship in all of Southern California, that emphasized shared collective identity, space and life. The original vision for Playa Vista built on the best site planning, urban design prototypes and architecture Los Angeles has to offer.



Phase 1 of the Maguire plan



Phase 1 as constructed

Part of the problem is that so many people wanted so much of Playa Vista - the only remaining open space and only new neighborhood on Los Angeles' extravagantly expensive ocean-adjacent Westside. One of the biggest issues - and one that won't go away -- was whether there even should have been a project. But if there wasn't a project then who would pay the developer for the land? Where could the money be found to turn it into a giant park, or better yet, back into wetlands? And if the money could be found, should it be used to create yet another park on the wealthy Westside when it is low-income ethnic communities on the less privileged Eastside that really need more open space?

Setting aside the environmental issues, which with Playa Vista is little like trying to step over a Brontosaurus, it's clear that the plan was much more wonderful than the resulting development. Because in order to actually build Playa Vista Maguire Thomas had to finance the project by turning the actual development of buildings over to other developers - conventional developers and their investors who were neither familiar nor comfortable with New Urbanism.

The buildings that resulted are merely conventional apartment buildings pretending to be boulevard housing, according to Morris Newman: "Conventional apartment buildings have one explicitly public area - the entrance - while the rest of the building, including its face to the street, remain private. Row houses (think San Francisco, Philadelphia, New York, Boston) are explicitly urban because they 'acknowledge' the public realm with formal and attractive facades while still protecting privacy with a small setback - usually a beautifully kept garden or miniature lawn

"The narrow green band-aids of Playa Vista are inadequate. The very features that make the row house seem public - front steps or 'stoops,' a covered entrance or portico, a garden in front - also protect the homeowner from public intrusion. Playa Vista lacks these punctuation marks, these protectors of privacy. We feel like intruders while walking by the balcony of a private apartment because there is no spatial or architectural intermediary. Quite literally, we can reach out and touch the hibachi, folding chair and guitar resting on the balcony. The housing seems vulnerable to the street, while the street, having no public character of its own, feels like an adjunct to the housing compound. Add narrow sidewalks and a lack of shade trees, and the result is claustrophobia."

Playa Vista can look scarily dense rising up out of the wetlands and the surrounding low-density development of the surrounding suburban neighborhoods. And there simply isn't the integrity of architecture that was envisioned in the original noble dream and the plans drawn up by Duany Plater-Zyberk, Moule & Polyzoides and others. But I would argue Playa Vista is still far superior to most major new development on the Westside. There is a high ratio of open space to development, and the open space and built volumes complement each other and are organized according to timeless principles, employing the axis and symmetry.

Moreover, people are using this space - walking their dogs and pushing their strollers - and there are a lot of public amenities. Most importantly, there's a wide variety of housing types and styles available for people of all incomes, including 25 percent held aside for moderate and low-income renters and buyers. And there's a lot of housing -- Los Angeles' most scarce resource - there were 40,000 names on the list for the remaining 1,400 units yet to be built as part Phase 1. And it's unfair to criticize Playa Vista now when its ultimate urbanist value is dependent on features that aren't built yet, such as the commercial components. In 2005 the jury is still out on Playa Vista.



Neighborhoods

Nestled in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains in Azusa, the **Monrovia Nursery Master Plan** (right) turns the former 500-acre nursery into a large development focused around a new light rail transit station and utilizing multiple land uses. The Azusa Land Partners company of Newport Beach has entitled the property for 1,250 residences, 50,000 square-feet of retail, an elementary school and numerous public parks. A community recreation center and a transit station along the future Foothill Extension of the Metro Gold Line are also planned. These neighborhoods are built in a scale that corresponds to the pedestrian, with parks located within a 2-3 minute walk from each residence. Each area promotes a mix of housing types and uses, and most homes are located close to the sidewalk with generous rear yards emphasizing a distinction between the public and private realms. The southeastern area of the site includes a mixed-use corporate campus with residences, stores, offices and restaurants. The parks create a 'necklace' of parks, greenways, and water features that link distinct infill neighborhoods and respect the existing bluffs and hilltops. This new series of neighborhoods, inextricably linked to its unique context, has become a model for pedestrian-scaled and transit-oriented urban infill for the entire region. The developer expects to begin construction in early 2005, with first new home deliveries planned for late 2006.

Urban Design : Torti Gallas and Partners CHK (charrette plan - immediate rig)

Urban Design : EDAW (approved plan - far right)





Built upon Traditional Neighborhood Design planning principles, RiverPark (left) in the heart Oxnard is the largest mixed-use project in Ventura County history, at over 700 acres. RiverPark is created to be pedestrian-friendly and human-scaled, with neighborhoods built in compact clusters that emphasize front porches, walkways, and a town center rather than automobile traffic. RiverPark offers a broad range of housing options. 1,800 new homes are available with two-thirds attached, one-third detached and a significant affordable housing component. The development includes a three new schools (accommodating over 3,000 students), a town center with



880,000 square feet of retail space, neighborhood amenities such as a fire station, and an extensive system of 14 parks and open-spaces, which accounts for over one third of RiverPark's development area. RiverPark's developer is a consortium of three homebuilders; Shea Homes, Standard Pacific Homes, and Centex Homes, working in concert with the City of Oxnard and other public entities. The community's master planner is by AC Martin Master Partners, Inc, Los Angeles. Residential designs are by William Hezmalchal Architects, Santa Ana, CA; commercial designs are by MBH Architects, Alameda, CA; and school designs are by WWCOT, Santa Monica, CA.

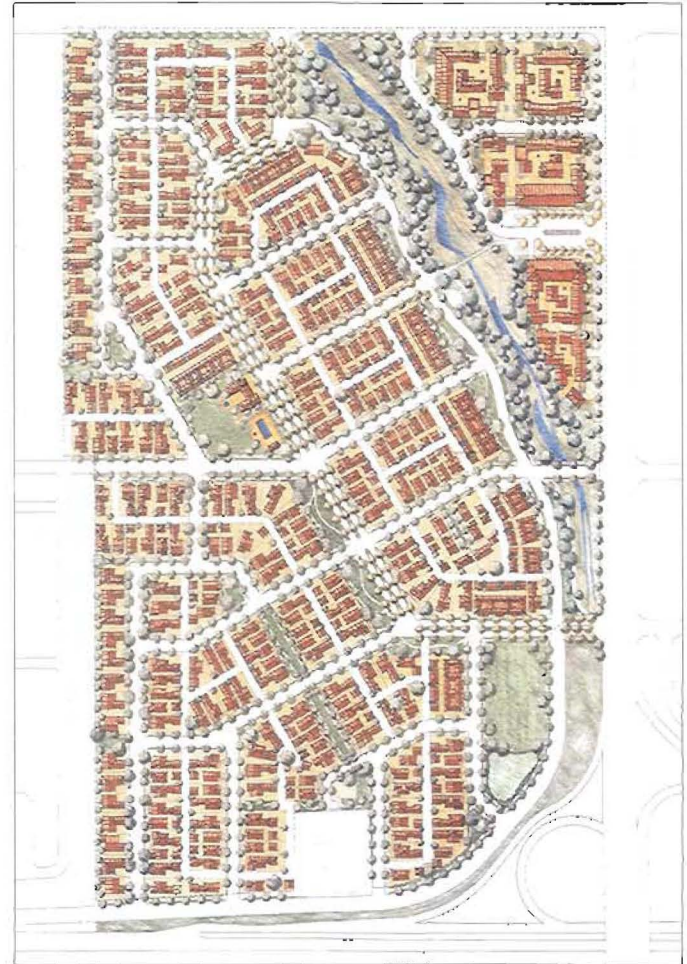


Isla Vista Master Plan (above) is a revitalization strategy for the unincorporated community of Santa Barbara County adjacent to UCSB. Strategies for encouraging downtown revitalization, improving traffic calming and pedestrian safety, regulating the development of appropriate housing types, and creating a seamless integration between UCSB and Isla Vista. One of the primary goals of this Master Plan is to create a cohesive vision for Isla Vista, UCSB and Isla Vista Parks and Recreation Department.

Urban Design : Opticos Design

Liberty Village, Lake Elsinore (below) is a 2,097 acres Master Plan for a new mixed-use community, including interconnected villages, residential neighborhoods, town center and an open space network.

Urban Design : Cooper Robertson



Parklands (above) is a Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) in the City of Buena Vista, California. The 67-acre neighborhood is designed as a sustainable community of 500 homes around a pedestrian-friendly network of streets and blocks. It incorporates an existing water "Barranca," defined as a natural bridge of rocks and soil, and a series of parks and green ways. In homage to traditional neighborhood designs of the 21st century, a neighborhood center, located on 10 acres north of the Barranca, is designed around a mixed-use entry plaza. Both are surrounded by 150 units of attached podium housing, arranged around courtyards. South of the Barranca, 350 single-family detached homes are designed on a range of lot sizes in various styles. The focus of this southern portion of the neighborhood is a central park with a community center and pool facility as part of an intricate network of pocket parks and rose walks. The plan was approved in 2005.

Urban Design : Moule & Polyzoides



John Laing Homes and Scheurer Architects have created a community praised for its design and style, and its integration with the surrounding community of Corona del Mar. Sailhouse represents the first West Coast appearance of St. Augustine-style architecture - made famous in Florida's Seaside and Rosemary Beach resorts designed by Andres Duany. The project has won several awards and has been profiled in national publications such as New York Times. Its pedestrian-focused plan openly addresses the walkable beach-town lifestyle of Corona Del Mar, with boardwalks that connect homes together and to the surrounding community. The 89 homes of **Sailhouse** are characterized by upper-level wood siding and lower-level stucco. Outdoor rooms, such as a lookout deck, serve as orienting landmarks. And the exterior color scheme of Sailhouse contributes to the "open" feel for the neighborhood. Sailhouse offers bungalow, carriage and cottage units. The cottage and bungalow-style homes range from 1,367 to 2,383 square feet. Prices range from the \$700,000s to over \$900,000.

The revitalization of the 150-acre military base of **Fort Irwin** in San Bernardino County entails the renovation or new construction of more than 700 homes and the addition of a small town center of 20,000 square feet to the project. An emphasis on sustainable design, energy efficiency, and the timely renovation of all residential units within the community is at the heart of the base's redevelopment. The partnership between the Army and the developer will ensure that virtually every home, streetscape, and park or open space will be replaced, rebuilt or improved within the first seven years of the partnership. In keeping with the desert setting, the homes will adopt the Southwest Desert Style and, where possible, will take advantage of the landscape and the long range views of the desert and mountains. These duplex-courtyard and single family detached homes, which have two-car garages, have been carefully designed according to their orientation to the sun, with roof overhangs and trellises over south-facing windows and doors. The two-story homes wrap around exterior courtyards to provide shade during the hottest part of the day and reduce glare on the interiors. With concrete tile roofs, high efficiency insulation in walls and roofs, energy and water efficient systems and appliances, and a root-fed capillary irrigation system for backyard lawn irrigation, these homes will achieve a 50% reduction in energy usage over standard design and construction methods.

Urban Design : Torti Gallas and Partners CHK

Neighborhood Parks

commentary by James Rojas

Unlike other cities with a long history of park planning, Los Angeles did not set aside fragile hillsides or lands along the river; real estate speculators subdivided and sold off the flood plains and valleys shortly after arriving in the pueblo. Early parks were either parcels that had proven unsuitable for development, or they were gifts, such as Griffith Park - at 3,000 acres the largest municipal park in the world - donated by Colonel G.J. Griffith, wealthy owner of Rancho Los Feliz, to help smooth over the scandal that resulted after he "accidentally" shot his wife

The utopian vision of L.A. as a collection of hamlets of single-family homes each with its own private park space didn't really turn out as planned, and now the city desperately needs more green space: It is park-poor, especially in low-income communities, with only 10 percent of the recommended 8-10 acres/1,000 residents, a standard set by the National Recreation and Parks Association. 27 percent of land in New York City and 25 percent in San Francisco is set aside for parks, in Los Angeles the figure is 10 percent, including the beaches.

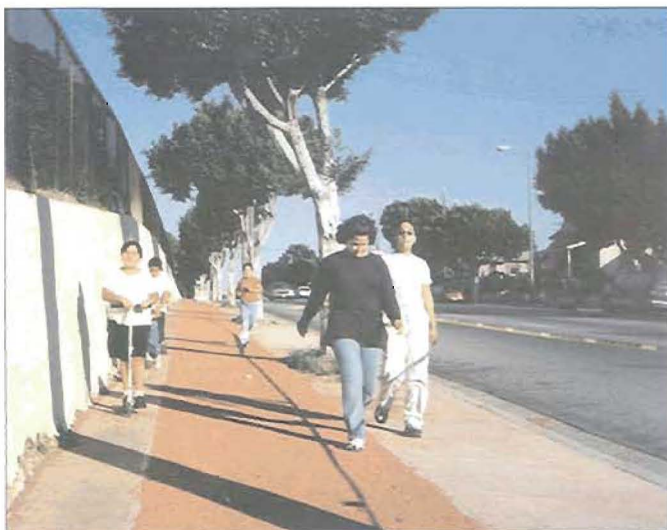


South Central Farm

The City of L.A. gave the L.A. Food Bank temporary access to 14 acres of industrial land along the Alameda Corridor in South Central L.A. that had been intended for construction of a trash incinerator project halted by neighborhood activists in the '80s. Immigrant farmers divided up the land into 350 plots and tilled it with plants both native and exotic, including cactus, chayote, amaranth, lemon guava, and including some grown from seeds carried across the border. The land, 14 football fields big, has become a lush oasis, vines forming canopies over pathways and connecting one plot to another, and birds and butterflies abound - it's become a source of food, shade and recreation. Children play among the garden plots and run along the dirt pathways while the gardeners play dominoes, barbecue and share their knowledge about farming. A produce market draws as many as 2,000 visitors on weekends. Farmers keep the garden open from sunrise to sunset and pay the water bill. But the former owner of the land has demanded the city give it back to him, the farmers are suing the city to keep it, and in 2005 the fate of the farm is unclear.

But now Los Angeles is built-out and the high cost of real estate makes it unlikely any significant amount of undeveloped land can be purchased to set aside. Because residents are demanding open space, new parks are being created from brownfields, small vacant lots, hillsides and other underutilized parcels of land, and there are more public plazas. The Cornfields State Park just north of Chinatown is one significant example, created from an abandoned downtown rail yard that had been slated for development as an industrial park until a coalition of environmental justice activists and environmentalists sued to make sure this land along the concrete L.A. River be set aside.

Streets are the next likely frontier for open space. Many are overly wide and can be designed to be shared with pedestrians and joggers and bicyclists. The open space along neighborhood streets in low-income communities is already appropriated as shared public space, with street vendors providing food and sundries, sometimes out of small trucks, while teenagers congregate on the sidewalks, neighbors converse over fences, and children play on driveways and in front yards. These small urban interventions are important to communities because they provide a space where the community can come together in a city designed to provide private, not public, space.



