

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES, CA: **COMMUNITY-DRIVEN CHANGE**

A Sustainable Design Assessment Team Report



DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES: COMMUNITY - DRIVEN CHANGE

A SUSTAINABLE DESIGN ASSESSMENT TEAM FINAL REPORT

SDAT TEAM MEMBERS

Walter Sedovic, FAIA, LEED- Team Leader

Jim Diers- Neighborhood Development & Governance

Sara Geddes- Streetscape, Open Space, & Sustainability

Jane Jenkins- Business Improvement

Mark McDaniel- Neighborhood Revitalization

Eve Picker- Downtown Revitalization

Paula Reeves- Transportation

Robert Yakas, AIA, AICP- Urban Design & Sustainability

Joel Mills- AIA Center for Communities by Design

Erin Simmons- AIA Center for Communities by Design



INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Introduction

In November 2008, the Sustainability Committee of the Downtown Neighborhood Council of Los Angeles (DLANC) submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the city and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the downtown. The issues included planning and land use, urban design, transportation, revitalization, preservation and civic capacity. The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in August 2009, recruited a multi-disciplinary team of volunteers to serve on the SDAT Team. In December 2009, the SDAT Team members worked closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, non-profit organizations and citizens to study the community and its concerns. The team used its expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which were presented to the community in a public meeting. This report represents a summary of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community.

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The mission of the SDAT program is to provide technical assistance and process expertise to help communities develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. The SDAT program brings together multidisciplinary teams of professionals to work with community stakeholders and decision-makers in an intensive planning process. Teams are composed of volunteer professionals representing a range of disciplines, including architects, urban design professionals, economic development experts, land use attorneys, and others.

Today, communities face a host of challenges to long-term planning for sustainability, including limited resources and technical capacity, ineffec-

tive public processes and poor participation. The SDAT approach is designed to address many of the common challenges communities face by producing long-term sustainability plans that are realistic and reflect each community's unique context. Key features of the SDAT approach include the following:

- **Customized Design Assistance.** The SDAT is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community.
- **A Systems Approach to Sustainability.** The SDAT applies a systems-based approach to community sustainability, examining cross-cutting issues and relationships between issues. The SDAT forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.
- **Inclusive and Participatory Processes.** Public participation is the foundation of good community design. The SDAT involves a wide range of stakeholders and utilizes short feedback loops, resulting in sustainable decision-making that has broad public support and ownership.
- **Objective Technical Expertise.** The SDAT Team is assembled to include a range of technical experts from across the country. Team Members do not accept payment for services in an SDAT. They serve in a volunteer capacity on behalf of the AIA and the partner community. As a result, the SDAT Team has enhanced credibility with local stakeholders and can provide unencumbered technical advice.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** By employing the SDAT approach, communities are able to take advantage of leveraged resources for their planning efforts. The AIA contributes up to \$15,000 in financial assistance for each project. The SDAT team members volunteer their labor and expertise, allowing communities to gain immediate access to the combined technical knowledge of top-notch professionals from varied fields.



The SDAT program is modeled on the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program, one of AIA's longest-running success stories. While the R/UDAT program was developed to provide communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design

solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation. Through the Design Assistance Team (DAT) program, over 500 professionals from 30 disciplines have provided millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 180 communities across the country. The SDAT program leverages the pivotal role of the architectural community in the creation and support of sustainable livable communities.

The following report includes a narrative account of the Los Angeles SDAT project recommendations, with summary information concerning several principle areas of investigation. The recommendations are made within the broad framework of sustainability, and are designed to form an integrated approach to future sustainability efforts in the downtown.

Downtown Los Angeles in Context

The city of Los Angeles represents a challenging case. The sprawling jurisdiction is nearly 500 square miles, and as the second largest city in America has a population of 3.8 million people. The history of downtown has been characterized by several eras of change. Downtown began as the traditional core of the city and developed into one of several nodes

in a polycentric urban community defined by its highway infrastructure and the emergence of several suburban nodes. Following a period of decline in the 1970s that was characterized by flight from downtown investment, the area has staged an urban comeback during the last decade, attracting artists and young professionals to the authenticity of downtown living. Downtown has remained an employment center for the city, providing over 400,000 jobs in a mix of industries.

It is within this context that the downtown has evolved over time, and it is with this history that it must be examined. Today, the downtown is home to 40,000 residents in a collection of neighborhoods and districts that include Spring Street Financial District, Broadway Theater and Commercial District, the Arts District, Civic Center, El Pueblo, Gallery Row, the Fashion District, the Financial District, Toy District, Jewelry District, Bunker Hill, Chinatown, South Park, Old Bank District, Historic Core, Skid Row, Central City West, and Little Tokyo. Each neighborhood and district reflects a unique identity and distinct characteristics that pose potential challenges to incorporation within a holistic downtown identity. The Skid Row community presents a particular challenge given the present socioeconomic issues associated with an estimated street population of up to 6,000, including an estimated concentration of hundreds of



sex offenders and what police describe as the “region’s largest drug bazaar.”

DLANC and the Neighborhood Council System

The Sustainability Committee of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council (DLANC) made the SDAT application to the American Institute of Architects with a project focus defined by the existing downtown framework. Therefore, a parallel concern of the SDAT team has been DLANC’s role in downtown sustainability, and at a larger level, the status and future of the citywide neighborhood council system. The team found that issues regarding neighborhood capacity, governance, and collaboration are all key components of any analysis of downtown sustainability.



DLANC was formally certified by the City Council in 2002, and has primarily served as a representative council for neighborhood stakeholders to advocate their views on issues to the city. The DLANC is made up of an elected body of 28 members, representing residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the downtown. It is the recipient of an annual \$50,000 neighborhood fund from the city. The city’s Department of Neighborhood Empowerment manages the neighborhood council system and serves as the primary connection to city government. The stated mission of DLANC is as follows:

To unite the diverse communities of Downtown Los Angeles and to provide an innovative forum for all community stakeholders to contribute to a healthy, vibrant, and inclusive downtown.

SDAT Key Findings

Fragmentation and Identity.

The SDAT team concluded from its conversations with a range of stakeholders that the downtown currently has a schizophrenic identity. Like the larger city, the downtown is fragmented, both from a physical standpoint and a civic standpoint. The team found that the downtown represents a collection of disparate formal and informal districts and neighborhoods that each express an identity, but there is no collective sense of the whole. They concluded that from a civic standpoint, there is no true ‘downtown’. As a result, efforts to address a variety of key issues in downtown have faced obstacles to implementation, and partnership and collaboration between downtown stakeholders has been limited.



Governance. Governance and management of downtown affairs is also marked by fragmentation. In addition to various city entities and agencies, and the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council, the downtown is home to at least half a dozen business improvement districts (BIDs), as well as other significant civic interests. Neighborhood councils in Los Angeles came about



with the revision of the City Charter in 1999 as a response to secessionist movements in the city and that problematic history has colored the degree to which neighborhood councils are integrated into city go-



vernance. Each council has its own unique governing process, further complicating collaboration across neighborhoods, and as a group they all appear to be searching for their proper role in city governance. Accountability is a significant issue across the city, and the lack of performance management systems and clear structures for responsibility are creating systemic challenges and civic frustration. The team did find some positive signs toward progress with the evolving role of the

Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE), and found that there are significant opportunities to change the tone of discourse with and between neighborhoods moving forward. In the end, the DLANC's future is inextricably linked to the health of the overall neighborhood council system and the role of DONE in transforming civic dialogue to focus on partnership, capacity building, and collaboration.

Neighborhood Capacity. The SDAT team found that current neighborhood capacity has been limited by fragmentation, but significant potential exists among the available resources and assets in the downtown to develop a model approach to neighborhood partnership and transformation citywide. Particularly in the downtown, there are a number of institutions with significant resources which could have a transformative impact on the area if partnerships are enabled for common interest.

Key Recommendations

The Need for a Downtown Vision. During the charrette process, the team interviewed a variety of downtown stakeholders, including public officials, neighborhood representatives, non-profit organizations and business interests. No entity could articulate a clear vision for the future of downtown. Many of the existing challenges to partnership and implementation downtown are symptomatic of the lack of a coherent, collective vision. The team concluded that a downtown visioning process is sorely needed, both to establish a direction that reflects the commonalities across the area, as well as to provide a framework for partnership among a disparate group of stakeholders.

Focusing on the Whole. The downtown has engaged in some great planning previously. The team recognized that the city has many superlative plans, including Bring Back Broadway, the Grand Avenue Plan, and others. However, moving from planning to implementation has been a struggle, particularly in the current marketplace. Because there is no guiding vision for downtown, existing plans do not have a clear connection to any broader aspirations about what the downtown could be. In contrast, they represent narrow strategies that are focused on a single corridor or site without the benefit of how they connect to the downtown's identity and future. The team concluded that a downtown vision should articulate a framework for partnership between the institutions and stakeholders in the downtown, facilitating collaboration and unique partnerships to im-



plement common desires and aspirations. Downtown is rich with potential resources and capacity. Among its assets, the downtown has a strong neighborhood council with technical expertise that can be brought to bear on its planning efforts, as well as a concentration of key institutions that can together accomplish bold partnerships. The whole should be greater than the sum of its parts, and a collective vision for the downtown will allow more robust partnerships to occur. Having a clear vision and well articulated goals will fuel action and facilitate necessary partnerships.

Start Small. The DLANC has already experienced some success with small, tangible neighborhood projects. The SDAT team felt that any implementation strategy should focus on connecting modest investments and projects that can have a catalytic effect, and leveraging those projects for bold, large-scale investments in the longer term. Every project should seek to maximize partnerships and participation from a diverse group of stakeholders. By leveraging existing assets and forming partnerships across the downtown, the DLANC can galvanize broader participation in downtown's revitalization and bring additional resources to bear. The team felt that projects which serve to reinforce the physical unity of the downtown would be particularly potent in addressing the current fragmentation issues. By focusing on projects that address the 'seams' between districts, increase pedestrian activity and create community gathering places, the DLANC can begin to serve a prominent role in bringing the community together for collaborative public projects that create a revitalized, dynamic downtown. The report has been organized to provide a number of recommendations covering short-term as well as longer term items in the DLANC agenda.

ISSUE NO. 1: NEIGHBORHOOD EMPOWERMENT



The Downtown Neighborhood Council in Context

The current status of the DLANC is understood best within the context of the broader citywide neighborhood council structure, and is colored by the history of the system in Los Angeles. Created through city charter reform efforts in 1999, the neighborhood council system was the product of growing civic frustration with city hall and was largely a reaction to various secessionist movements. Since its creation, the system has had mixed success, with some neighborhoods organizing themselves, getting certified, and becoming functional neighborhood units, while others have struggled through myriad challenges and conflict. As a result, the team found that the current neighborhood council structure is weak citywide. The neighborhood council system faces several key challenges:

- The city does not have in place sufficient programmatic support or capacity building capabilities to make the neighborhood council system viable over the long term, and the political leadership has not expressed significant interest in building the capacity of the neighborhood council system as a structure for civic participation.
- While the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) was formed to play a supportive role to neighborhood development, its role has been vaguely defined by city leadership and it has been subject to budgetary constraints and cuts.



- The neighborhood council system was created with inherent design weaknesses regarding the standards and protocols for operation. The city placed requirements upon the neighborhood councils to formalize their operations in a manner that actually stymies civic participation and collaboration by creating an additional level of bureaucratic process, rather than a dynamic framework for collaboration. In addition, the city did not standardize how each council implemented its operating guidelines, so it has produced a wide variety of operating procedures across the system, essentially creating dozens of new micro-jurisdictions throughout the city. The result has been greater fragmentation rather than enhanced collaborative problem solving or public dialogue across neighborhoods.
- Across the system, there are a variety of existing levels of capacity within each neighborhood council, and a need to have the city play a more supportive role in developing local capacity. DONE is the natural agency to play this role, and the team's conversations with representatives at DONE indicated that there is strong interest to transition its role into a facilitative, supportive effort that builds neighborhood capacity.



Changing the Dialogue: Moving Away from 'No'

During the three-day charrette process, the team heard a multitude of stakeholders express dismay and pessimism concerning the possibilities for downtown. Some representative opinions the team heard include the following sentiments:

"The city has no money for parks."

"We can't stop the dumping of ex-offenders."

"We can't have children in Skid Row."

"We can't change the streets."

"We can't fight city hall."

The SDAT team believes that there is a strong need for the DLANC to play a facilitative role in changing the dialogue about downtown to focus on its possibilities, as well as the necessary partnerships to realize the vision of downtown stakeholders. Downtown stakeholders need to organize themselves with success in mind, and take advantage of the extraordinary assets that exist in the downtown. The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (DONE) can be a strong partner in developing local capacity to implement change downtown. At the scale of downtown, the SDAT team made the following additional observations:

- The Downtown Neighborhood Council exhibits greater capacity to organize, advocate for itself, and conduct public work than most of its peer organizations. Therefore, it is well positioned to play a constructive leadership role in the downtown's revitalization activities.
- The downtown has an extremely fragmented identity. The team found that the downtown represents a collection of disparate formal and informal districts and neighborhoods which each express an identity, but no collective sense of the whole. They concluded that from a civic standpoint, there is no true 'downtown'. As a result, efforts to address a variety of key issues in downtown have faced obstacles to implementation.

- Partnership and collaboration among the districts of downtown is limited. There are significant resources and assets present, but they are not acting in a coordinated fashion to achieve greater returns. Downtown stakeholders are spending energy inefficiently, and the result is a collection of half-implemented ideas and enduring challenges. None of the current efforts are making direct connections to others and leveraging each other's energies, and the result is a lot of well-intentioned work having little impact on developing the kind of downtown that stakeholders all said they would like to experience.
- The downtown lacks a cohesive vision. During the charrette process, the team interviewed a variety of downtown stakeholders, including public officials, neighborhood representatives, non-profit organizations and business interests. No entity could articulate a clear vision for the future of downtown. Many of the existing challenges to partnership and implementation downtown are symptomatic of the lack of a coherent, collective vision. The team concluded that a downtown visioning process is sorely needed, both to establish a direction that reflects the commonalities across the area, as well as to provide a framework for partnership among a disparate group of stakeholders. Currently, there is no common unifying identity or civic vision that serves as a vehicle to facilitate collaboration and partnership or to implement the expressed aspirations (built projects, amenities, parks, retail, etc) of the community.