Evergreen Cemetary Jogging Path

Residents of park-poor East L.A. used the sidewalk that encircled this historic cemetery as a walking and jogging path from sunrise to sunset, even though its concrete surface was cracked and broken by the roots of nearby ficus trees. The Evergreen Cemetery is the city's oldest and one of its largest with 300,000 grave sites, serving as the burial ground of pioneers like the Hollenbecks, Lankershims and Van Nuys, and famous midwife Bidy Mason. At the urging of residents, who circulated petitions, the local city council office and city agencies assembled \$800,000 to replace the sidewalk with a rubberized track for jogging. This safe linear community plaza now attracts more than a thousand residents daily, from the young to the elderly, in a community that has been plagued with obesity and related diseases.



Augustus Hawkins Natural Park

This 8.5-acre park at the corner of Slauson and Compton in South Central L.A. isn't natural at all, but was created on the site of a former water and sewer pipe storage yard when 3,000 cubic yards of dirt were trucked in from landslides along Pacific Coast Highway to form hills and meadows. Piped-in water feeds an artificial wetlands, and chaparral and sage, oaks and sycamores were transplanted from other places; there's even a mock "valley grasslands." The park is intended to reproduce small samples of habitats found in Southern California and is named after the man who in 1962 became the first African American elected to Congress from west of the Mississippi. There are no basketball courts or soccer fields, but there's a windmill and community garden and a pastoral atmosphere absent from most city parks.

Proyecto Jardin

This is a community "medicine" garden in an industrial neighborhood in East Los Angeles on land leased from White Memorial Hospital. There are 65 community gardens in Los Angeles, and most make land available to individuals in separate plots. This garden, however, is shared by everyone, and serves as an open-air classroom for a nearby school. Filled with nopal cactus, Mexican corn, bananas, sugar cane, and herbs grown in geometric spirals of ancient Aztec culture, the garden is the site of harvest festivals and festivals celebrating the spring equinox with roots in both Native American and Hispanic cultures.

Neighborhoods

Pueblo del Sol: Renaissance in the Barrio

commentary by Gloria Ohland

HUD's HOPE VI program, the only new thinking about and significant funding for public housing since the first projects were constructed in the '40s, was ended by President Bush in 2004. Based on New Urbanist principles, HOPE VI spent \$5 billion in 25 cities to stimulate private investment in neighborhoods stigmatized by public housing, poverty and crime by revamping the housing projects as mixed-income mixed-use neighborhoods. Pueblo del Sol, designed by Quatro Design Group and developed by McCormick Baron Salazar and the Related Companies of California, is a stellar example of what HOPE VI was intended to do: Built with \$23 million in federal dollars, the development has leveraged, partly through the sale of low income housing tax credits, another \$90 million in investment in what used to be called Aliso Village, on the edge of what was the largest and meanest public housing project west of the Mississippi.



Call it magical realism. Along what is now called Gabriel Garcia Marquez Street, a new neighborhood has been raised where there used to be a gang shooting every week. Young moms push strollers and kids ride bikes and skateboards outside new two- and three-story townhomes fronted by porches and balconies; a new community building and pool stand amid fields of purple sage and orange day lilies around the Utah Street Elementary School. To the south, along First Street where the streetcar used to run, a new light rail line and station are under construction and so is a new college-prep "academy" public high school. And there are single family homes for sale - the only significant new residential construction in densely populated, dirt-poor Boyle Heights, L.A.'s very first suburb, which was built-out long ago and where 75 percent of homes are owned by absentee landlords.



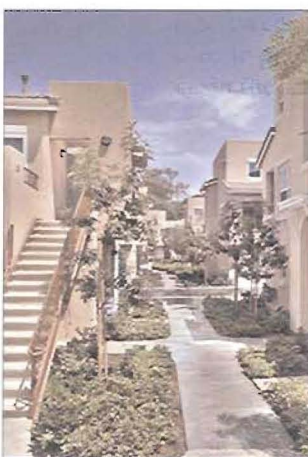
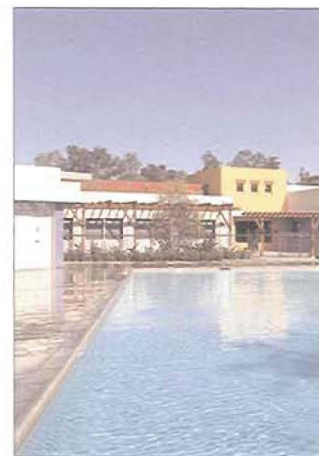
While investment has poured back into urban core neighborhoods on the west side of the L.A. River after decades of decline, Boyle Heights has remained separated from the real estate boom by the concrete river, a span of freight railroad tracks and the underutilized and nearly outmoded warehouses that sit on the brownfield that is the river's east bank. But now, for the first time since WWII and the internment of Boyle Heights's many Japanese residents - Boyle Heights was one of L.A.'s only early suburbs to have no racial covenants in place - would-be buyers and renters, many of them Asian, are coming back to East L.A. to inquire about renting and buying in Pueblo del Sol. Utah Street Elementary School officials marvel that new parents are coming to ask about the school's test scores.

Hundreds of homes were razed in Boyle Heights in the '40s and '50s for "slum clearance" and to make way for construction of four freeways and a huge spread of public housing in three projects, Aliso Village to the north of First Street, and Pico Gardens and Las Casitas to the south. Together they comprised the vast high-density high-crime neighborhood commonly known as Pico-Aliso. Las Casitas and Pico

Gardens were also renovated using HOPE VI funds, but they were completed early in the program and neither are successfully New Urbanist, neither achieve a mix of incomes or housing types or uses, and both remain gated. But the re-design of Aliso Village is much more successful, and mixes a reduced number of public housing units with affordable rentals, and with affordable and market-rate for-sale homes. Because the L.A. Unified School District has claimed land that was targeted for retail, the mix of uses is limited to homes, schools and community buildings, but the new Gold Line will provide easy access to a lively pedestrian commercial corridor less than a mile away.

Aliso Village's modernist garden apartments were just two stories and linked by ramadas, a pleasant design by no less noteworthy an architect than Lloyd Wright (son of Frank). But the large apartment buildings were surrounded by expanses of green space and parking lots that got claimed as gang turf. Now housing is decentralized in townhouse-style apartments with doors and windows opening onto front and backyards so residents can take ownership over and control these smaller and more private spaces. There hasn't been any gang violence for more than two years. Now there are plans to link the neighborhood back to downtown by reinventing First Street as a major corridor that connects Boyle Heights' Mariachi Plaza to downtown's Disney Concert Hall. There's talk of an even more ambitious residential project at an abandoned Sears distribution center to the south, and community activists are beginning to envision reclaiming the river bank and its outmoded warehouses for more new homes, schools and shops.

Diego Cardoso of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is project manager of the Gold Line to East L.A. and served on the Los Angeles Housing Commission when it applied for HOPE VI funds. "The beauty of HOPE VI," he says, "is that it has tapped the value of the real estate on which public housing projects sit, which is valuable because of its location - next to transit, next to jobs, next to downtown. The key lies in thinking of public housing as an asset instead of a liability. The private sector stepped in at the very moment that the federal government abandoned hope in public housing."



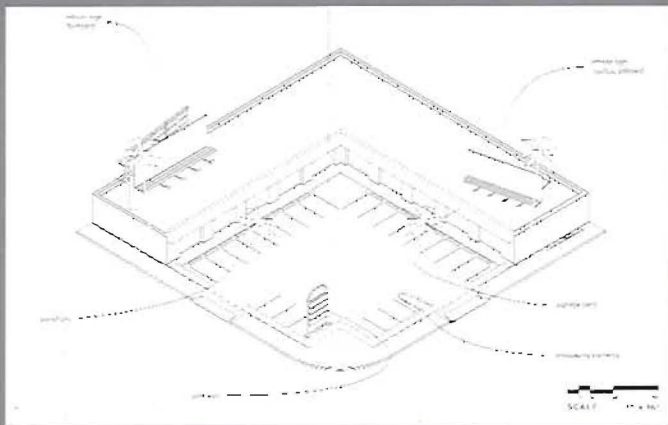
Maximizing the Mini-mall



The mini-mall is minimal. It's the cheapest and most utilitarian container for human activity, with almost everything you need but nothing more. You can get pad thai or acrylic nails here, but you can't get architecture. In fact, there's rarely any architectural effort at all. Instead, the come-on is ready access to parking. The mini-mall's primary feature is the exterior single-loaded circulation and high-visibility location, with all storefronts oriented to the street and plastered with signage.

Mini-malls made their first appearance in the 1920s at the dawning of the great auto age in Los Angeles, and were developed as L-shaped commercial buildings, often as garages and service stations but sometimes as markets. The latter-day explosion of mini-malls started in 1973, catalyzed by the OPEC oil embargo, when hundreds of gas stations across the country went out of business. "Those abandoned sites, surrounded by chain-link fences and strewn with ripped-up chunks of concrete, were usually at busy intersections chosen with the motorist in mind; oil companies were eager to get rid of the properties, and they were priced to sell," wrote Jade Chang in a complete history and appraisal of the mini-mall in the April 2003 issue of *Metropolis* magazine.

Charles Eicher, on his "Disinfotainment" website, notes that Standard (Oil) sold their gas stations, "in one huge block, one of the largest auctions of urban properties in modern LA history. And Bob Hope bought them," he wrote. "His company, La Mancha Development, immediately set to developing these properties, which were mostly corner gas stations, many in residential neighborhoods. By 1985, there were 3,000 of these badboys in Los Angeles. In 1988, Councilman Michael Woo called our fair city 'the mini-mall capital of the world.' And he wasn't smiling when he said it. He and his fellow council members decided the insanity must be stopped, passing an ordinance establishing guidelines to slow the growth of the monstrosities."



Just a year later, an *L.A. Times* quality-of-life poll revealed that mini-malls were Angelinos' biggest pet peeve after potholes. But we love to hate them as much as we love to patronize them. And the mini-mall, flanked by parking and freighted with signage, has proliferated until it is now ubiquitous.

Jade Chang, who grew up next door to one, argues that these developments do count as a form of public space. "Just three blocks away from our Northridge tract home, this prototypical collection of Chinese restaurant, beauty salon, candy store, and dry cleaner was the first place I was allowed to go on my own. I would skateboard or bicycle over with my fifth-grade friends, ready to pick out jellybean flavors and watch the



ladies come and go, talking of nail polish colors. My first job, at 17, was next door to the candy store, personalizing bar/bat mitzvah favors and children's birthday presents with puffy paint."

Talk about incubator businesses and the Great American Dream! The proprietor of Suzy's nail is probably sending her daughter to Harvard. Sail down a street like Vermont as it approaches the northern edge of Koreatown, and ask yourself if you've ever seen such a boiling cauldron of economic opportunity!

Yes, mini-malls are ugly. But maximizing economic opportunity, optimizing human activity and interactivity, doesn't always look as gemulticheit as Jane Jacob's Greenwich Village. Just as there were once tent cities on the beach, which were superseded by summer homes and eventually by permanent homes, so the last act of the mini-mall has not been played out.

Virtually every mini-mall is a potential redevelopment site. As Los Angeles becomes more dense and the number of drivers and pedestrians and transit users flowing past and through mini-mall sites increases exponentially, so will the potential for development until, finally, parking will become an underutilization of space. And in the meantime, development could be put on the street, with parking located above, below or behind.

Urban designer and architect John Kaliski is among those who point out that these eyesores are fantastic opportunity sites that should be targeted for public action and private investment. Maybe in some bizarre new incarnation of urban building type there could be two stories of external corridors, with offices on top and housing on top of the offices. After all, what could be more convenient than living on top of your workplace and above ten delicious ethnic restaurants, as well as a hair salon, nail parlor, travel agent and cleaner?



- by John Leighton Chase

The Block

commentary by Vinayak Bharne

From the 1920s to the 1950s, Los Angeles did for the shopping center what New York did for the skyscraper. Within a single generation, sweeping changes in retail development transformed the traditional city block in prioritizing size over any pre-war urban precedent. Larger than the neighborhood center, these mammoth “regional” complexes expanded the scope of merchandise for specialty outlets and large department stores, and as counterparts to L.A.’s historic centers - from Downtown to Miracle Mile and Westwood Village, and the intimately scaled bazaar-like qualities of the Farmer’s Market and Olvera Street - emerged as mega-blocks to evenly disperse space for buildings and cars.



Pacific Design Center, West Hollywood



Beverly Center, West Hollywood



The Grove, Fairfax Neighborhood

These mega-blocks constructed in Los Angeles’ outlying centers were not seen by the industry leaders as anomalies, but rather as pioneering examples that would function as updated Main Streets so long as sufficient space was given to parking. In 1945 attention was showered on Bullock’s 250,000 “store of the future” in Pasadena that seemed to shed all vestiges of traditional design. In 1947 the Broadway-Crenshaw Center officially opened, with 550,000 square feet of enclosed space supplemented by 13 acres of parking lot designed to hold 2,500 cars at a time. In 1949 at the 73-acre Westchester Business Center, Milliron’s architect Victor Gruen designed one of the most unorthodox and well-publicized retail facilities of the period with roof-top parking and crossed Futurist ramps leading up to it. And in 1951 just as it had pioneered in the use of off-street parking for large commercial outlets in the 20’s, Sears through its 26 acre and 3,500 car Valley Plaza Store led the way to realigning buildings away from the street and beginning with the car lot to achieve the most effective means of getting customers parked. By the early 50’s most involved parties agreed that the tract as a whole, not its block-street front provided the point of departure.

The sequels to such mega-block paradigms built upon Los Angeles’ “motor-city” and “heterotopian” repute. Two decades later, the Shopping Center at Century City inverted physical priorities with multi-level car parks below and a pedestrian “piazza” on the top where the shopper could perambulate. In 1975 Cesar Pelli (then of Gruen Associates) pulled West Hollywood’s design and furnishing firms together into the seven story, all glass yet no exterior window, 245 feet wide, 530 feet long and 750,000 square feet behemoth - the Pacific Design Center - that John Pastier described in the *Los Angeles Times* as “an attempt at hiding a whale in a backyard swimming pool.” In the 80’s the Welton Becker designed Beverly Center generated eight stories of almost blank plaster walls extruded from the sidewalk edges of an entire city block while the Jon Jerde Partnership incorporated the size of

Victor Gruen’s projects with the pageantry of market places, initiated by the Horton Plaza in Downtown San Diego and followed by the notorious Universal City Walk’s hilltop mega-mall surrounded by parking lots. And in 1996 AMC opened the largest mega-plex in the nation, a 30 screen, 5,700 seat theater at the Ontario Mills Mall under the pseudonym of “interactive shoppertainment.” Bigness and exclusiveness dominated the urban nihilism of the mega-block destination.