Recommendations

The SDAT team's observations and dialogue with downtown stakeholders led them to make several key recommendations regarding the downtown, and the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council:

- The DLANC should institute a more collaborative public process. The current regulatory requirements associated with the neighborhood council structure stifle constructive dialogue and civic partnership. The system's emphasis on formal procedural rules and operating standards serves as an impediment to the creation of dynamic and collaborative dialogue. As a result, the entire neighborhood council system represents another layer of formal government process. The team felt that the system should be reformed to enable more robust public engagement and participation. However, the DLANC can mitigate this constraint by engaging in more collaborative dialogue outside of its formal meeting schedule, particularly around key areas of implementation that require broader participation.
- The DLANC should broaden its role from policy to an emphasis on neighborhood leadership and programmatic activities. The DLANC's role in the municipal governance process thus far has been characterized mainly through its advocacy and involvement in city policy issues affecting downtown interests. However, the team found its more recent programmatic role in organizing local stakeholders to engage in tree planting initiatives and other neighborhood projects to be a far more effective role for the council. The DLANC's volunteer organizing around these projects represents a great start in engaging the neighborhood in tangible public work that can build trust and partnership for more ambitious future efforts, and positions the DLANC to play an important leadership role in convening stakeholders to engage in visioning and planning efforts with city support.
- The DLANC should institute a community indicators process to measure progress toward the goals and vision for downtown. By establishing clearly articulated goals and metrics, the DLANC can manage implementation and efforts to successfully create tangible change.
- The DLANC should lead efforts to convene the downtown stakeholders in a collaborative visioning process. The downtown has engaged in some great planning previously. The team recognized that the city has many superlative plans, including Bring Back Broadway, the Grand Avenue Plan, and others. However, moving from planning to implementation has been a struggle, particularly in the current marketplace. Because there is no guiding vision for downtown, existing plans do not have a clear connection to any broader aspirations about what the downtown could be. In contrast, they represent narrow strategies that are focused on a single corridor or site without the benefit of how they connect to the downtown's identity and future. The team recommends that a downtown visioning process be undertaken to articulate a framework for partnership between the institutions and stakeholders in the downtown, facilitating collaboration and unique partnerships to implement common desires and aspirations. The whole should be greater than the sum of its parts, and a collective vision for the downtown will allow more robust partnerships to occur. Having a clear vision and well articulated goals will fuel action and facilitate necessary partnerships.
- In the longer term, the team believes the DLANC can become an effective and respected intermediary organization with the ability to convene diverse interests for collaborative work. By establishing a framework for implementation that is built around areas of common agreement and partnership, the downtown can leverage its enormous resources and make dramatic investments in its future.
- The DLANC should also lead efforts to engage in a broader dialogue with adjacent neighborhood councils and begin to expand areas of potential partnership beyond the neighborhood where strategic opportunities exist.

There are several lessons and models that downtown Los Angeles can adapt from other communities in addressing its key priorities.

The Seattle Way

Seattle's approach to neighborhood community building provides a useful example in how government can play an important facilitative role in empowering neighborhoods to take control of their own future. From 1988-2002, the city's department of neighborhoods helped facilitate a process that led to the following outcomes:

- Over 2,000 community projects were implemented in neighborhoods, involving tens of thousands of residents in tangible public work with visual results, such as new parks and playgrounds, public art and community facilities;
- Thirty-seven neighborhood plans were developed across the city, involving over 30,000 residents in defining visions for their neighborhoods and broadening the level of investment in implementation;
- The process helped catalyze a proliferation of non-profit groups and associations around a variety of interests as citizens identified common interests upon which to partner for change;
- Over 5,000 people a year participated in 62 community garden projects that they built themselves;



- Forty-Three percent of the city's adults volunteered regularly in the community and 62 percent participated in at least one neighborhood group or community non-profit;
- The city's investment in neighborhoods had an exponential impact, by catalyzing private investment by residents which reached over \$30 million to complete over 2,000 projects that designed themselves;
- The level of investment created by neighborhood-driven planning resulted in the approval of 3 ballot initiatives that funded \$470 million in public investment for library, community center, and park improvements.
- Most importantly, the Department of Neighborhoods engagement process fueled stronger community bonds and the production of social capital that empowered residents to take control of their futures and positioned local government as a partner in public work rather than a provider of public work.



The Hampton Approach: Capacity Building and Empowerment

In Hampton, Virginia, officials have worked tirelessly over the past two decades to reinvent local democracy. As one observer described the transformation, "Hampton is one of the oldest cities in the United States, but it has changed rapidly over the past fifteen years through creative and painstaking efforts to expand the community's capacity for effective



Hampton received the prestigious Innovation in American Government Award from Harvard University for its Youth Civic Engagement initiative. Observers rightly have identified Hampton's local informal democratic practice as unique:

Like so many of Hampton's other initiatives, the challenge of improving civic dialogue has been met by a multifaceted approach, including building leadership capacity, creating forums, strengthening citizenship and social capital, reaching out, and continually adapting.

Transforming Roles and Relationships: Neighborhood Planning in Washington, D.C.

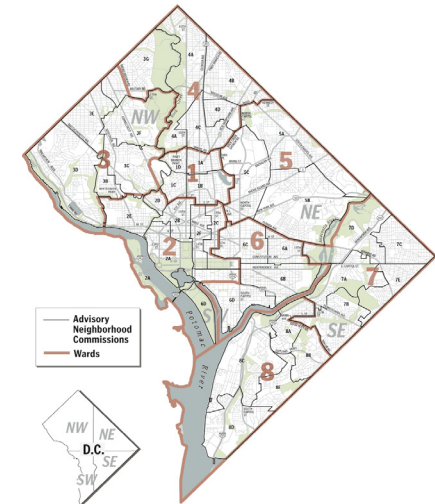
Washington, D.C.'s urban renaissance during the last decade provides an interesting model. The city had experienced years of neglect and corruption at the local level that left it crippled and inept. In 1991, the city's mayor, Marion Barry, was incarcerated on drug charges. In 1995, a severe fiscal crisis resulted in a Congressionally appointed Financial Control Board that ran the city finances until 2001. The mayor was involved in further scandals, eventually leading to his decision not to run for re-election. He was succeeded by Anthony Williams, the former Chief Financial Officer of the Control Board.

After decades of mismanagement and a severe decline in civic faith in

dialogue, deliberation, and collaboration on every kind of public issue." During this time period, Hampton has become widely known for its initiatives to address race relations, reinvent neighborhood planning, and engage youth. In 2005,

government, the city attempted a radical reform of government services and accountability. With the Mayor's support, the city developed a transformative strategy to reengage the public in the governance process and demonstrate municipal government's intent to be guided by public will.

The District created a system of 37 Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs). The ANCs were developed to advise and collaborate with government on policies and programs that affect neighborhoods, including those that involve traffic, parking, recreation, street improvements, liquor licenses, zoning, economic development, police protection, sanitation, trash collection, and the District's annual budget. The city explained that the development of this system



was meant to involve residents as direct partners with city government: "The intent of the legislation that created ANCs was to ensure the DC government had input from an advisory board made up of residents of the neighborhoods directly affected by government action. The ANCs present their positions and recommendations on issues to various District government agencies, the Executive Branch, and the DC Council."

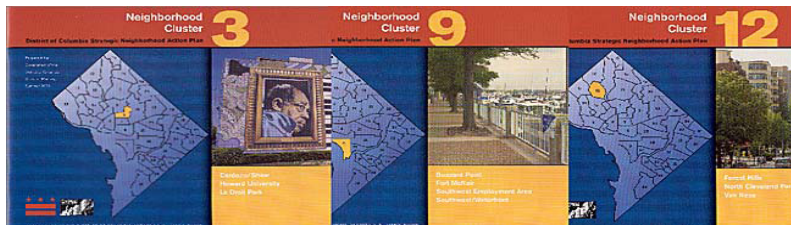
Secondly, the city developed an innovative program called Neighborhood Action. It consisted of a two-year management cycle that integrated strategic planning, budgeting, performance contracts and a public score card. The centerpiece of this initiative was a series of bi-annual Cit-

izen Summits that drew 3,000 residents to review strategic plans for the city in a modern, New England-style town hall meeting. After incorporating summit feedback and action items from Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAPS), the citywide plan was revised and then shared again. Additional input was used to finalize the plan, which then became the basis for the city budget and performance contracts with city leaders. A public scorecard system was developed to hold government accountable for implementation of the plan.



During the first six years of the initiative, Neighborhood Action held three Citizen Summits involving thousands and one Youth Summit involving 1,400 youth. In addition, follow-up meetings and forums and ongoing neighborhood-based planning processes involved hun-

dreds of local residents across the city. During this period, Neighborhood Action engaged more than 12,000 people in setting the city's priorities. As Mayor Williams said, "It's an inspiration to see so many District residents come together working towards a common goal." The process has fundamentally altered the relationship between local government and residents, and leveraged new civic energies through a network of unofficial processes in neighborhoods across the city.





ISSUE NO. 2: HOUSING THOUGHTS



Background

Downtown LA is an enigma. At the epicenter of a vast city, surrounded by wealth, it is struggling to decide its identity. The districts contained within it are amazingly different. A civic center with great building stock, historic Broadway with a vibrant ethnic community, Skid Row containing a sad and unwanted population and a manufacturing district, (unheard of in most downtowns), essentially ignore each other.



The good news is that Downtown LA is rich in assets. Its corridors are solid, its architecture is significant, and it has a growing residential population that is the envy of many other cities. The bad news is that its streets are wide, fast and disruptive, a convict population continues to be discharged at alarming rates into the city center, and the economy has stalled the growing residential population and is endangering the vitality of Broadway.

The best news of all is the Neighborhood Council, populated by bright, hopeful and passionate people who are completely emotionally invested in Downtown LA and want to do their best for it. They should be at the centerpiece of any planning effort. With resources that are apparently unbelievably scarce, they are the richest resource in hand.

A lack of vision bedevils Downtown LA. While many are busy, and much is being accomplished, the districts and people within them seem to work independently, not collaboratively. Each district is quite distinct—distinctly different built environments & distinctly different governance.

Leadership that speaks to the entire Downtown LA's future seems to be non-existent.

All of this presents great opportunity but requires much work.

Leadership

Although there is a community plan and a strategic plan, there is no VISION for Downtown LA. What is the Big Hairy Audacious Goal?

Throughout the two days of tours and meetings with stakeholders we asked the same question over and over again. What do you, the people who are invested in it, want Downtown LA to be like in five years, in ten years. Not one person answered that question. Instead the question was deflected over and over again.

You can't get there if you don't know where you are going.

This community must first and foremost organize itself, from the ground up, including everyone possible in the process, to discover what its people want and to plan a vision for Downtown LA. That vision is the path that should be followed.

Housing Assessment

A demographic study of housing conducted by the Los Angeles Downtown Center Business Improvement District in 2008 showed that the residential market is booming in downtown LA. Between



2006 and 2008, 7,000 units were added, increasing the total number of housing units downtown to over 26,000. Residents increased during that time period by an astounding 11,000 people. Clearly there is an interest in living downtown. With the increase in units and residents, the following also occurred:

- Less than 1,000 of the 7,000 units added were affordable. While in 2006 50% of housing units downtown were affordable, by 2008 only 26.5% were.
- Couples increased slightly over singles from 2006 to 2008 indicating a willingness for families to locate in Downtown LA.
- The population that increased the most between 2006 and 2008 was 45 - 64 year olds, empty nesters. That population increased from 17% to 29% of the total population.
- In 2006, 67% of residents commuted by car and 11% by public transit. By 2008 this had changed dramatically to only 33% of the residents commuting by car and another 33% using public transit. Residents who worked downtown increased from 55% to 63% in that time period. Clearly, the new downtown population is moving there for a more sustainable lifestyle.



- 73% of residents in 2008 listed dining out as their main activity in downtown. In 2006 the percentage was down to 58%. At the same time residents wanted more discount department stores and more mid-level restaurants.

In summary:

1. The decrease in affordable housing units between 2006 and 2008 is a concern. It indicates the rapid gentrification of Downtown LA.
2. There is a growing residential population who are moving to Downtown LA because they are interested in a more sustainable lifestyle. This is evidenced by the enormous increase in numbers of residents who no longer commute by car.

The composition of Downtown's residential population is changing quickly, and it is largely developer driven.

Vision

A vision for Downtown LA should also include a vision for the residential neighborhood we want it to become. With no vision in hand, the emerging neighborhood is developer driven, driven by the economics of the deal, relationship with banks and relationships with the city. Housing units are determined based on a developers need to make the numbers "pencil out", not on any particular need the neighborhood has.

No developer will tackle a housing project to create housing that is affordable, or different than the current housing, if there is a risk that he/she might lose money. Instead, typically, they make plans conservatively based on units that have sold or rented in the past, driven in large part by banks that will only lend conservatively.

Therefore a vision is a necessity. With a vision Downtown LA can plan

programs around it, can actively support developers who speak to it, and can actively oppose developers who don't. A vision can create a strong and diverse neighborhood.

Recommendations

In order for Downtown LA to be a sustainable neighborhood, we believe



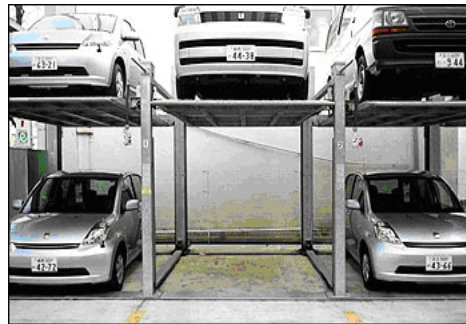
its vision should support:

- Affordable housing to ensure a housing mix that embraces everyone.
- Housing options that reflect the new, transit-friendly population.
- Different styles of housing to suit different lifestyles.
- A greater range of unit sizes than currently available. (1 bedroom units currently dominate the market).

How?

Find ways to reduce costs for developers by eliminating or reducing parking requirements.

- Lower parking requirements for all downtown parking to 0 per unit. The parking requirement should be developer driven. If a developer feels the market requires parking he/she will provide it. At \$25,000 - \$50,000 per interior parking space, eliminating parking requirements will greatly reduce the per unit cost to residents.



- Create as many opportunities for shared parking as possible. Then if a developer builds a product that he/she feels needs parking, there will be less expensive options available. Such options should include:
 1. Free or inexpensive overnight parking in garages that are empty at night.
 2. Free or very inexpensive meter permits for downtown residents
 3. Reduced rate parking in parking garages for residents by eliminating taxes for garage operators.
 4. Stacking parking options for outdoor lots.
- Provide density bonuses for construction of housing units, whether adaptive reuse or new, if shared parking options are utilized instead of on site parking built.

With the elimination of a parking requirement and more shared options, first floors will be opened up to retail or other uses and a greater building density will be achieved.

Public/Private Partnerships

Explore public/private partnerships that provide incentives to developers and residents. Once a vision for Downtown LA's future housing mix is in place, plan for it. Tools will need to be implemented to make your vision happen. These include:

- Reduced interest rate mortgages & deferred principal payments to developers who build the units you are seeking for diversity and affordability.