After half a century of devastating effects Southern California is witnessing a reversal of patterns. With the increasing prognosis of the "Dead Malls" syndrome, the very victory of the mega-mall has spelt its eventual defeat. Many such endangered mastodons are approaching this sorry state - victims of fierce competition, failed regional department store chains, the loss of national anchors, and shifting demographics - most neither big enough to attract national credit tenants, nor convenient enough to compete with thriving grocery-anchored neighborhood centers. As policy they have spelt the debacle of single-use zoning, instigating increasing

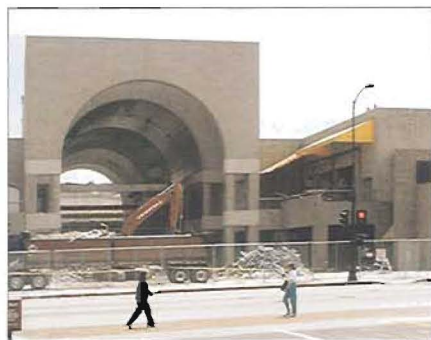
counter reactions in the form of Mixed-use, Park Once and Form-Based ordinances. As planning they have been recognized as unsustainable patterns sparking the revitalization of Main Streets and Transit Villages within L A 's suburban downtowns. And as development they have revealed their limitations to reuse and permanence while drawing attention to their large sites as fields for alternative scenarios to ongoing real estate trends - where it is no longer the single-family suburban house, nor the characteristic L.A. dingbat, but the ubiquitous stacked flat that represents the desperation of residential densities trying to cope with Southern California's unprecedented and ever-soaring land prices.



Regional Mall



Dead Mall



The demolition of Plaza Pasadena

Consequently the traditional urban block has gradually made a comeback. It is now being increasingly recognized as an opportunity to restore L.A.'s eroded urban fabric along with the public and private realm of the city. As such, numerous developments, each larger than the individual building increment and smaller than the neighborhood fragment are infilling, reclaiming and reusing traditional blocks to juxtapose housing, retail and commerce in various permutations within the same block. With the completion of City Place in Long Beach and Paseo Colorado in Pasadena (both replacing their mega-mall predecessors) and with several block-scale projects under construction or on the boards, the Mixed-use Block is emerging as an urban prototype in Southern California. The projects that follow represent the return of the traditional block in challenging the urban nihilism of their predecessors. Though designed by single hands, they reject the mega-block to accommodate large programs in incremental and collective forms, hide parking away from the public realm, establish interdependence between blocks, streets and buildings, and turn around to embrace L.A.'s urban grid as the necessary condition for their architecture. They point not only to a multi-dimensional concurrence on positions long held by traditional architects and urbanists, but also testify to a genuine commitment to prioritize responsible urban form over architectural idiosyncrasy.

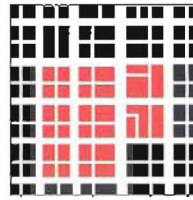


City Place, Long Beach

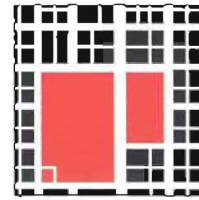
CityPlace begins with an ambitious intent to reweave the dead Long Beach Plaza megamall site into the downtown's traditional urban grid. Four streets suture the mega-block into a six block pattern of broad sidewalks, trees and consistent street amenities, tying together a variety of conventional suburban retail tenants that focus less on downtown's high-end customer base and more towards the local and regional middle-class.

Yet in comparing the historic block network with the site's re-urbanization, the project's reluctance and incompleteness is quite apparent. Long Beach Boulevard and Fourth Street cut all the way through, but Fifth Street succumbs to the conventional footprint of Wal-Mart, shifting for its accommodation and dying towards the east. In forgetting alleys, one of the most pragmatic features of the historic grid, the absence of clear service areas generates front and back ambiguities. Thus the entire face of Long Beach Boulevard is devoted to service uses while Sixth Street is fronted with two blocks of large empty walls

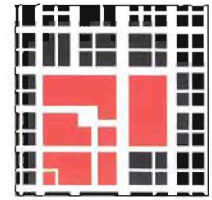
Converting the mega-block into a mixed-use "place" is no small achievement, yet all said and done CityPlace deserves more sympathy than praise for opportunities lost amidst solutions clearly executed in certain portions of the project - for its inconsistent building liners, for its relentless stucco, for its favoritism to the stacked flat versus its skepticism towards other housing types, and finally for that embarrassing self-proclaimed "public plaza" that lined with a parking lot and a parking garage, seems more like a leftover crumb after a hearty meal.



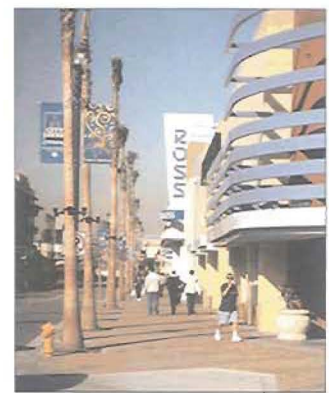
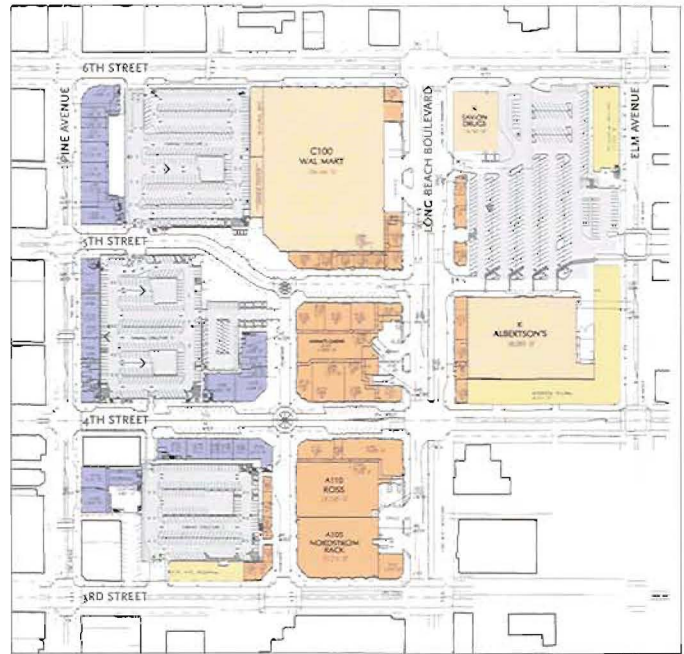
CityPlace, preWW2



Long Beach Plaza



City Place



Developed by Developers Diversified Realty, Inc., CityPlace includes 475,000 square feet of retail and more than 300 residential units. It serves as the northern anchor in Long Beach's Downtown revitalization efforts and provides an effective link between the Promenade and Pine Avenue. Structured parking accommodates 2,400 spaces, yet pedestrian traffic is facilitated with the adjacent Metro Blueline station. Retail anchors in the project include Nordstrom Rack, Ross Dress for Less, and Walmart, while neighborhood retail, including a state-of-the-art full-service grocery store, lines the streets. CityPlace is also permanent home to The Found Theater and a sponsor of public art by local artists.



Paseo Colorado, Pasadena

To restore the disrupted north-south civic axis of the original 1925 Bennett Plan by the Plaza Pasadena shopping center, the 1998 Civic Center Master Plan recommended extending the Garfield Avenue right-of-way towards the historic auditorium, and making public, accessible and pedestrian-friendly faces towards Green Street. In response, Paseo Colorado demolished its predecessor, lined Colorado and Green with retail as well as service uses, opened the axis visually, and denied Garfield as a through street.

Thus what could have been a dynamic, picturesque, real street, with people, trees, cars, retail, restaurants and residences all juxtaposed against the magnificent backdrop of the auditorium, has now become a caricature of its own image - an axial mid-block crossing too wide to be a "paseo," and too ordinary to be a "square," a circulation path en route to the myriad retail destinations and high perched residences overlooking the cityscape and the mountains beyond. Despite its admirable mixed-use and housing agenda, its open to sky retail courts and terraces, and its varied massing, with no new streets to break the 1200 foot long block length and no alleys to access services, and with those skin-deep,



Paseo Colorado located on three city blocks in the heart of historic Pasadena between Colorado Boulevard, Green Street, Marengo and Los Robles Avenues, celebrated its grand opening on Friday, September 28, 2001. Developed by TrizecHahn and designed by architects Ehrenkrantz Eckstut and Kuhn it has 391 luxury residential apartment homes and lofts that reside in four levels above the retail marketplace and public promenades. It is anchored by Pacific Theatres' 14-theatre cinema complex, Gelson's Super Market, Amadeus Day Spa & Salon, a newly renovated Macy's, the West Coast's first location of Equinox Fitness Clubs and 65 distinct specialty retail shops. Seventy-five percent of the village's retailers are new to Pasadena, including Coach, BCBG Max Azria, Betsey Johnson, Ann Taylor Loft, April Cornell, Max Studio, Brookstone, J. Jill, MAC Cosmetics, and Tommy Bahama. Paseo Colorado also offers visitors a variety of fine and casual dining options, including P.F. Chang's China Bistro, Tokyo Wako, Island's Fine Burgers & Drinks, Yard House, Bodega Wine Bar, and quick dining favorites Rubio's Baja Grille, Chinese Gourmet Café, California Crisp and Cold Stone Creamery.

cardboard-like, pastel, stucco facades barely half as rich as their older and smaller increments in Old Town Pasadena just two blocks west, Paseo Colorado is not much more than an extroverted incarnation of the very mega-mall on whose debris it stands.



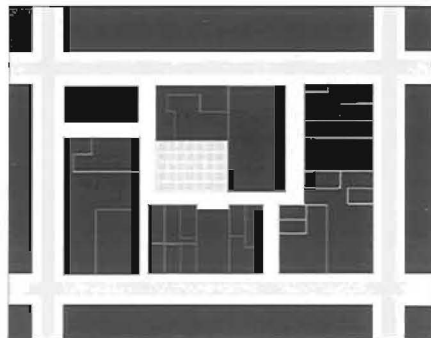


One Colorado, Pasadena

Just three blocks west of the Paseo project, where Colorado Boulevard transforms into Old Town Pasadena's charming main street, there is a rather beautiful and moving place. What started as a reuse project during the downtown's revitalization is now one of the city's most cherished hang outs with retail and shopping, even a movie theater, and plenty of eating-places. People might pass it by, since it is hidden from all the street activity, but walk through any of One Colorado's five tenuous "alleys" and one will eventually arrive into a mid-block paved court with the same unexplainable feeling as that of discovering an intimate square within a medieval labyrinth of streets. Though its continuous hardscape and potted plants may suggest otherwise, this square within Pasadena's Park Once district sits right upon the earth rather than the deck of an underground parking garage, clearly missing a real tree or two for shade during Pasadena's hot summers. But most of the reused brick buildings that surround the square are genuinely as old as they look. Questions of genuineness are not the point however. The point is that this private "mall" of sorts manages to deliver all those qualities of animation and spontaneity that few professional designers can achieve with the best will in the world. One Colorado is exotic, charming and hopelessly adequate, in fact so charming that one wishes for the one thing it does not accommodate - the sheer pleasure of living directly above all the action.

Pioneering the redevelopment of Old Pasadena, One Colorado, adds a distinguished group of tenants to the area, including Crate & Barrel, J. Crew, Armani A/X, The Gap and Il Fornaio. The success of One Colorado's early retail tenants has spurred a proliferation of retail in Old Pasadena. New tenants such as Sushi Roku, Waterworks and Laemmle Theatres, continue to set the pace for dynamic revitalization, and more than 4,000 customers visit the complex daily. Built into historic Spanish-style buildings, One Colorado is a setting for numerous annual outdoor film festivals, frequent music & dance productions, and high-quality art shows.

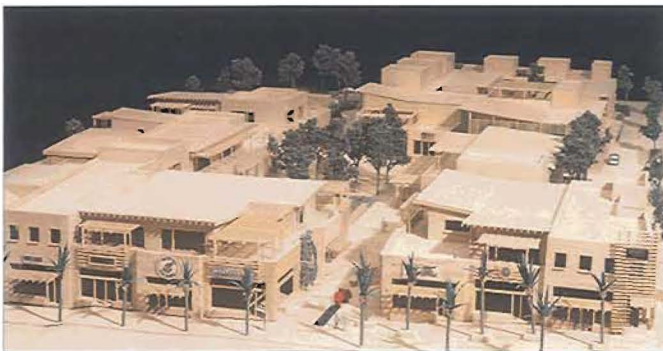
Architect : Kaplan/McLaughlin/Diaz
Developer : One Colorado Investments, LLC





The Metlox Block,
Manhattan Beach

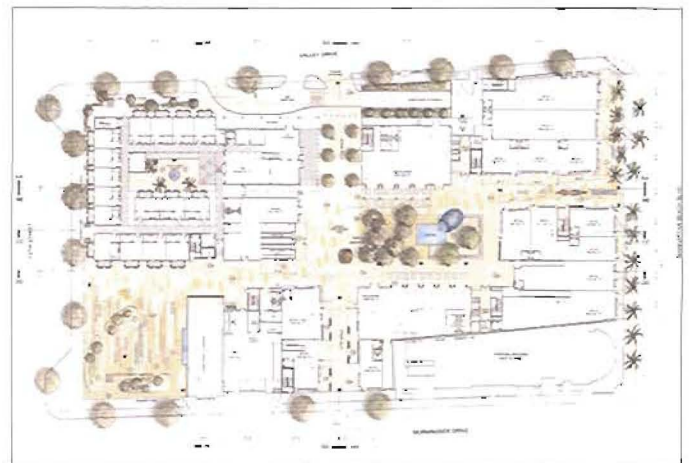
By extending the City Hall's forecourt into the block through its corner "garden" and thence into its central "Town Square," the Metlox Block provides the missing formal setting to the Manhattan Beach's civic heart. 12th Street bisects the block as a mid-block walkway leading to the ocean, continuing the existing "walking street" pattern of the surrounding blocks, while four separate buildings through their height and modular facades maintain the urban grain of the community's traditional retail frontages. The central court - like One Colorado - is lined with eating-places and boutique shops, but overlooked by offices and adorned by a cluster of trees that cleverly disguise the two level public parking garage beneath. This city-maintained public place within the private development promises the same vibrancy as its Pasadena counterpart.

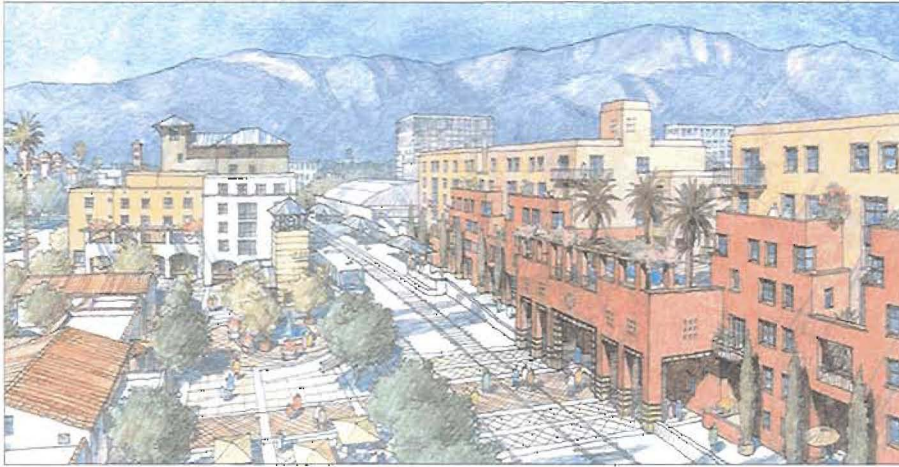


But amidst the restaurants and retail that surround the square, one misses that essential civic anchor, some kind of civic facility that could have marked the place as an extension of the civic center, and something more than just a "food and shopping court." And one certainly misses the prospect of living above the square, rather than in the small hotel that occupies one corner. Metlox is cute, but it evades the significance of its special location, making the notion of a "Town Square" seem quite the misnomer.

The Metlox Block project is an extension of Manhattan Beach's Downtown upscale commercial walking district, located three blocks from the beach and renowned pier. Approximately 64,000 square feet in all, its one- and two-story buildings will contain 25,000 square feet of new retail and restaurants, including a bakery and ice cream fountain; and 15,000 square feet of loft-style offices. The project will also add a 38-room boutique hotel and a full service day spa to the two-acre site.

Urban Design : Moule & Polyzoides
 Architect : Tolkin Architects
 Developer : Tolkin Group
 Status : under construction





Del Mar Station will soon be one of the Gold Line's most prominent light rail stops between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena. It is located adjacent to Central Park and near the historic Hotel Green at the southern edge of Pasadena's Old Town. Its program includes 347 rental housing units, 20,000 square feet of retail, and a subterranean garage for 1,200 cars.

Design Architect : Moule & Polyzoides
 Project Architect : Nadel Partners
 Developer : Urban Partners, LLC / Archstone
 Status : scheduled to open 2006

Del Mar Station TOD, Pasadena

One of the earliest vignettes of the Del Mar project was a square like setting with shops and cafes opening directly on to the train - recalling those magnificent historic transit plazas of Europe (right). This sketch morphed into the project's climactic aerial perspective, with buildings gathered around an endearing transit plaza marked by a "campanile" and brushed by the train (above). But the Gold Line authorities insisted on fences and gates to secure the train's passage, and the transparent plaza shrunk into a rather mundane court squeezed between a historic station and a metal fence. The very *raison d'être* of this unique block was more than compromised.



Yet the four Del Mar buildings convincingly fulfill their roles as the walls, portals and gateways of the figural void that meanders through the block. Higher densities are tucked away within the block interior while friendlier 3- and 4-story walkups cascade towards the surrounding streets, substituting what could have been a mega-façade with the fragmented image of an "urban village." Though it may remain only as "mixed-use" as a paltry 20,000 square feet of retail space for its size and proximity to Old Town Pasadena, and though its residential "courts" may seem more like vertical light wells against their seven story walls - its flex ground floor spaces and convincing renditions of various architectural styles promise a thriving, and memorable transit destination along the Downtown-Pasadena Gold Line. One cannot but wonder how in the years to come when the stucco has baked, and the buildings have aged, the nonchalant passerby might just about be convinced that Del Mar evolved incrementally over many years through many hands and that one day the train just happened to breeze right through it.





Mission Station TOD, South Pasadena

As the Gold Line heads south towards Downtown L.A., it passes through South Pasadena's historic bungalow neighborhoods and cuts across the main street where Mission Meridian stands. Here a graduating density diagram is quite literally translated into typological form. As if subdivided into lots, the half-block bears individual buildings specific to their respective adjacencies. A mixed-use loft building emulates its existing brick neighbor while twin courtyards with duplex fronts reflect the bungalow porches across the street. With higher densities tucked away within the block interior and with three single-family bungalows dissolving the block into the neighborhood beyond, the entire block frontage seamlessly "completes" the neighborhood street as a public room.



But right under these charming buildings are two levels of a gigantic parking garage, literally as big as the site itself. It covers almost every inch of earth with impervious concrete, limiting the landscape to tree wells and raised planters. And these planters occupy almost everything in the central courtyards limiting their experience to the edges of the buildings, diminishing their idea as outdoor "living rooms."

Exemplifying "density with dignity" above ground, while succumbing to conventional parking ratios below, Mission Meridian remains - despite all the TOD hype - a thoughtful contextually appropriate design with the train as little more than the icing on the cake.



The Mission Station project is a 1.65 acre transit-oriented development adjacent to a light rail station on the Gold Line between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena. It includes sixty-seven condominiums, 5,000 square feet of retail space, and a bicycle store and storage facility designed to accommodate people interested in commuting to work by train. Two levels of subterranean parking containing 280 parking spaces will service the needs of future commuters, project residents, and neighbors.

Architect : Moule & Polyzoides
 Developer : Creative Housing Associates
 Status : scheduled to open fall 2005



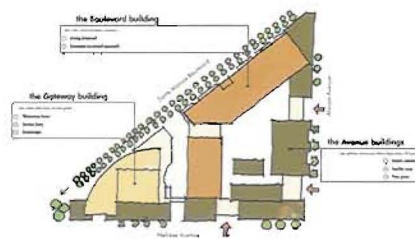
The Block



Melrose Triangle, West Hollywood

Three distinct ideas incept the Melrose Triangle. A “gateway building” marks the entry into downtown West Hollywood, a “boulevard building” lines the project’s most prominent thoroughfare, and “avenue buildings” face the surrounding neighborhoods. The entire block reads as a cluster of nine individual building increments arranged around two central courts on either side of a mid block walkway. Rendered in a variety of idioms and sometimes disconnected from each other with bridges in the air, they convincingly break the triangular island into an intricate sequence of building faces around a labyrinthine pedestrian route.

But on closer examination, it appears that the project is a clever architectural packaging of a singular housing typology - the double loaded stacked flat perimeter block. There is nothing wrong with this typology per se, but with the rather mundane experience of walking into every unit only through a corridor, however well designed, one cannot help but wonder why walkup types such as lofts and townhouses could not have provided a palette of housing choices within a project of this size. As such, despite its inspiring curve, the “gateway” building is typologically the most uninspiring of them all, with a central well like space that is lined on two sides not by building faces but corridors. For all its exterior sophistication, Melrose Triangle bears the same risk of internal monotony as the conventional market rate stacked flat building. The efficiency of a single building type may be its market-driven virtue, but it is also its greatest architectural vice.



Melrose Triangle is a 2.4 acre, 250,000 square-foot mixed-use development at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and Melrose Avenue in West Hollywood. Almost 200 residential units will sit atop 78,000 square feet of ground floor retail and restaurants. Tenants along Santa Monica Blvd will be selected on their ability to contribute to the street’s re-branding as a pedestrian-oriented Main Street, an effort the City has pursued for many years. Retailers on Melrose and Almont, however, will continue to foster the Art and Design character of West Hollywood with furniture and art galleries in a glass and brick design setting. The project also includes a housing component for low- and very low-income households.

Architect : Studio One Eleven
Client / Developer : The Charles Company



Developer Wally Marks is also the third-generation owner of The Helms Bakery, a Culver City landmark since the 1930s. The 11-acre complex is a restoration of the facility's classic bow-truss ceilings, antique windows and iron lamps into a network of restaurants (Beacon, La Dijonaise), a premiere jazz nightclub (the Jazz Bakery) and a new furniture concept (H D Buttercup) along with other furniture showrooms and studios.

The Helms Bakery, Culver City

The historic neon signs that say “Helms Bakery” and “Beacon Laundry” might lead you to believe something else, but these circa 1930’s poured in place concrete buildings have been lovingly transformed into a thriving retail, studio and office complex. Their spacious wood trussed interiors that once buzzed with bakers and launders are now occupied by numerous high-end furniture stores, while seamless new infill buildings house offices to the city’s architects, graphics, media industry and enhance the Washington Boulevard face. As both reuse as well as re-development, Helms Bakery Block is a worthy precedent across the board.



Helms Avenue, a public right-of-way bisects the property and the two blocks, and with its narrow dimensions and street parking, and with stores opening directly on to it bears all the promise of an intimate public gathering place that could well be the heart of the complex. But there could be street trees and benches here, and a lot more than a rhythm of banners to elevate it as more than just a vehicular route between Venice and Washington Boulevards. And there is parking lot at the southeast corner of Helms and Venice that should be anything but a parking lot. But what is least inspiring is that the block restores three of its faces with great sensitivity, while completely forgetting its fourth face to Hutchinson Avenue, which faces residential. Here single story detached homes now gape helplessly into the block’s interior at-grade parking lot, while they could just as easily have faced a building fabric that seamlessly completed the neighborhood street. Helms Bakery Block is remarkable in itself, but turns its back to the very neighborhood it tries to revitalize.



The Block



MJW Investments has created the largest adaptive reuse development in downtown with **Santee Court**, a \$130 mixed-use project with 165 loft apartments and more than 300 for-sale condos. The ultimate project area envisions the transformation of nine historic Garment District buildings with early 20th century architecture and ground-floor retail. MJW spent one year of restoration planning guided by the Department of Building and Safety, Cultural Affairs, Community Redevelopment Agency and L.A. Fire Department.

Client/Developer : MJW Investments

Santee Court, Downtown Los Angeles

Santee Court not only reuses Downtown's abandoned buildings, but resurrects designated local historic monuments of its early twentieth century industrial era. The Gothic Revival Textile Building (built by Florence Casler in 1926), the Spanish Churrigueresque Revival Marion Gray Building (built 1926), and the Art Deco/30's Moderne 700 Building (built in 1908 then renovated in 1935). Once inside these buildings, what is most impressive is not units themselves, but the dramatic central light wells carved out from their thick industrial bodies to accommodate thinner residential perimeters. Here, with three-dimensional lattices of original concrete beams maintained for structural reasons, and with large planters and cascading foliage, these once forgotten edifices now boast some of most stirring residential spaces of any post-war residential building Downtown.

With parking hidden below ground, the heart of the project is a community 'spine' with markets and shops drawing the inimitable gusto of the surrounding streets into the block interior. But the best part is all the way up, where the building roofs present an impressive exhibit of communal amenities, including a putting green and a basketball court, and barbecue areas, and even a swimming pool, perched high above the dust and danger of the city below. Despite all the constraints, with its diverse mix of incomes and uses, close proximity to public transportation and a density any retailer would covet, Santee Court literally brings 'concrete' hope for a Downtown renaissance, despite all the hype that continues to happen up Bunker Hill.





St Vincent Jewelry Center, Downtown Los Angeles

Downtown Los Angeles is home to one of the largest jewelry districts in the world, second only to New York, encompassing 4,900 businesses and employing more than 14,000 people. Within this vibrant urban setting, the beautifully restored half-block terra cotta exterior of St. Vincent Jewelry Center with its carefully cleaned up windows and storefronts brings a whiff of nostalgia for the mid-1930s, when it was designed and built by the architectural firm of John and Donald Parkinson. The Center's interior boasts a beautiful open-air marketplace with independent jewelry booths that reflect warmth and friendliness in a unique blend of old and new styles, while its ground floor glimmers with imported marble and satin-finished showcases.



But reassuringly the project's most distinguishing feature is St. Vincent Court, its charming alley filled with restaurants and delicatessens, almost seeming like a little street, a tranquil hideaway from the gusto of the Jewelry District. It is a rather unconventional alley, spanned twice across by six story arms creating spatial pulsations of shade and light, and paved and smeared with all kinds of follies from fake flowers and pastiche shop fronts to even a miniature Statue of Liberty, making it seem like a kitschy caricature of the real deal along Broadway just a step away. Yet amidst all the concoction there is a real plaque proclaiming the place as a California Registered Historic Landmark No. 567, bringing precedence for many of Broadway's magnificent historic buildings that long await that distinguished status.

Bordered by Broadway, Hill and 7th Street in Downtown LA's vibrant Jewelry District, **St. Vincent Jewelry Center**, the largest and most complete jewelry complex in the world with more than 300,000 square feet of space, and 400 wholesalers, manufacturers, gemologists, custom jewelers and retailers who conduct most of their business under one roof. The Center was named after Southern California's first college, founded by the Fathers of St. Vincent de Paul Mission in 1865. The years 1905-1935 marked the transformation of the former college campus into what became known as the "Bullock's Complex," named after the famous department store. In 1957, the campus was renamed St. Vincent's Court and became a county landmark. Los Angeles United Investment Company (LAUIC) purchased the complex in the early 1980s (after Bullock's had vacated the site) and began extensive renovations. In 1983, St. Vincent's Jewelry Center opened, proclaiming itself "a brand new gem in a grand old setting."



The Street

commentary by Vinayak Bharne

Once public life in Los Angeles was lived largely on the street. As the most ubiquitous element of its tabula rasa, it was what connected the mountains to the beach and the Downtown to the plains. We didn't need freeways because we had the trains, and we had great neighborhoods because we had great streets. We didn't need "Universal City Walk" because we had the magnificent theater lined Broadway and the pleasure-orientations of Hollywood Boulevard. Los Angeles had a great tradition of public rooms, remnants of the day when the notion of community was expressed in great physical places that were open to everyone and intended to be shared.



Main Street, Disneyland



State Street, Santa Barbara



The Grove

But in the mid '60s, when Charles Moore observed the magnetism of Main Street Disneyland, he could not help but voice the folly of "paying for public life," observing that the safety and splendor of civic life in L.A. was happening not on streets, but in destination enclaves that somewhat resembled a street. And since Reyner Banham anointed the Freeway as L.A.'s "fourth ecology" in 1972, these places have been increasingly accepted as the new forms of publicness in the "motor-city." Thus Main Street Disneyland recalls the cheerful and tidy nostalgia of Hometown America of 1910, City Walk renders a simulacrum of Hollywood Boulevard, the Grove presents a Eurocentric streetscape with a trolley, and Third Street Promenade closes a real street to become a "public outdoor mall." The point is they are pseudo streets, protected from the spontaneity and challenge of real street life, temporal products of capitalism where people can pretend to experience urban life without getting their hands messed up. As made up replicas of something people used to go to experience, they are an accurate reconstruction of Noel Coward's words on L.A. - "There is always something so delightfully real about what is phony here. And something so phony about what is real."

Meanwhile, Los Angeles continues to have real streets. We have the splendor of Miracle Mile on Wilshire, the pathos of Route 66 and the breathtaking views of the Pacific Coast Highway. We have the Hispanic rigor of Broadway, the controlled white of State Street and the regality of Rodeo Drive. And we have the intimacy of Larchmont in Hancock Park, Montana in Santa Monica, Colorado in Pasadena and Magnolia in Riverside. But streets such as these are inundated by L.A.'s overwhelming transportation palimpsest of wide thoroughfares, parking lots, freeways, strips and drive-ins, while its uniquely thin and homogeneous suburbs hardly place any value on the public realm, preoccupying themselves to the single family detached house, the yard and the automobile. In Los Angeles, we have stopped valuing the street, stopped nurturing the most essential building block of our urban geography, and as such stopped designing them. The projects that follow attempt to restore L.A.'s streets to their deserved status as communal rooms for pedestrians and cars. In them is the surest promise of ensuring that L.A. does actually have a civic realm. But they are embarrassingly few in number, a testimony to the vacuum that remains to be filled, as well as the opportunity that waits to be grasped.