- Second mortgages for median income buyers at 0% interest. This program has been extremely successful in Pittsburgh. First time homebuyers are offered a second deferred mortgage if they fit the median income profile and if they purchase in a targeted area. These mortgages can be as big as 40% of the total unit cost and are typically deferred for 99 years (in effect forgiven) at 0% interest. A program like this encourages diversity in housing product and diversity in residents.
- Hand money assistance for first time home buyers. This is also an important tool for affordable and more diverse housing. Work with banks and the CRA to craft a program that lowers hand money.
- Special incentives for tenants with no vehicle. Perhaps an additional incentive could be provided for a resident who does not own a vehicle and does not take up precious parking space in Downtown LA. This might be a discounted or free bus pass or an additional hand money incentive.



Your best partner in creating these incentives will be the CRA. They know how to create public/private partnerships and the financial incentives referred to above. Coupled with the City's Planning Department, who can help accomplish zoning changes and shared parking options, these are powerful tools for accomplishing a housing vision. You will soon be driving the vision for Downtown LA's residential neighborhood.

Broadway

Broadway is perhaps the most interesting district in Downtown LA. Its vibrant community, packed streets and delightful architecture are all an

unexpected surprise in the heart of Downtown LA. A short and intense, but unforgettable experience, here a visitor begins to understand the rich diversity of LA.

Broadway is also under serious and immediate threat. With 50% of the retail population seeking to move out of the district, landlords are reducing rents to as low as \$1.50 per s.f. and are still unable to find new tenants. If those spaces become vacant, the vibrancy of Broadway will be lost. This would be a serious loss to Downtown LA.



Many in the community are working to retain a tenant population that no longer wants to be there; a tenant population that seems to be untenable. Perhaps it is time to change the focus of the work. What opportunities lie in Broadway? How can it help to fulfill other needs that Downtown LA has? What should it become?

Broadway Assessment

We heard numerous facts from members of the Downtown LA community including these:-

- That 50% of the retail tenants want to break their leases right now

- Asking rents have dropped to \$1.50 per square foot and that still there is no appetite from potential tenants.
- Businesses are closing at the rate of one a week.
- The existing Hispanic community is moving to neighborhoods where new Hispanic communities are emerging. They no longer want to have their businesses in Broadway.



Perhaps the community's efforts are focused on an existing condition that is no longer tenable? Broadway is changing rapidly. It is time to take control and change the focus of energy invested by the community.

Broadway Vision & Recommendations

As in all of Downtown LA, Broadway needs a vision. What would we like this community to look like, be like in five or ten years from now? Until we have a vision, a plan to implement it is out of our grasp.

Instead of chasing elusive tenants, focus on a plan for the future – a big hairy audacious goal. Broadway is changing rapidly. Soon much of its building stock will be empty. See this as an opportunity and seize it. With control of buildings a new neighborhood could be planned. This is a big goal to be sure. But big goals can reap big returns. Some ideas might include:

- To create a land bank.
- To buy properties and mothball them until the economy turns around.

- Seek out developers willing to tackle small vacant upper floor projects.
- Build artist housing and startup commercial space with less amenities but more historic charm.
- Use Broadway to fulfill some of Downtown's moderate income housing needs.
- Do not require parking.
- Seek a population that wants to live without a vehicle.
- Use Broadway for a demonstration bike lane project.
- Be flexible and allow for transitional uses giving the neighborhood vitality and energy until its permanent economic direction is clear. Some ideas include pop up stores, free community galleries, artist's studios (they are always looking for free space), and partnerships with colleges or universities to use empty storefronts as learning experiences for students. The Waffle Shop in Pittsburgh, PA is a great example of this.



Although we cannot offer the final plan here, we believe the community should decide on its goal and then take big, audacious steps towards it.

ISSUE NO. 3: EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS FOR EX-OFFENDERS

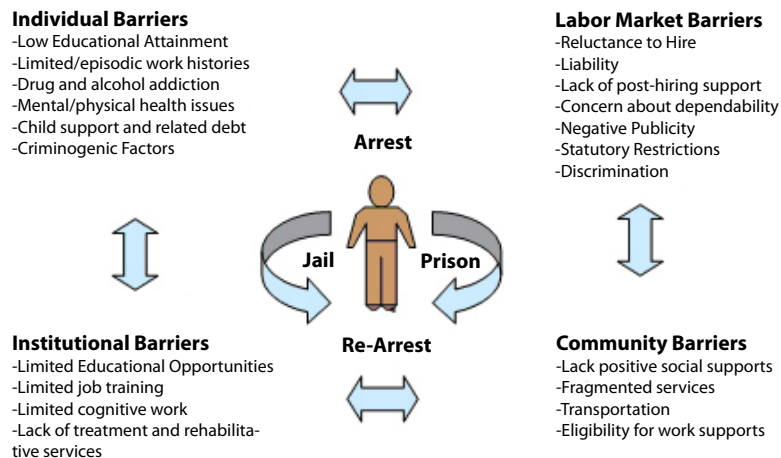


Overview

The challenges of prisoner reentry and community stability are significant issues for Downtown Los Angeles. The Neighborhood Councils are increasingly coming to the realization that their development agenda is unlikely to succeed without attending to the challenges posed by incarceration and reentry. According to most accounts, 19,000 individuals return to the streets of Los Angeles each year and unfortunately many will continue to cycle in and out of jails and prisons.

If progress is to be made on improving public safety and reducing the social and economic costs associated with incarceration and recidivism, then states and locales must work to allocate resources that recognize that the traditional focus on custody and control has not worked. Policymakers and other stakeholders must embrace a more comprehensive perspective that ensures that prisoners are adequately prepared for their eventual return home.

The Cycle of Incarceration & Recidivism

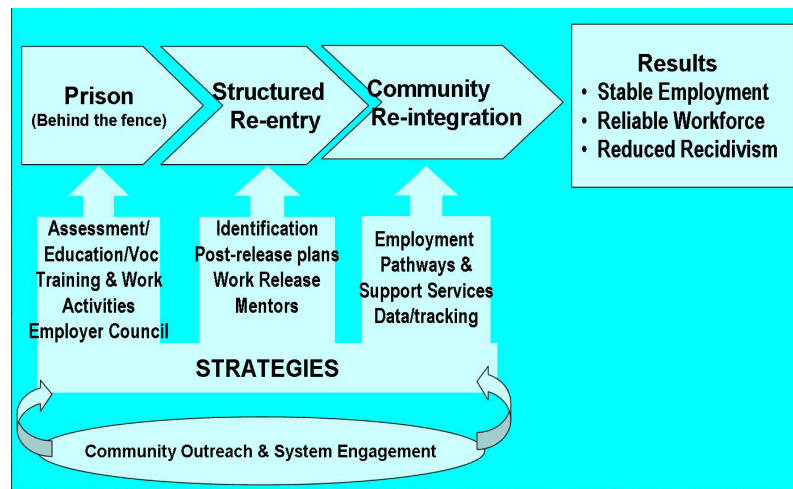


- **Individual Barriers:** Former prisoners returning home bring a host of personal barriers including low education and literacy, and limited job specific skills and prior work experience
- **Correctional Barriers:** Planning for prisoners both pre and post release is generally not comprehensive enough to address all their needs and the need of their families and the delivery of important services and supports is fragmented.
- **Labor Market Barriers:** Employment opportunities are restricted and jobs scarce. Employers are reluctant to give jobs to people released from prison. Industry leaders are not for the most part involved in work programs inside prisons and have no real investment in receiving people on release.
- **Community Barriers:** Public perceptions of people who have been in prison have not fully been explored or broken down and they work against successful return. Concern for public safety, a media-intensified fear of crime, a lack of restorative programs, and continued sanctions for accessing supports contribute to a cycle of recidivism. Communities are not clear on what are the assets of the individuals who they will need to absorb into their community building work.