Santa Monica Crosswalks

The citizens of Santa Monica complained loudly when crosswalks began disappearing in their seaside city during the 1990s -- so loudly their complaints were picked up by newspapers on the East Coast and in Europe. Cities across California had begun removing crosswalks at unsignalized intersections and in mid-block because of studies suggesting that they gave pedestrians a "false sense of security" and increased the likelihood of accidents. But pedestrian advocacy groups had been gearing up across the country with the conviction that cities had been giving away too much in the effort to accommodate free and easy vehicular movement. An image in The New York Times of surfers stranded with their boards on one side of tidal wave of traffic on Ocean Boulevard galvanized the local pedestrian advocacy movement.



Santa Monica residents demanded local officials do more, not less, to protect pedestrians and enhance, not remove, crosswalks so it was easier to walk to schools and to parks. At the direction of the City Council the city launched an aggressive campaign that assigned engineers to investigate every intersection along 15 major thoroughfares, check pedestrian counts, traffic volumes and speeds and street widths, and review accident records. Residents were consulted before and after plans for different remediations were drawn up. "We used quantifiable criteria to create strict performance standards and establish the thresholds at which different enhancements should be employed," said one of the project consultants. "It's the most scientific approach to pedestrian safety that I've ever heard of."



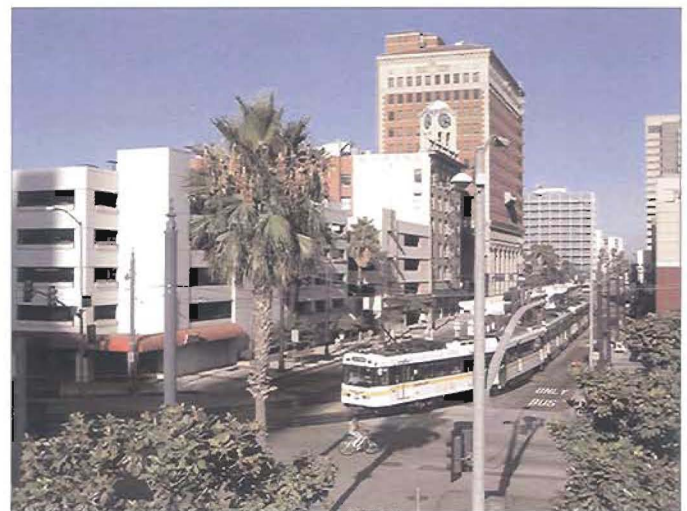
In the past six years the city has spent \$8 million installing crosswalks, refuge islands, curb extensions, in-pavement flashers, landscaping, medians, zebra striping, pushbuttons, signage, signals, a roundabout. The city coordinated crosswalks with bus stops, sought to accommodate senior citizens, worked with the fire and police and garbage departments to accommodate concerns about access. Says Planning and Community Development Deputy Director Ellen Gelbard, "It was expensive and the changes have been subtle, but the fact that we have installed hundreds of crosswalks has had an undeniably huge impact on the walkability of the city, and it has slowed traffic." She notes that 15 percent of residents get to downtown on foot, and that the opening of the Santa Monica Transit Mall has increased the number of bus boardings to 16,000 daily, more than at most rail stations - pointing out that every transit rider is a pedestrian.

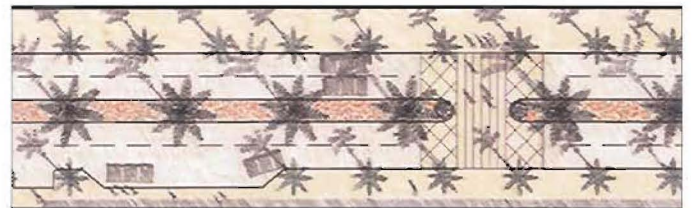
The Street



Glendale's main drag - Brand Boulevard - retains storefronts from pre-World War II days alongside large mega malls, entertainment districts and big-box plazas. With the success of this vibrant district, the city is now adding American at Brand. This is a 15-acre \$264 million project by Caruso Affiliated planned to mix boutiques, restaurants and upscale apartments. (Caruso Affiliated, headed by Rick Caruso, is the city's most high-profile retail developer and now plans to include residential components in most of its future projects.)

Once considered Long Beach's premier retail street, Pine Avenue fell into abandonment and disrepair during the post war era. Currently it is emerging as the City's destination for dining and entertainment. Part of its success is attributed to a reconfiguration of the right-of way several years ago from a one-way four-lane street designed to move traffic quickly to a calm two-way one-lane street with curbside parking on both sides. Sidewalks have been widened and enhanced with a comfortable stamped concrete finish, street trees, art components, and pedestrian scaled lighting. Pine Avenue is also diverse in building style and scale, woven together with a consistent "zero setback" generating a harmonious urban edge. Downtown's original lot frontages were laid out on a 25 foot module generating building widths varying from 25', 50', 75', 100' and 150', each with a unique architectural style. The preservation of this historic lotting module with recent urban infill has avoided the one building per block approach commonly used with urban renewal. Preservation through adaptive reuse has transformed classic department stores into successful residential lofts many with industrial interiors. Even though the recently completed CityPlace Avenue provides for ground floor retail with housing above, many of the other unique urban patterns that define this street are not well respected or executed.





The **Beverly Hills Triangle Streetscape** project preserves and enhances the physical character and commercial cachet of one of the most prestigious retail addresses in the world - the City of Beverly Hills. The project, completed in 2004, involved a multi-pronged strategy that coordinated both design and management measures. One design element used to facilitate walking was the transformation of the area into a "park-once" district with wide sidewalks and mid-block crosswalks where pedestrian traffic is heavy. The designer upgraded streetscapes in conjunction with this, improving landscape, lighting, signage, and public art, and a new design code was adopted to ensure the proper form and design quality of future buildings. Finally, the City of Beverly Hills instituted a management plan to improve and maintain the district's physical appearance and retail mix.

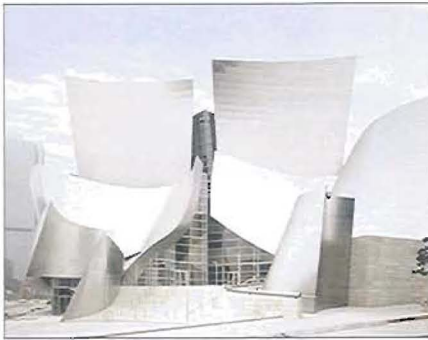
Urban Design : Moule & Polyzoides / Fong Hart Schneider



The Building

commentary by Vinayak Bharne

There are those in the architectural mainstream that argue that Los Angeles defies traditional urbanism; that its ambiguity of city and country, amorphous civic life, and lack of a functional mass transit represent the rejection of the usual spatial clues pertaining to urban culture; that L.A. is "anti-urban" and different, and hence demands a new definition of urbanism; and that the traditional European distinction of *Res Publica* (the civic) versus *Res Privata* (the fabric) provides little precedence. Little wonder that the individual 'building' has for the last few decades hardly attempted to balance the public and private realm with infrastructure and transportation, rather than focus on little more than itself. The same city that once produced small courtyard plans under its benign climate has now become the Mecca of the architectural avante-garde, hardly missing a single opportunity to impress with its architectural histrionics, while diminishing any discussion on its generic fabric to a pitiful footnote on the "battle of styles."



Iconic Building : Disney Concert Hall



Institutional Building : Occidental College



Commercial Building : 3rd & Fairfax District

But, as Stefanos Polyzoides states (in an unpublished letter dated March 10, 2005) . "There are two dimensions of design that precede any consideration of style: urbanist engagement and typological commitment. They both arise through a social and ecological concern for the history and culture that buildings are built within, and thereby generate relative and complex judgments about the value of particular designs, as opposed to the a priori valuation or advocacy of one style over another. The city in its full complexity has always been colored by the particular process of sponsorship, design and production that has made it possible." LA is no exception. There are the landmark buildings designed with very high budgets by international talents, where experimentation rules, and which are built by the best craftsmen. There are the Institutional and Commercial buildings, from those sponsored by wealthy donors and entrepreneurs and built by detail-capable contractors, to those built by people of modest capability and interest in craft. There is Housing ranging from wealthy custom-made homes, to publicly funded senior and affordable housing, to promoter-sponsored projects "generally squeezed by the exaggerated demands for returns." And then there is "the crap sponsored by shameless bottom feeders that build most of the sprawl. Any discussion of any building needs to be cast in the complexities of this framework and seen through a consideration of the issues that dominate its class."

Over the last decade, the emergence of many world-class landmarks in LA has represented one of the most conspicuous layers of this framework. Many great metropolises have "iconic" buildings that strongly embody its image but Los Angeles has always lacked such buildings, for apart from the visible infrastructure of its freeways, only the nine white letters of the Hollywood sign atop Mount Lee could be attributed such an iconic status. Thus the Getty Center though disconnected from

Downtown L.A. (where it was initially intended), the Disney Concert Hall, despite its controversial siting and Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, built at the price of abandoning one of the city's and indeed the region's oldest historic icons, the Cathedral of St. Vibiana symbolize among other things the crowning jewels of an affluent and optimistic urbanism as well as positive social investment for the city, despite the dubious notion whether they will ever become the icons that L.A. seeks.

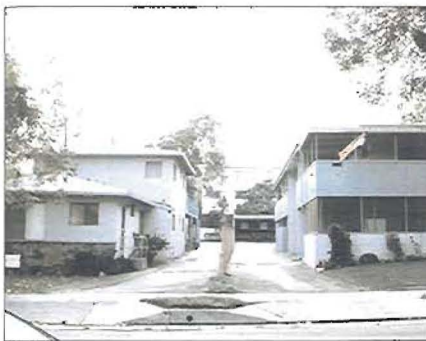
Meanwhile, amidst all this "iconic" fanfare, a number of modest building endeavors are transforming the city's neighborhoods and districts. Amidst its growing demographics and insufficient infrastructure, LA has never quite enjoyed a reputation for good school buildings, but the recent Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) School Initiative, the nation's largest public works program, coupled with the City of L.A.'s Library Program promise the revitalization of many of the city's neighborhood centers. Simultaneously the urbanization of conventional big box retail buildings such as the Hollywood Gateway and the Shops on South Lake provide refreshing precedents amidst the numerous mid- high density housing projects that along with the reuse and building rigor Downtown contract and densify L.A.'s urban cores. (See "Town Centers" chapter)



Senior Housing : Villa Flores, Downtown LA



Commercial Housing, Pasadena



Crap

At the scale of the "building," the issue of housing stands out the most, not so much due to L.A.'s unprecedented land prices and demands, but because for the first time in more than half a century, there is an alternative palette of residential typologies to the region's notorious sprawl culprits, the single family house, the dingbat and the stacked flat. In these alternative types are innovative solutions to the market's density demands, a silent revolution against decades of dormant tax incentives and mortgage policies, the search to address alternatives forms of the family - from childless couples to "empty nesters" - and a variety of urban patterns that diminish the reliance on the car. This growing acceptance of multi-family housing and the revival of Southern California's traditional types coupled with their combination into new "hybrid" types presents one of the most optimistic patterns towards a cogent, diverse and rich urban fabric.

This chapter then highlights the most significant "building" scale paradigms that challenge L.A.'s self-referential and isolated urbanism of the last five decades. As agents for the harmonious completion of city form and expressions of a judicious understanding of the structure of place, they are assessed through that which matters the most - their urban and ecological consequences - leaving the issue of style a completely open, flexible question.

The Building

Located on the south side of Sunset Boulevard, extending east from the Sunset Plaza across Alta Loma Drive, the **Sunset Millennium** is a three-block-long multi-use development by Apollo Real Estate Advisors. Each of the blocks has a different use mix. The west block (the only part completed) has 105,000 sq. ft of commercial space, the middle block will have two 100 foot tall residential towers with a total of 173 residential units, and the east block will have two separate 100 foot tall hotel towers with a W and a Marriott. Both the hotels and the residential towers have commercial space at their base, and all three parcels are split into multiple buildings in order to create view corridors.

These view corridors are mandated by the Sunset Specific Plan, the governing planning document, as a way to preserve and enhance viewsheds from the Strip. The original intent of this specific plan, makes the hopeful assumption that it is possible to husband ad media on the strip and manage it as a contributing element to the Strip without overwhelming it. However advertising on the Strip is a mighty force to be reckoned with, and ads are so lucrative here that, where there is a vacant lot with a billboard on it, the billboard rights can be worth as much as the land. The Sunset Specific plan allows revenue generating offsite advertising in three forms, "tall walls" which are walls of 5,000 square feet or larger, and billboards and large screen video signs that are allowed in certain locations as an incentive for new development.

Once complete the Millennium will have four billboards and seven tall wall ads. The tall walls started out as a palliative measure for large blank sides of buildings that were non-contributors to the urban environment. Over time the tall walls have morphed to include existing walls with windows in them, and now new projects like the Millennium include blank walls just so they could have these tall ad walls. Developer's argue for the inclusion of new tall walls stating that their projects do not pencil out without them, implying that if approval for revenue-generating off-sites is denied, there will be no project.

Sunset Millennium was approved by West Hollywood City Council for the public benefit it will accrue to the city. The hotels alone will generate millions of bed tax dollars along with enhanced pedestrian vitality on the strip - after all one has only to look eastward at the collapse of Hollywood Boulevard to realize that today's high-end retail and office can be tomorrow's ghost town. From an urban design point of view the hotels are an important part of the use mix, and of the synergy created together with the residential towers and the retail component. Mixed use is often thought of as uses stacked horizontally. But uses placed side by side can generate just as much bustling city life. The Sunset Millennium when completed will have a good site plan, and a great use mix with dazzling architecture in the middle parcel.

The truth is that the Sunset Millennium is a perfectly logical addition to the Sunset Strip. Its three blocks are all target sites, identified as locations for more intense development in the Sunset Specific Plan. There are already plenty of three to ten story plus office buildings on the Strip that were built in the heyday of the 50s and 60s, the Sunset Strip's strength being its heterogeneity and inclusiveness of all building scales and sizes. And even a development like the Millennium is a drop in the bucket when it comes to regional traffic generation and inevitable future regional population growth that actually determines much of Sunset Boulevard's peak traffic. The Millennium is a totally legitimate urban design building block for Sunset Boulevard.

Urban Design : Gensler

Architects : Gensler (east block), Kanner (middle block), Nadel (west block & Playboy building)



Over the last five decades, the two most ubiquitous housing types of the L.A. region have been the single-family dwelling and the stacked flat. With the first manifesting the attraction to Southern California's warm climate coupled with the "American Dream," and the second representing the outcome of the "highest" or most profitable use of land as well as the increasing demands of parking, as housing types they both stand at extreme ends of the density spectrum, leaving out an entire range of intermediate typologies, and presenting limited and often in-appropriate urban forms within the middle layers of the regional transect.

While the single-family dwelling has a range of remarkable precedents in Southern California's traditional neighborhoods, with diverse frontages and parking hidden in the rear, the conventional front-loaded garage continues to dominate the most sought after prototype to achieve sparse suburban densities of 4 units/acre. At the other extreme the stacked slab and vertical tower (left) represent two Modern housing typologies that achieve the necessary densities of more than a 100 units/acre within the region's centers and corridors. In between these two extremes, sits the typically uninspiring "apartment" type, the most conventional solution for an "intermediate" density with units stacked atop one another, entered through corridors that span the entire length. At their best they are designed as double loaded bars with at least one side of each unit facing either a street or an internal court, while at their worst, they become single loaded arms, with the central court lined not with rooms but circulation corridors much like conventional "motels." Save the occasional architectural treatment that may salvage a project (below), much of the obtrusion to traditional neighborhood fabric owes a lot to this type.

It is in this light that the following housing projects become so significant. They revive after more than five decades, Southern California's 1900 -1930 multi-unit "courts" - its unique mediation between apartments and single-family residences, and their seamless incorporation of density into neighborhood fabrics. In successfully integrating the home with the garden, while replacing dead-end streets and corridors with communal courtyards, and front loaded garages with rear parking courts, they become alternatives to conventional prototypes, design tools to achieve various rural to suburban to urban densities, and renewed interpretations to the very zoning codes that have perpetrated sprawl.



Typical single-family tract house



Typical apartment building



Benton Green, Echo Park District
 Architect : The Albert Group
 Program : 38 affordable units

The Building



Gartz Court, Pasadena



Bowen Court, Pasadena

Bungalow Courts

Achieving densities from 8-12 dwelling units per acre, the traditional 'bungalow court' arranges individual detached homes in a two-part pattern: pairs facing the street and also lining a courtyard, in as many pairs that fit in the depth of the lot. The two bungalows at the head of the court are designed as typical porch-dominated houses facing the street, no more and no less so than any adjacent single-family house, with the space between them becoming the entrance to the court. Each house has a private patio, with cars typically located behind or to the side of the court, entered from a side yard alleyway(s) or an alley.

The first bungalow courts were constructed in about 1909. The Sanborn fire-insurance maps for Santa Monica show Ocean Court, composed of 16 units arranged around a common path, Sylvanus Marston's St. Francis Court built in Pasadena is notable for its incorporation of the automobile (given that many later courts did not provide parking access), and the 1911 Alfred and Arthur Heineman designed Bower Court contained 35

bungalows arranged around a central court, with automobiles kept out of sight on a side driveway. Since the mid-thirties when rising land and building costs, and increased parking requirements signaled their gradual demise, Duarte Courts represents one of the first reinterpretations of this suburban housing type in more than fifty years.



Duarte Courts, Duarte (left)
 Architect : Moule & Polyzoides
 Client : Bowden Development
 Program : 29 houses
 Completion : 2004

Attached Courts

To achieve densities from 15-20 dwelling units per acre, the bungalow court changes from detached to attached dwellings such as duplexes, triplexes, quadruplexes and townhouses. The private patios between the individual buildings are either placed on the rear, or completely eliminated making the central garden the primary communal room for the surrounding units. Cars are parked in individual garages at the back of each townhouse, in detached garages towards the lot rear accessed from an alley, or in an underground garage beneath the building.

Thus as typical East Coast street lining row-houses rearranged to define outdoor 'living rooms' in Southern California's benign climate, attached courts represent housing prototypes at the scale of both the block as well as the building. And with buildings having more porous block frontages as in Artisan Square, to those positioned at the street edge, and allowing for an urban consistency in their façade continuity such as in Vermont Village, they represent an important 'transitional' infill prototype from both suburban to urban conditions.

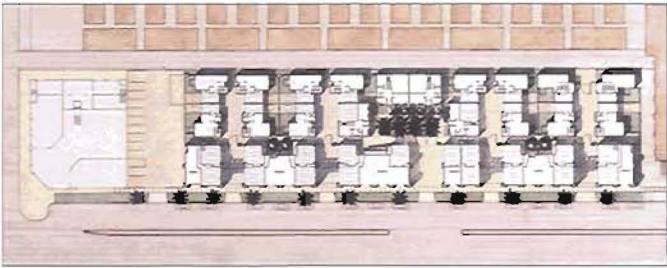


429 South Madison, Pasadena

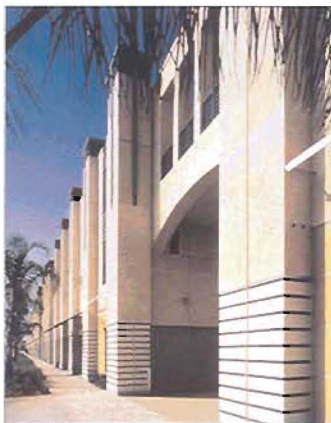
Artisan Square, a new townhouse neighborhood by John Laing Homes, is attracting first-time homebuyers to Pasadena with its courtyard-style homes. The six buildings on the site are clustered in pairs around extensively landscaped courtyards in three architectural styles: Spanish Colonial, Italianate and Andalusian. The Spanish courtyard, called Camphor Court, features an alley of camphor trees, found in many of Pasadena's oldest neighborhoods. The Italianate courtyard, Sycamore Court, combines existing large pines with sculptural sycamore trees. The southern-facing Andalusian courtyard, Olive Court, offers Moorish arches and olive trees with an authentic tiled fountain. The courtyards and homes are oriented toward the street and sidewalk, while garage entrances are tucked on the side. Units range from 1,161 to 1,717 square feet and pricing starts at the low \$500,000s. The neighborhood is near the new Gold Line light rail station at Sierra Madre Villa, linking residents to downtown Pasadena and Los Angeles.



The Building



The premise of **Vermont Village Plaza** is that affordable homeownership is a key to neighborhood revitalization. A 1994 competition sponsored by First Interstate Bank teamed architects with local developers and builders to create a mixed-use development proposal that would act as a catalyst for further economic development in the blighted area of South Central Los Angeles, ravaged by years of disinvestment and the civil unrest of 1992. Solomon Architects and Caleb Development designed, won, and built the project that contains 36 two- and three-bedroom townhouses over retail. Vermont Village Plaza also features community facilities and controlled open space. It provides comfortable pedestrian environments along Vermont Avenue and internally within the project, while simultaneously accommodating very high Los Angeles parking needs without resorting to an expensive concrete parking podium. The Los Angeles Housing Department provided financing options for qualified homebuyers including payment assistance, mortgage credit certificates, and mortgage revenue bonds for first-time homebuyers.



Wisconsin III is a 26-unit low-income project built around a central courtyard that focuses on a community room. The buildings are designed to complement the existing urban fabric of the area. Structure varies between two and three stories with a landscaped surface parking lot.

Architect : Killefer Flammang Architects
 Client : Community Resources & Talent Development
 Program : 26 units



The East LA Community Corporation commissioned Quatro Design Group to build the small (.36 acres) but meaningful Los Girasoles project in 2003. The 11-unit housing complex, which means "sun-flowers" in English, is a great example of many forces coming together to produce exceptional affordable housing amid the complications of an unusual program and site, as well as stringent County regulations. The complex consists of townhomes from one to four bedrooms and a size range of 600 to 1,400 square feet on less than one-half acre. Each unit has direct access to a private garage, yet the heart of the development is found in several community facilities. A community and computer room, as well as an outdoor tot lot and garden with local artwork, fashioned from demolished utilitarian buildings in the neighborhood, serve the community at large. All the units and the community center are networked for cable, satellite, and DSL access. Total project cost was \$2 million.

Architect : Quatro Design Group
 Client : East LA Community Corporation
 Program : 11 units, community room, computer room
 Completion : 2003

The Building

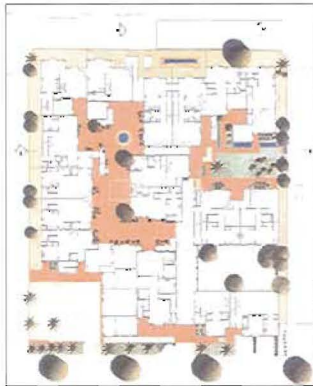
Courtyard Housing



The Andalusia, West Hollywood



Villa Sevilla, West Hollywood



To achieve more urban densities from 20-40 dwelling units per acre the attached court undergoes two further changes: the surrounding units assume a single layer of stacking - flats over flats, townhouses over flats, lofts over flats and so on, while parking gets accommodated within a separate garage beneath the building. Save those facing the street, all units are accessed directly from the central courtyard, those on grade via porches or thresholds, and those above by single-flight staircases. Thus Courtyard Housing as a type represents the inverse of the 'motel', replacing the central parking lot with a communal garden, and lining the court with building faces in eliminating all circulation corridors.

Seven Fountains (25 du/ac), as the first real Courtyard Housing project to be built in more than half a century is a testimony to the forgotten legacy of one of Southern California's most cherished traditional housing types, visible in such splendid examples as the Andalusia and Rhonda in West Hollywood, and Casa Torre in Pasadena. In contrast to the porous frontages of the garden courts, these projects present more continuous facades to the street, exemplifying a range of strategies on

how to achieve a collective dwelling form in dense urban situations, without destroying personal amenities of the individual dwelling and garden. By reviving and refining this type, the project becomes replicable and relevant to neighborhood-making throughout Southern California.

Seven Fountains, located adjacent to the famous Sunset Strip in West Hollywood is organized around four courtyards and seven fountains, Harper Court apportions interior and exterior spaces among twenty units. Each unit has its own private garden overlooking public courtyards, and a separate, directly accessed live/work space. Many have double-height living rooms, hillside views and exterior fireplaces. The project is built on top of underground parking and has rich landscaping throughout. Harper Court refers to several famous Hollywood precedents, such as the Andalusia (1926) and the Ronda (1927).

Architect : Moule & Polyzoides
Client / Developer : Boyd Willat
Program : 20 units
Completion : 2001

Hybrid Courts

When housing densities over 40 dwelling units per acre are desired in a 'courtyard' form, it becomes necessary to introduce more than one layer of stacking in part of the building, thereby necessitating vertical circulation cores and corridors. At **Granada Court** (50 du/ac), close to half the building is configured as two layers of stacked flats sitting over townhouses to create a four-story façade along Union, while the rest of the project is pure Courtyard Housing not unlike **Seven Fountains**. As densities increase, the amount of stacking concurrently increases, such as at **Del Mar Station** (100

du/ac, see "The Block" chapter), where stacked flats rising up to seven stories are accompanied by friendlier walk-up types such as lofts and townhouses.

In this 'hybridizing' stacked and walk-up types and 'blending' higher and lower densities within the same project, a richer and contextually respon-



Harper House, West Hollywood

sive urban form is achieved by avoiding building homogeneity whilst simultaneously providing diverse housing choices. As Stefanos Polyzoides states "The secret to new urbanist housing design is to abandon the machine analogy. To design without reference to average densities, deadening repetition and one-shoe-fits-all recipes. To recognize that buildings leverage all other aspects of urban structure, open space, landscape, transportation and utility infrastructure. And to promote the idea that through variety, diversity and character, every single design can become a significant link in constructing towns and cities of harmonious overall form."



Situated in the budding urban village of the Pasadena Playhouse District, **Granada Court** unites and modulates interior and exterior spaces among 29 units of luxury apartment living over a 50-car subterranean parking garage. Arranged in flats and townhouses, the units are oriented around three distinct courtyards - two internal pedestrian courts and one external auto court. Each unit has private balconies, decks and/or patios overlooking the courtyards, as well as a separate space for a private office or study. Some units include a unique double-height space with the topmost spaces taking advantage of the surrounding views of Pasadena's nearby Civic Center with the San Gabriel mountains in the background.

Architect : Moule & Polyzoides

Client / Developer : Granada Court Incorporated

Program : 29 apartments

Status : under construction

Live/Work Lofts

Achieving densities from 20-40 du/acre, and similar in appearance to rowhouses on the exterior, live-work lofts are becoming one of LA's increasingly accepted urban housing prototype, as well as one of its most effective urban infill strategies. Parked on grade or underground, they can be designed as spacious stacked flats with living and working spaces on the same level as in the Venice ArtLofts, as abutting individual units with work-spaces lining the street and living above as in the Abbott Kinney Lofts, or as two-level 'mezzanine' spaces sitting above a independent retail base as in the Birch Street Lofts in Brea and the Mission Meridian Station in South Pasadena. (see 'The Block' chapter). As transitions between primarily commercial and primarily residential areas, their flexible live-work layouts fulfill the needs of two-income families, small retailers, artists and business incubators that may not be able to afford dedicated office space. And in providing a 'mixed-use' urban setting with a twenty-four hour activity they contrast the purely suburban residential areas, which tend to get deserted during the day, or the suburban office districts that tend to become empty at night.

Venice, a district in the City of Los Angeles best known for its canals and beaches and also for its bohemian neighborhoods and colorful boardwalks, is fast becoming one of the most exciting venues for loft housing. With close to a dozen loft buildings either complete or soon to be constructed (right), nowhere is the creative energy of this housing type more vibrant than within the immediate environs of its main street Abbott-Kinney, where rows of art galleries, trendy boutiques, vintage clothing shops, famous restaurants and the nearby Venice Boardwalk give the neighborhood a robust personality that loft residents find easy to embrace



Architect : Bill Adams



Architect : Koning Eizenberg Architects



Architect : Ali Jeevanjee



Architect : Fredrick Fisher



Architect : Mark Mack



The Abbot Kinney Lofts, built in 2001, are a strong response to the changing social and physical environment of Venice. Abbot Kinney and its surrounding streets are quickly developing into an artists' district. The number of artists, designers and small multi-media companies that have relocated to the area has grown markedly during the past decade, and promises to continue as more creative professionals are drawn to the vitality and diversity of the community. An adapted form of the "artist's loft" has emerged to service the needs of this new culture. Foregoing the traditional and formal boundaries between living and working, many professionals opt for informal and casual environments that better reflect their lifestyles. The Abbot Kinney Live/Work Lofts works within this typology by creating large open spaces that adapt and blend living and working environments. A common color palette and materials visually unite the three buildings located on adjacent lots. Balconies and large interior open spaces reflect both the generosity of space and the deliberate use of material and simple, raw materiality.

Architect : Mark Mack

Client / Developer : Robert Douroux & Elaine Spierer

Program : 3 live-work residences in 10,200 sf

Completion : 2001



Urban infill is transforming even the most industrial zones of Marina del Rey. Element is Los Angeles' largest "new-construction" loft development, incorporating "pre-cast concrete" construction (materials more commonly used in parking structures). This allows the 50 residential units on busy Glencoe Avenue to have spacious, open floor plans up to 1,600 square feet, and floor-to-ceiling windows, while it increases energy efficiency. The building is up for a Silver LEED green building rating, one of the first such distinctions for a residential project nationwide. A collaboration between developer John Laing Homes' and architect Cuningham Group, the building presents an arresting, framed exterior that appropriates the industrial look of traditional lofts converted from defunct warehouses, but built with the latest fixtures and materials.