Mounting a successful reentry initiative will require a set of robust community and systems partnerships that include policymakers; federal, state and local government officials; community leaders; the faith community; local service providers, public and private sector employers and people who have been to prison and their family members. These partnerships should be oriented to work from the point of sentencing/intake through the period of incarceration and after the release of the prisoner back into the community. Their primary function would be to institute proactive, practical policies and actions that increase the probability of employment and long-term economic success for returning prisoners.

Employment Pathway Continuum from Prison to Home

The emphasis on preparing inmates for work requires a different orientation for institutional and community partners and a new recognition about what it will take to connect increasingly larger numbers of formerly incarcerated people into meaningful pathways of employment opportunity.



There are several macro-influences impacting strategies to build a prison to community employment pathway. The condition of state and local job markets will certainly dictate the availability of jobs and in economic downturns the formerly incarcerated suffer from a comparative disadvantage when pursuing the same opportunities as disconnected workers without criminal records. Even in economies where job growth is strong, many employers might still be hesitant to hire the formerly incarcerated with or without incentives such as tax credits and bonding. In all too many cases, state and local statutes and laws still ban people with criminal backgrounds from being employed in certain sectors in a myriad of public and private sector jobs officially limiting the job prosp-

ects in the formal economy for an already vulnerable population.

All of these factors suggest that the burden of change within this environment cannot and should not fall solely on the shoulders of the Department of Corrections, although their ability to rethink and redirect their missions towards preparing inmates for successful reentry into society is an important cornerstone. Complementing Corrections' efforts should be a set of results-oriented partnerships with employers, the faith community, the nonprofit sector and others to identify and overcome barriers to employment. Lastly, government actors and legislators should assess their own relative impact on incarceration and recidivism and devise policies that redress and remove barriers that facilitate successful reentry.

Ultimately, reforming and creating new policies that promote the employment of the formerly incarcerated should be informed by past efforts that served this population and have been formally evaluated. Consistent with other human service reform efforts, public safety advocates, correctional policy decision-makers, governmental agencies and practitioners have increased their reliance on "evidence-based" practice as a means for identifying interventions that are considered effective versus those that have failed to produce meaningful outcomes.

The continuum for a reentering prisoner presented in the adjacent diagram is informed by current evidenced-based practice and available research and suggests strategies should start at the point of intake into prison, continued through a structured reentry stage and through community reintegration.

Prison (Activities Behind the Fence)

- A validated assessment tool such as the Level of Service Inventory-Revised LSI-is administered to assess risk and needs.
- Petition court to modify child support order.
- Develop individualized prison service plans based on assessment information.
- Individualized prison service plans prioritize employability factors and address literacy, education and vocational training needs.
- Provide cognitive behavioral programming to address criminogenic, anti-social factor risk factors.
- Engage community providers in the development and implementation of services and supports to encourage the relationships necessary for successful reentry.
- Provide graduated work assignments (apprenticeships, prison industries) that simulate and emulate the employment market.
- DOC/Workforce partner to create an Employer Advisory Council to co-design programming necessary to prepare individuals for the job market.

Structured Reentry (one year, six months, 90 days pre-release)

- Family and community support providers are engaged in developing the transition plan.
- Structure work programs so that individuals move through community-based work release programs.
- Ensure that all individuals have upon discharge:
 1. Identification, social security card and eligibility for public benefits determined.
 2. A concrete plan to address debt.
- Provide other supports such as housing, interview and work clothes, etc. Inmates are stepped down from prison to transitional facilities or halfway houses prior to release.

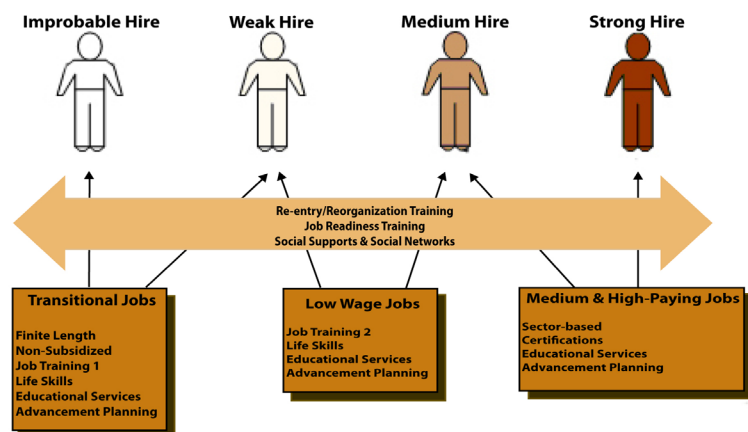
Community Reintegration

- Individuals are discharged to central location and connected to community advocate/mentor.
- Individuals are released through split sentences to a period of community supervision.
- Coordinate job and criminal justice commitments to minimize interference with job responsibilities while maintaining the benefits of proactive community supervision .
- Encourage restorative justice, community building and leadership programs that allow the formerly incarcerated to “give back” to their communities.
- A local collaborative composed of community corrections and other agency and community-based providers helps to coordinate and bundle key services and track results .

Ideally each stage will build on the previous level. At a minimum the prison (behind the fence) work will result in an individual that has clearly identified employability strengths and weaknesses and has begun to address through their service plans. A detailed structured reentry process will provide the appropriate materials, documents, and will allow inmates to practice pro-social skills and facilitate critical beyond the fence connections. Community re-integration will facilitate a range of partnerships that help ease the transition, with employment at its core.

It is clear that one-size-fits-all notions of employability are unrealistic for this population. Their needs will vary significantly. Addressing the employment preparedness will require a comprehensive set of interventions and strategies to prepare people for work.

Reentering Employment Pathways



At one end of the spectrum of a re-entering workforce are individuals with limited skills or individual barriers to employment. These individuals may require remedial education and/or ongoing substance abuse treatment in addition to job training, vocational education and life skills training. In other cases, transitional jobs strategies for those with few soft skills may have to be employed so that individuals can get more intensive support on and off their job sites. Learning disabilities might be an important impediment to a subset of this returning population and may require access to employment pathway where the jobs/occupations require low skills. Others will have varying degrees of job readiness depending on a number of mitigating factors beyond education and training. They include:

- **Age-** Several studies indicate that work programs had a significant impact on the employment outcomes and recidivism rates of males who were over the age of 26.

- **Length of Incarceration-** Incarceration for long periods of times not only reduces the effect of social networks on future job prospects but it also erodes job skills and work habits.
- **Physical & Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues-** The prevalence of these problems disproportionately impacts this population and impacts an individual's ability to remain employed and engage in productive, pro-social activities.
- **Debt-** 55% of reentering adults have children under 18, and incarcerated parents owe on average over \$20,000 in child support debt.

In any case, case managers both pre and post-release, should work closely with community partners, probation and parole officials and others to ensure individuals are triaged into the most appropriate employment and ongoing job training opportunities. The use of data and tracking of individuals post-release would be important element in determining which programs and strategies are working (measured primarily by placement, retention and wage progression) versus those that may need improvement.