Architect : Cuningham Group

Client / Developer : John Laing Homes

Residential Hotels

commentary by Gloria Ohland

Hotel living has always seemed the pinnacle of urbanity and convenience. Room service. Beds made up every morning. A concierge and doorman just a phone call away. A high-rise view over the metropolis. A car waiting downstairs. But while a significant number of people still live in high-end hotels in New York City, and an even larger number live in single-room-occupancy hotels, or SROs, on Skid Rows everywhere, mid-range hotels for those who want to avoid - or can't afford - the commitment of a mortgage have all but disappeared.

Residential hotels were commonplace at the turn of the century, offering personal service, elegant dining, and sociability as well as privacy at one end of the spectrum, and at the other, inexpensive accommodations for those in transition or unattached. But in the early 1900s housing reformers sought to address the problems brought on by the industrialization of cities and the overcrowding of workers in tenements by razing the old city and building anew, with a modern set of rules built on the separation and specialization of uses.

In his fascinating book *Living Downtown: A History of Residential Hotels in the U.S.*, Paul Groth writes about the crusade against multi-family living in mixed-use neighborhoods, and how reformers targeted residential hotels. They were supported in their campaign by the federal government and federal rules that supported the new local zoning codes, making difficult to insure and get loans for downtown housing of any kind. National underwriting manuals gave low ratings to residential property in crowded neighborhoods, Groth writes, "especially those with racial mixtures, or with a mixture of 'adverse influences' defined as stores, offices or rental units."

A moral fervor infused this campaign to privatize and sanitize the American way of living, as well as establish the primacy of the nuclear family and the residential neighborhoods in which they were to be properly housed. Groth quotes reformer Edith Elmer Wood, in her "The Housing of the Unskilled Wage Earner," who wrote, "The only excuse for apartments is for celibates, childless couples and elderly people." The real estate industry was an eager partner in the effort to establish codes that in effect codified urban sprawl, and over the next few decades a frenzy of suburban building ensued. Groth cites City and Suburban Homes Builder E.R.L. Gould, who wrote that apartments should serve only as an intermediate stage between the "promiscuous and common life" of the existing city and the "dignified well-ordered life of the detached house."

But seismic changes in the demographics of the U.S. are forcing the housing market to once again broaden the notion of home in cities everywhere. Single adults - the unattached - will soon be the new majority. The nuclear family of yore -- breadwinner dads and stay-at-home moms -- accounts for just one-tenth of all households. Married couples with kids, the demographic group that made up the vast majority not too long ago, now account for just 25 percent, a share expected to drop to 20 percent in five years.

Moreover, there are a plethora of influences making the single-family home in a suburban neighborhood no longer viable or desirable. The new non-family majority wants housing that makes it possible to blend life and work and to live in neighborhoods where it's not necessary to drive. Condos have outpaced the sale of single family homes nationwide and there are a score of new and old multi-family housing types coming on the market, including the residential hotel - but not your grandfather's residential hotel.

First there was the Pegasus, 322 sleek new loft-style “serviced” living quarters in the renovated historic shell of the long-abandoned Mobil Oil building downtown - a hybrid of hotel and apartment that includes a concierge and cleaning service, business center and rooftop lap pool. Now developer Brett Mosher and architect John Sofio of Built are turning the downtown Holiday Inn into The Flat, 200 rooms remodeled as efficiency apartments with hot plates, plus a heliport, barber-shop, maid service, rooftop pool, spa, and a restaurant and bar. And in downtown West Hollywood, developer Avi Brosch is breaking ground on the Holloway-Olive, the prototype for what will be a chain of “serviced” and furnished condominiums and “extended-stay guest suites,” all with concierge, maid service, restaurants and bars.



Groth concludes that the unattached have for decades been underserved by planners and the real estate industry, who have ignored three basic realities: “that people are diverse; that diversity requires flexible approaches and multiple solutions to problems; and that diverse environments are essential for maintaining important social and cultural options. No one solution can work for all Americans. These ideas mark a major shift from professional attitudes of the past 100 years.”

KOR Realty Group and Kennedy Wilson have teamed up with architects Killefer Flammang to transform the Pegasus, a half a million square feet of office space and former western headquarters of the Mobile Oil Company, into 322 units of residential living space. Sitting next to the Standard Hotel, among the most trendy hangouts in L.A., the Pegasus offers monthly leasing prices ranging from \$1,225 for a studio to \$2,800 for a two bedroom. Features include a rooftop pool and gymnasium and units have high ceilings and large glass windows. The AIA has also recognized the Pegasus, in the heart of downtown L.A.'s financial district, for code compliance in adaptive reuse buildings because it was rehabilitated while its historic elements were preserved.

Architect: Killefer Flammang Architects
Developer/Client: KOR Realty

The Building

The West Hollywood Gateway is a vibrant urban retail center at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and La Brea Avenue, on the eastern edge of the City. When West Hollywood incorporated as a city in 1984, giving formal definition to the area that had long had a colorful past, it adopted a Master Plan that sought to enhance the quality of life for residents and make the area more attractive to developers and investors. Part of that plan included the beautification of a historic stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard, originating at the city's western edge. Jerde Architects was asked to create a solution for the site's formerly blighted site. The resulting development is a nod to the city's rich diversity. The Gateway is an eclectic collection of low-rise buildings that preserves the character of the surrounding streetscapes. Big box retailers Target (143,000 square

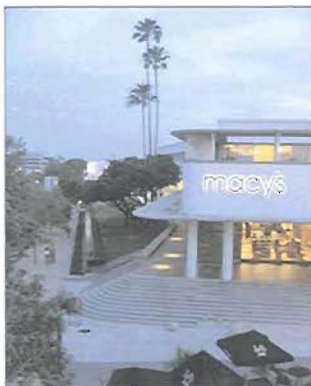
feet) and Best Buy are integrated into the development to accommodate the neighborhood retail needs of nearby residents, and wide sidewalks and generously landscaped courtyards provide a strong complement to the commercial activity. The Gateway offers 34,000 square feet of specialty retail and 21,000 square feet of restaurant and café space.

Architect : Jerde Partnership

Program : 143,000 square-foot Target store, 16,800 square feet of restaurants, 4,200 square feet of cafes, 33,700 square feet of speciality retail, 1,600 square-foot community room

Completed : 2004





The **Shops on South Lake Avenue** is a 150,000 square foot retail project in an historic urban infill setting in the South Lake district of Pasadena. The shops and restaurants that are built on one and two levels in three separate blocks surrounding a historically significant Macy's department store. The 250,000 square-foot Macy's, originally Bullock's Department Store, was built in 1947 in the International Style and is a treasured site within architectural and local neighborhood communities. The project's success lay in the developer's successful navigation of the interests and strong involvement of city agencies, neighborhood and historic preservationist groups, from which it gained the necessary approvals through a combination of listening, collaborative thought and excellence in design. The governing principle of the project is to preserve and enhance the suburban vehicular-oriented character of the original building while incorporating a new pedestrian-oriented element to the building and street. The combination thus capitalizes on the benefits of both models while minimizing their weaknesses. The design further highlights this unique interplay: the new retail buildings are designed to appeal to contemporary tastes while harmonizing with the existing mid-century modernism of the existing buildings.

Architect : MDA Johnson Favaro
 Program : 150,000 square foot shopping center w/ 470 cars
 Completion : 2003



The **LA Design Center** is the first phase of a Master Plan that will revitalize a depressed area home to many of this city's furniture manufacturers. The idea for this center germinated with the founder of a furniture company that has operated out of South LA for thirteen years. He recognized the need for a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented showroom district that would enable many vendors in the area to market and sell their product; spur investment and job growth; and positively change the identity of the neighborhood. In its completed state, Phase 1 involves the renovation of two large brick warehouses into a 20,000 square foot showroom; 60,000 square feet of additional tenant space; and the transformation of an existing parking lot into a public event space and motor court. This exterior space fronts onto Western Avenue and forms a strong link to the neighborhood and the city beyond. Future phases for the development of three city blocks on Western Avenue, just south of Slauson Boulevard will connect the structures of the Phase 1, 2, and 3 with landscaped parking areas, exterior walkways, and interior passageways. The Phase 4 development proposes turning Manhattan Place into a landscaped pedestrian spine linking all existing structures and leading directly into the new public event space that serves as the heart of the Phase 1 development.

Architect : John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects, Inc.
 Client / Developer : Francisco and Alba Pinedo
 Program : 80,000 square foot furniture show room
 Completion : 2003

Postscript: Notes from the 5th Los Angeles

It is the best of times for urbanism and urbanists in Southern California.

The region is being transformed into one of the most prosperous, most livable and most urbane in the United States. It didn't use to be that way. Only a decade ago, the Los Angeles of smog, riots, lost jobs and broken opportunities dominated the national news.

Since the early 1990s, Southern California has experienced a physical and social transformation so rapid and extensive, it has been hard to register or to comprehend. Its emergence as a paradigmatic polycentric region, socially diverse, entrepreneurial, culturally confident, has been a surprise.

How did this monumental shift from urban decay to urban renaissance take place in such a short period of time?

Not being able to see the mountains, and not being willing to imagine the oneness of this region, used to be central to the culture of LA at the time. Los Angeles, pioneer of auto mobility through freeway construction, leader in growth by formless subdivision, source of universal and perpetual urban expansion, was rightfully branded the "Mother Lode of Sprawl." Since the 1950s, the rest of the United States has seen Southern California as a frightening place of declining livability and environmental quality. This negative view of others, eventually became Los Angeles' corrosive view of itself. Sprawl and smog were too overwhelming a reality to deny or to overcome. A region founded on boosterist self promotion was reduced to pessimism and low expectations of itself.

Beginning in the early 1990s the planning and development culture of Southern California began to shift away from sprawl. This was not accomplished by a sudden reversal of citizen attitudes, political climates or professional practices. It was instead induced by a variety of trends slowly and steadily leading the region towards a more positive view of its culture, its livability prospects and its financial outlook:

1 : Small cities within the region have prospered at the expense of larger ones, particularly Los Angeles. The smaller the information and governance gap between citizens and their municipal representatives, the more intense and beneficial the process of planning and development. The more constructive and responsive the roles of mayor, council, staff and commissions, the more consequential the decisions affecting their city's form. Effectiveness in managing planning and development enabled cities like Pasadena, Santa Monica, Culver City, and many others, to regenerate. There was certainty and confidence that their physical form was evolving to the standard desired by their citizens. The public process delivered repeated preservation and design decisions that created authentic buildings and places while raising the social and economic profile of existing neighborhoods. Real estate values in these small cities soared as a result.

2 : After fifty years of doubting, it has finally become clear that freeways don't relieve congestion but induce it. The promise of free and rapid mobility by car through the LA basin has been dashed. Commuting across the region is out of control. The half hour freeway ride between Pasadena and Santa Monica is now a distressing one and a half hours in the morning and evening. As a result, alternative means of mobility have emerged and prospered. In the last decade, a rapid bus and rail transit systems have become regional in their reach. Working at home, or closer to home is increasingly seen as a preferred way of living in Los Angeles. Transit-oriented development at the scale of whole neighborhoods is becoming an alternative to both extensive car ownership and time-wasteful commuting by car.

3 : One of the most unexpected developments of the last decade has been the dismantling of malls in many Southern California cities. In Pasadena, Long Beach, Sherman Oaks and elsewhere, malls have been converted to open air, multi use, multi building places. The end of the mall has hastened the localization of retail. Living anywhere within this vast basin, it is possible to meet a family's total retail needs within a five mile radius. The result has been the recovery of every major city and town center in the region and their conversion into multi use districts, many with Park Once systems to support them. This has completely altered the living patterns of Southern California families. It is now possible to enjoy a public life in almost every corner of the region. This development, more than every other, has brought the diverse people of LA together in public, and allowed them to share their common values and their common interests in being part of a multi cultural society.

4 : There is no fact more characteristic of the age of sprawl, than the dominance of the single-family house configured in endless subdivisions. Most of the land left for large-scale land development now exists in the outer reaches of the region. Commuting back and forth from there to the center is impractical. The price of land in the core areas of this polycentric LA has soared. As a result the condominium in mixed use or middle density housing projects has become a viable commodity. So much so, that in most prosperous Southern California towns and cities, the price of condominiums has caught up with the price of single-family houses. As the demographics of the country change, with more and more people retiring, this market segment has begun to dominate the development patterns of our country.

Housing is being built in quantity, in multi family architectural types that promote both privacy and community.

5 : Los Angeles is one of the densest populated metropolises in the United States. The scarcity of open space and landscape at the neighborhood-scale has become more acute as densification increases. Greening streets and parks has become a priority. More and more municipalities are choosing to carry out public works projects that reclaim streets into city-wide networks of green places. This emphasis on designing high quality thoroughfares in balance between the needs of pedestrians and cars is beginning to affect the form of buildings. Region wide, housing projects are being designed to form streets, and to invite their residents to walk them. Large scale greening projects are also under way. These include the recovery of the LA River as a regional park, the conservation of the Santa Monica Mountains and budding attempts to cover freeways in the interest of expanding recreational options.

6 : This is one of the few places in the world founded in a setting without the natural resources and facilities to sustain a major settlement. The history of Southern California is the process of securing for the basin the infrastructural apparatus for enabling life and growing an economy. Water, electricity and gas were imported from afar. Ports, train systems, freeways and airports were imposed on the land. A sewer and water run off system were constructed from scratch at a vast regional scale. It is becoming clear that safeguarding the future of the region depends on the conservation of resources and their careful management basin-wide. Many initiatives are already under way. Cities are patterning sustainability programs after Santa Monica's pioneering one. Programs to change water run off practices on streets and parking lots are patterned after Los Angeles'. The US Green Building Council is promoting green building for commercial and public buildings here and nationally, and in partnership with the Congress for the New Urbanism, it is pursuing green building standards for housing and neighborhoods.

7 : As a new urban culture begins to dominate the life of the region, civic buildings are being designed that express its aspirations and its presence. The Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Staples Center and the proposed transformation of LA County Museum of Art suggest a resurgence in the design of monumental building. In the right location, of appropriate program, and well integrated into the city around them, such buildings small and large, particularly small, can act as catalysts of urban redevelopment. They can also serve as mirrors of community pride and identity. In a city in whose schools 100 languages are spoken, bonds of togetherness expressed through building can help deliver an awareness of common destiny.

8 : While sprawl has been slowed down, it has not ceased. Throughout the LA region, conventional subdivision-based development is still being built on agricultural land. Reaction to this has been pointed. In Ventura County, a citizen-led referendum, Save Our Agricultural Resources, SOAR, has imposed growth limits over a 20 year period. Further north, in the coastal counties of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, conventional development is severely constrained. Agriculture, particularly viticulture, has been built up as an antidote to sprawl. Weekly farmers' markets have sprung up in virtually every Southern California town. Between these and many specialty markets, more people buy fresh provisions daily than ever before. The amazing proliferation of places to eat throughout the region, both high and low, famous and family run, have elevated Los Angeles to the highest realms of food culture in the country and the world

9 : The 50-year reign of sprawl generated both an abandonment of city centers and unchecked growth at the edge of the metropolis. The 1950s and 60s attempt to radically restructure the region's downtowns unleashed the most extensive preservation movement the republic has ever known. Organizations like Pasadena Heritage and the Los Angeles Conservancy, among others flourished in response to the ravages of clearance. Citizens organized around these preservation organizations to protect the character of their streets, neighborhoods and downtowns and to fight insensitive projects. Eventually, the care to preserve led to a radical shift in planning theory and practice in favor of contextual specificity. Region-wide, abstract use-based codes aiming at random urban form are being replaced by form-based codes sympathetic to enhancing existing conditions. Ventura, Azusa, Newhall, Yorba Linda and a number of others Southern California cities are leading the way.

10 : The social make up of the Southern California region has changed dramatically over the last fifteen years. A population of migrants and immigrants, approaching a majority in numbers, is on the ascendant. Ambitious, educated, entrepreneurial, with knowledge and understanding of the entire US and all the continents of the world, they have become the leaders of Southern California business, society and culture. The age of sprawl was also the age of the supremacy of modernism. For sixty years we have been served triumphant and undecipherable modernist buildings. Traditional buildings of declining quality were delivered in a climate of cultural repression and increasing ignorance. By contrast, buildings are currently being sponsored by an elite so diverse in background, that their instructions to architects are as broad as the cultures of their native lands. In this climate, there is no remote possibility for "an architecture of our time," a singular style that represents the aspirations of all. The recent triumph of architectural eclecticism in Southern California has generated an unprecedented freedom of expression. Authentic modernist and traditional new buildings have become more common, almost expected. And the common currency that makes them of the same place is their urbanist and sustainable design content. For the first time in many decades, we now expect buildings here to be both unique and rooted. Building the city and nurturing our relationship with nature are now our common cultural bond, not the mere expression of difference through style.

Much remains to be done. The public school system California-wide is in a state of decline. Mechanisms for delivering affordable housing are not producing the results desired. There is still too much emphasis on road building. There is a fast food epidemic afflicting those who don't know or can't afford better. The ten trends described above don't extend into many suburban and exurban reaches of the region. The socially damaging consequences of mass immigration need to be addressed with both dignity and firmness. The environmental review process needs to be urgently reformed. There is more.

Yet the news from 2005 is that Southern California is emerging one decision, one investment, one project, one policy at a time as one of the most distinguished places in the world. And this being the age of regional competition world-wide, bodes well for the future.

Charter of the New Urbanism

The Congress for the New Urbanism views disinvestment in central cities, the spread of placeless sprawl, increasing separation by race and income, environmental deterioration, loss of agricultural lands and wilderness, and the erosion of society's built heritage as one interrelated community-building challenge.

We stand for the restoration of existing urban centers and towns within coherent metropolitan regions, the reconfiguration of sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, the conservation of natural environments, and the preservation of our built legacy.

We recognize that physical solutions by themselves will not solve social and economic problems, but neither can economic vitality, community stability, and environmental health be sustained without a coherent and supportive physical framework.

We advocate the restructuring of public policy and development practices to support the following principles: neighborhoods should be diverse in use and population; communities should be designed for the pedestrian and transit as well as the car; cities and towns should be shaped by physically defined and universally accessible public spaces and community institutions; urban places should be framed by architecture and landscape design that celebrate local history, climate, ecology, and building practice.

We represent a broad-based citizenry, composed of public and private sector leaders, community activists, and multidisciplinary professionals. We are committed to reestablishing the relationship between the art of building and the making of community, through citizen-based participatory planning and design.

We dedicate ourselves to reclaiming our homes, blocks, streets, parks, neighborhoods, districts, towns, cities, regions, and environment.

We assert the following principles to guide public policy, development practice, urban planning, and design:

The Region: Metropolis, City, & Town

1. Metropolitan regions are finite places with geographic boundaries derived from topography, watersheds, coastlines, farmlands, regional parks, and river basins. The metropolis is made of multiple centers that are cities, towns, and villages, each with its own identifiable center and edges.
2. The metropolitan region is a fundamental economic unit of the contemporary world. Governmental cooperation, public policy, physical planning, and economic strategies must reflect this new reality.
3. The metropolis has a necessary and fragile relationship to its agrarian hinterland and natural landscapes. The relationship is environmental, economic, and cultural. Farmland and nature are as important to the metropolis as the garden is to the house.
4. Development patterns should not blur or eradicate the edges of the metropolis. Infill development within existing urban areas conserves environmental resources, economic investment, and social fabric, while reclaiming marginal and abandoned areas. Metropolitan regions should develop strategies to encourage such infill development over peripheral expansion.
5. Where appropriate, new development contiguous to urban boundaries should be organized as neighborhoods and districts, and be integrated with the existing urban pattern. Noncontiguous development should be organized as towns and villages with their own urban edges, and planned for a jobs/housing balance, not as bedroom suburbs.
6. The development and redevelopment of towns and cities should respect historical patterns, precedents, and boundaries.
7. Cities and towns should bring into proximity a broad spectrum of public and private uses to support a regional economy that benefits people of all incomes. Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the region to match job opportunities and to avoid concentrations of poverty.
8. The physical organization of the region should be supported by a framework of transportation alternatives. Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle systems should maximize access and mobility throughout the region while reducing dependence upon the automobile.
9. Revenues and resources can be shared more cooperatively among the municipalities and centers within regions to avoid destructive competition for tax base and to promote rational coordination of transportation, recreation, public services, housing, and community institutions.

The Neighborhood, the District, & the Corridor

1. The neighborhood, the district, and the corridor are the essential elements of development and redevelopment in the metropolis. They form identifiable areas that encourage citizens to take responsibility for their maintenance and evolution.
2. Neighborhoods should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use. Districts generally emphasize a special single use, and should follow the principles of neighborhood design when possible. Corridors are regional connectors of neighborhoods and districts; they range from boulevards and rail lines to rivers and parkways.
3. Many activities of daily living should occur within walking distance, allowing independence to those who do not drive, especially the elderly and the young. Interconnected networks of streets should be designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, and conserve energy.
4. Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community.
5. Transit corridors, when properly planned and coordinated, can help organize metropolitan structure and revitalize urban centers. In contrast, highway corridors should not displace investment from existing centers.
6. Appropriate building densities and land uses should be within walking distance of transit stops, permitting public transit to become a viable alternative to the automobile.
7. Concentrations of civic, institutional, and commercial activity should be embedded in neighborhoods and districts, not isolated in remote, single-use complexes. Schools should be sized and located to enable children to walk or bicycle to them.
8. The economic health and harmonious evolution of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors can be improved through graphic urban design codes that serve as predictable guides for change.
9. A range of parks, from tot-lots and village greens to ballfields and community gardens, should be distributed within neighborhoods. Conservation areas and open lands should be used to define and connect different neighborhoods and districts.

The Block, the Street, & the Building

1. A primary task of all urban architecture and landscape design is the physical definition of streets and public spaces as places of shared use.
2. Individual architectural projects should be seamlessly linked to their surroundings. This issue transcends style.
3. The revitalization of urban places depends on safety and security. The design of streets and buildings should reinforce safe environments, but not at the expense of accessibility and openness.
4. In the contemporary metropolis, development must adequately accommodate automobiles. It should do so in ways that respect the pedestrian and the form of public space.
5. Streets and squares should be safe, comfortable, and interesting to the pedestrian. Properly configured, they encourage walking and enable neighbors to know each other and protect their communities.
6. Architecture and landscape design should grow from local climate, topography, history, and building practice.
7. Civic buildings and public gathering places require important sites to reinforce community identity and the culture of democracy. They deserve distinctive form, because their role is different from that of other buildings and places that constitute the fabric of the city.
8. All buildings should provide their inhabitants with a clear sense of location, weather and time. Natural methods of heating and cooling can be more resource-efficient than mechanical systems.
9. Preservation and renewal of historic buildings, districts, and landscapes affirm the continuity and evolution of urban society.

Authors & Editors

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Hank Dittmar is chief executive of the Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment in London. He was formerly CEO of the national non-profit Reconnecting America, which works to better integrate transportation systems and communities, and executive director of the Surface Transportation Policy Project, where he managed STPP's successful campaign for the landmark TEA-21 federal transportation bill. He chairs the CNU Board, and considers Los Angeles one of the world's great cities.

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Mott Smith is principal of Civic Enterprise Associates LLC, which seeks to develop vibrant neighborhoods around housing, shared parking and public schools. Mott was acting director of planning for the L. A. Unified School District, and served as the first director of the nonprofit New Schools-Better Neighborhoods, which advocates creative, community-based approaches to school development. He is president of the Westside Urban Forum and sits on the Transportation and Land-Use Collaborative's board.

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Image Credits

Front Cover | Photography of artist Jim Doolan's murals (on display in the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's headquarters) : Art Cueto; courtesy of the MTA | **The Five Los Angeleses** | Maps : Elizabeth Moule & Stefanos Polyzoides | All Photos : Collection of Stefanos Polyzoides | **Observations from the Observatory** | Hale Observatory : Moule & Polyzoides | Avenue 26 : Warren Aerial | Johannes Van Tilburg Building : Alan Loomis | Victoria Gardens : Alan Loomis | Fuller Lofts : Livable Places | Grand Avenue : Alan Loomis | Participants : Art Cueto | **The Metropolis, The City & The Town** | Regional Growth Vision : SCAG | Brea General Plan : City of Brea | Azusa General Plan : Moule & Polyzoides | Griffith Park : City of L.A. Parks Department | Baldwin Hills : Mia Lehrer Associates | Hollywood & Western : Alan Loomis | Hollywood & Vine : Legacy Partners | Holly Street Village : Alan Loomis | Olive Court : Ernie Marjoram | Metro Rapid Bus : Suisman Urban Design | Metroart : LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority | Exposition Park : Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership | Plummer Park : Grant Mudford | West Hollywood Park : MDA Johnson Favaro | **The Enacted Environment & Latino New Urbanism** : James Rojas | **Natural Corridors** | Los Angeles River : Alan Loomis | **Urban Corridors** | Santa Monica Boulevard : Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership | San Fernando Corridors Plan : Freedman Tung & Bottomley | Exposition Transit Project : Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership | First Street : Suisman Urban Design | Olympic & Soto : Moule & Polyzoides | **Community Parking** : MDA Johnson Favaro | **Districts - Town Centers** | Panorama & Bunker Hill : collection of Alan Loomis | Disney Concert Hall, Cathedral, Staples Center : Moule & Polyzoides | Downtown LA Map : Community Redevelopment Agency of LA | Downtown Strategic Plan : Moule & Polyzoides | Ten Minute Diamond Plan : Suisman Urban Design | The Standard Hotel : Koning Eizenberg | Flower Street Lofts : Moule & Polyzoides | Grand Lofts : Killefer Flammang | Old Bank District Lofts : Killefer Flammang | Eastern Columbia : Killefer Flammang | Pacific Electric Building : AC Martin Partners | St. Vibiana Cathedral : Vinayak Bharne | Skid Row : Skid Row Housing Corp | Fashion District : Fashion District BID | Hollywood & Highland : Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects | Sunset + Vine : Alan Loomis | Central Pasadena : Pasadena Chamber of Commerce | Central Pasadena Map : Vinayak Bharne & Alan Loomis | One Colorado : Moule & Polyzoides | Romano Village : Toledo Homes | Meridian Court : Moule & Polyzoides | Vromans Bookstore, Plaza las Fuentes, Shops on Lake, Heritage Walk, Madison Walk, Archstone : Alan Loomis | Trio Apartments : Thomas Cox Architects | San Fernando : Will Cipes | Downtown Redlands : photos by Art Cueto, drawing Torti Gallas and Partners | Cathedral City : Freedman Tung & Bottomley | Culver City : Alan Loomis | Platinum Triangle : Art Cueto | Downtown Brea : Birch Street Loft photo by Greg Epstein, other photos by Alan Loomis, drawing by RTKL | Janns Court : Alan Loomis | Robert Redford Bldg : Moule & Polyzoides | Downtown Santa Ana : Art Cueto | Downtown Fullerton : Art Cueto | Vintage Square : Jack Skelley | Downtown Ventura : Moule & Polyzoides | Old Town Monrovia : Art Cueto & Alan Loomis | Victoria Gardens : photos by Art Cueto & Alan Loomis, drawing by Altoon & Porter | Downtown Long Beach : Moule & Polyzoides | **Districts - Campuses** | USC Master Plan : MDA Johnson Favaro | UCSB Master Plan : courtesy of Urban Design Associates, Opticos Design | **Architecture of the Everyday** : Diego Cardoso | **Neighborhoods** | Playa Vista : Moule & Polyzoides | Monrovia Nursery : Torti Gallas and Partners | RiverPark : AC Martin | Isla Vista Master Plan : Opticos Design | Liberty Village : Cooper Robertson | Parklands : Moule & Polyzoides | Sailhouse : Jack Skelley | Fort Irwin : Torti Gallas and Partners | Neighborhood Parks : James Rojas & Alan Loomis | Aliso Village : Quatro Design Group | **Maximizing the Minimal** : Martin Leitneiz of the Universitat Bauhaus' Architecture Program | **Blocks** | CityPlace : Michael Bohn | Paseo Colorado : Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects | One Colorado : Moule & Polyzoides, Pasadena Chamber of Commerce | Metlox Block : Tolkin Architects | Del Mar Station TOD : Moule & Polyzoides | Mission Station TOD : Moule & Polyzoides | Melrose Triangle : Studio One Eleven | Helms Bakery : Wally Marks | Santee Court : Vinayak Bharne | St Vincent Jewelry Center : Vinayak Bharne | **Streets** | Disneyland, The Grove : Alan Loomis | Santa Monica Crosswalks : City of Santa Monica | Pine Street : Art Cueto | Brand Boulevard : Moule & Polyzoides | Beverly Hills Business Triangle : Moule & Polyzoides | **Buildings** | Sunset Millennium : Gensler | Benton Green : The Albert Groupo | Duarte Courts : Moule & Polyzoides | Artisan Square : Alan Loomis | Vermont Village : Solomon ETC | Wisconsin II : Killefer Flammang Architects | Los Girasoles : Quatro Design Group | Seven Fountains : Moule & Polyzoides | Granda Court : Moule & Polyzoides | Element : Jack Skelley | Abbot Kinney Lofts : Alan Loomis | The Pegasus : Killefer Flammang Architects | West Hollywood Gateway : Alan Loomis | Shops on South Lake : MDA Johnson Favaro | LA Design Center : John Freidman Alice Kimm Architects

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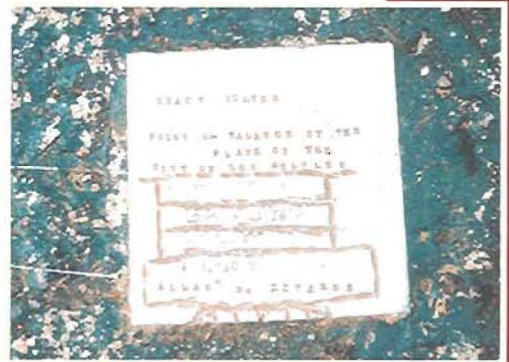
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- Alan Loomis & Gloria Ohland

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Plaque in the Hollywood Hills designating the center of Los Angeles.