The Impact of Public Policy on Reentering Prisoners

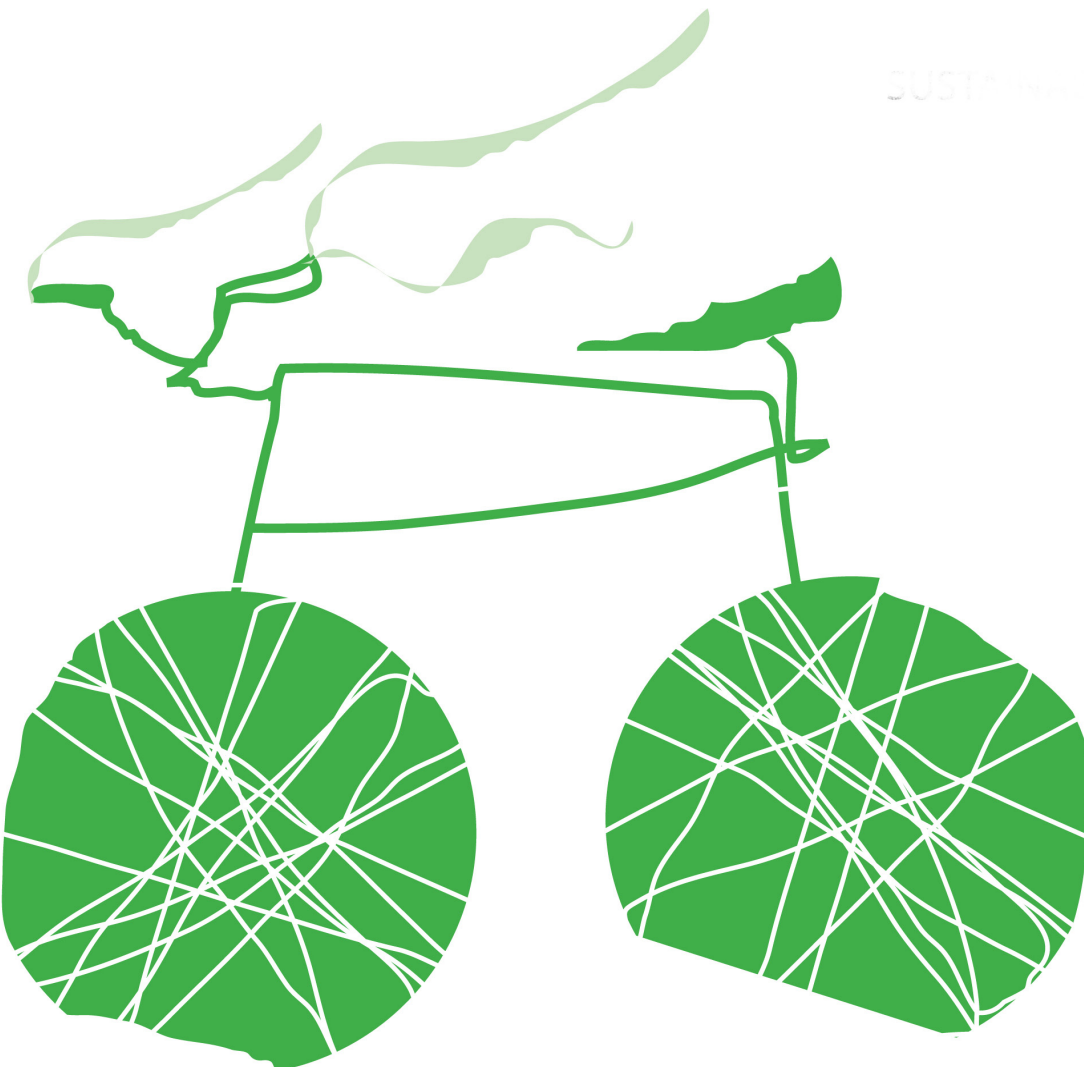
Complementing behind the fence programs and the contributions of public and private partners should also be an intentional focus on identifying public policy challenges. Without changes in several key areas policy will continue to be a contributing factor to recidivism. While there may be many other changes depending upon State and local laws the Foundation sees shifts in these policy areas as key:

- **Child support-** Child support policies should support legitimate employment, strengthen parental ties, increase the reliability of payments, and reduce recidivism.

- **Criminal financial sanctions-** Fees and fines levied against people as they make their way through the criminal justice system lead to unrealistic and counterproductive payment obligations. Consolidate debt , fines and fees into reasonable payment schedule.
- **Employment restrictions-** Returning prisoners' criminal records typically create an employment barrier for the rest of their lives, even for jobs that are unrelated to their past criminal activity. Inventory and limit state-created restrictions on employment and licensing in the public and private sectors.
- **Public benefits-** Federal and state law and policy often prevent parents with criminal records from accessing needed public benefits. Allow individuals with criminal records (other than for public assistance fraud) to receive public benefits if they are otherwise eligible.

Significantly reducing the number of people returning from incarceration in Downtown Los Angeles will not be an easy task. While programs in Skid Row and elsewhere can be core partners, realistically addressing this problem will take leadership from legislators, government agencies and even former inmates themselves to tailor strategies that rebuild the lives of these often forgotten citizens of downtown Los Angeles. Los Angeles will not be alone in this endeavor. States and cities across the country have begun rethinking their policies related to incarceration and reentry and have begun implementing proactive evidence-based strategies that facilitate successful reentry for formerly incarcerated individuals.

ISSUE NO. 4: TRANSPORTATION



THE
SUSTAINABLE
CITY

Sustainable Transportation

Los Angeles represents the American dream and draws people from all over the world to take part in its star studded spectacle, but suburbia and the car culture still reign supreme in LA. This is not good news for sustainability, congestion, and related climate changing emissions. The American Lung Association currently ranks LA #1 for worst air quality in the nation.

Streets for Cars or Streets for People?

It should come as no surprise that a city known for its car culture is dominated by transportation infrastructure that centers on the fast movement of automobiles. The majority of the roads in Downtown LA have posted speeds of 35 miles per hour and vehicle travel speeds are often higher, especially during off peak times of the day. Current research shows an estimated 95 percent survival rate for pedestrians struck by vehicles traveling at 20 miles per hour or less. This compares with fatality rates of 40, 80, and nearly 100



percent for striking speeds of 30, 40, and 50 miles per hour or more, respectively. Reductions in vehicle travel speeds on Downtown LA's urban arterials may be a cost effective way to reduce traffic related fatalities as a third of LA's traffic crashes

involve pedestrians. Reductions in speed can be achieved through road redesigns, including raised medians, chicanes, road diets, temporary road closures for events, and roundabouts. Comprehensive community-based speed reduction programs, which combine public information and education, enforcement, and roadway engineering, have the best outcomes.

Downtown Residents vs. Commuters

More than 80% of commuters drive to work in LA. Perhaps more telling is that the transit share of commuters is only 10% in spite of significant investment in over 73 miles of trains, numerous bus services, and more currently in the works. On the other hand, with relatively small investment, 4% of the population currently bikes or walks to work.

The picture within the Downtown LA SDAT study looks much different. The Downtown Center Business Improvement District (DCBID) reports that in 2008, one-third of downtown residents commuted alone by car and another one-third used public transit. This is an increase in transit use up from only 11% in 2006. Also in 2008 another 37% walked or bicycled versus half that percentage (17%) in 2006. The DCBID concluded that their findings reflect major shifts regarding commuting mode mostly away from driving alone to walking, biking and public transit. A central challenge for LA is how to effectively shift away from cars serving single family homes outside the SDAT study area with abundant, cheap parking to more sustainable modes of transportation reflecting a higher degree of land use



connectivity. This will require improving the attractiveness and accessibility of transit and marketing it strategically to those living outside, but commuting to downtown as well as developing and increasing side-walks, bike lanes, paths, trails and safe crossings, linking them all together in a seamless network.

LA currently has no pedestrian advocacy group focused on improving conditions in the Downtown Neighborhood area. There may be opportunities for a group of this nature to help the Downtown Neighborhood Council implement transportation policy goals.

A number of important projects are underway in LA that begin to address some of these transportation challenges. One of the most publicized efforts is the potential addition of 60 new transit oriented developments along existing subway lines. A second key initiative is the City's recent development of a Bicycle Plan for bicycle facilities throughout the city.

Perhaps the most encouraging change is the focus on neighborhood planning efforts.

What is the Vision for Transportation Downtown?

As the population, the price of gasoline, and concerns over changes in climate increase, an overarching question facing Downtown LA related to transportation sustainability is: How will the different and possibly competing transportation visions for Downtown LA and surrounding areas come together?

In LA as everywhere, transportation is linked to all aspects of life. The natural environment, economic vitality, and health and social well being of our community depend on transportation systems that are efficient,

clean and equitable. A sustainable transportation system is one that:

- allows basic access for all,
- offers a variety of transportation options, and
- limits waste and uses energy efficiently.

A sustainable transportation project weighs transportation objectives, impacts to the environment, and impacts to community values equally, and may help avoid delay and other costly obstacles to project implementation.

Pedestrian Safety and Mobility

Pedestrian safety and mobility should be the top transportation priority for LA in coming years. It is critical to creating the kind of vibrant and livable downtown that the Neighborhood Council envisions and it serves residents, commuters, and visitors alike.

Studies show that people are generally willing to walk about ¼ - ½ miles to transit and other destinations and wait about 30 seconds before attempting to cross the roadway. To increase safety and convenience of pedestrians, establish a block size of 600 feet or less in downtown, increase mid-block crossings on longer blocks, and consider providing a leading pedestrian interval (3 seconds before the green light) and/or curb extensions at longer crossings. Prioritize high risk intersections and consider pedestrian lighting, medians and other low cost improvements at these locations in the near term. In the longer term, establish pedestrian zones that are either car free or give clear priority to pedestrian travel.

Pedestrian lighting and medians are currently the most cost effective treatments to improve safety and walkability. Lighting should be fully shielded to reduce light pollution and support dark sky initiatives.

LA should use and increase pedestrian level illumination along downtown corridors and to make a more vibrant downtown. Consider allowing temporary road closures for events and public markets.

Creating a Bicycle Transportation System

The weather conditions and the public attitude toward biking and being active in the outdoors create an ideal circumstance in LA for establishment of a comprehensive bicycle commuter system that operates 24 hours a day vs. after mid-night in the Downtown LA SDAT study area. A bicycle transportation system or a network of bicycle facilities that serve people bicycling to work, school or shopping may include:

- A connected system of on-street bike lanes.
- Separated paths through high traffic or high risk areas.
- Bike stations at or near primary commuter destinations and modal centers.
- Bike lockers and bike racks throughout the city (could be required in development standards).
- Informational kiosks, maps, and on-line tools to help cyclists find destinations, local bike shops, etc.
- A community policing policy or a policy that supports law enforcement interaction with education of the community to improve safety.



- Bicycle police patrols.
- A public service campaign aimed at bicycle commuters as well as motor vehicle drivers.

LA has a number of wide streets throughout the City. However, few of these are marked and signed as bicycle lanes in accordance with the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). 2% of the LA street network includes bicycle lanes (130 miles of 6,500 miles) and few of these are in Downtown. A relatively cheap and easily implemented first step towards a more comprehensive bicycle commuter system would be to pilot test a bicycle boulevard on Broadway or Spring where bicycle latent demand is likely to exist and these corridors could form the backbone of a bicycle transportation system in Downtown.

Addressing Tough Questions About Transit

The Downtown LA Neighborhood Council must be prepared to have the extremely difficult discussion related to transit ridership in LA. This discussion must start soon and DLANC must be prepared to address any and all issues and concerns, including fear of crime and racism, expressed by the target market - commuters currently driving into downtown from outside the study area.

The Importance of Roads That Fit In

Transportation projects are now being designed using a process that better engages neighborhoods commonly called Context Sensitive Solutions. This approach weights transportation needs, community values and environmental goals on equal footing in determining a final project design. Fundamental to this new approach to transportation project development is transportation planners and engineers working with community members from project inception through project delivery.

One tool that will help the Downtown Neighborhood Council provide more information and visuals about what type of arterial is within their neighborhood (e.g., parkway, boulevard, or avenue), is ‘typing’ the thoroughfares within the area. Thoroughfare type is established based on the surrounding context and governs the selection of thoroughfare design criteria and configuration. Typing streets and thoroughfares will improve safety and ensure accommodation of the appropriate mix of modes for each context.

Parking as a Congestion Strategy

Parking management is another approach to relieving congestion that does not involve constructing expensive new road capacity. The City currently supplies over 37,000 on-street parking meters that may be an opportunity for reducing congestion. The Downtown Neighborhood Council should consider pushing for removal of parking minimum requirements, even if only in selected parking control zones. Also, by offering developers opportunities to mitigate parking demand by investing in car share programs, offering employee or resident transit passes, and implementing parking fees, parking can help to reduce traffic congestion.

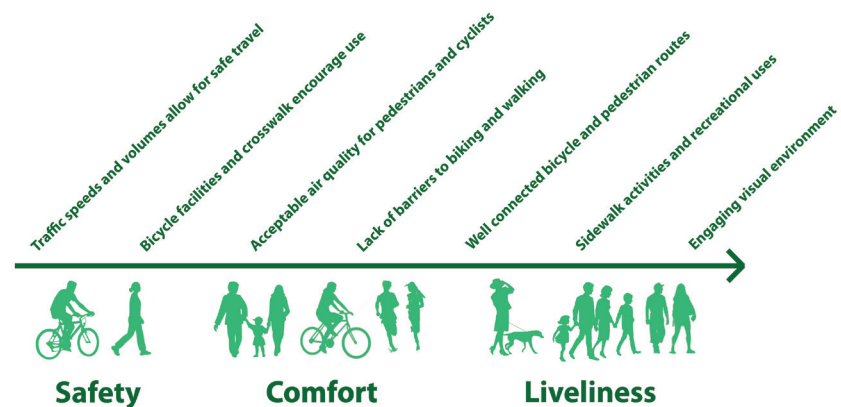
Establishing Sustainable Transportation Indicators of Success

The Downtown LA Neighborhood Council needs to set quantifiable, area-specific targets and performance measures derived from safety, environmental, and health objectives for the Neighborhood. These measures will help the City to anticipate environmental or social impacts of transportation-related decisions rather than trying to react to them after they have occurred.




Several examples of quantifiable performance measurement tools commonly used for transportation systems and projects include the following:

Total Person Travel Capacity vs. Motor Vehicle Level of Service

- Measuring all the person trip making capacity of all elements of the transportation system including roads, trains, buses, sidewalks, bicycle facilities, etc.. can produce more flexibility for infill development and create a vibrant and sustainable downtown. See City of Redmond, WA: <http://www.redmond.gov/connectingredmond/resources/concurrency.asp>



Example Roadway Types for Urban Street Standards

Urban Thoroughfare Types	Function	Max. Number of Lanes	Target Posted Speed	Intersection Spacing	Transit Service Emphasis	Median	Curb Parking	Pedestrian Facilities	Bicycle Facilities
 <p>Boulevard</p>	Principle or Minor Arterial	4-6	35	1/4 to 1/2 mile	Express with some local	Required	Provisional	Sidewalk	No-Separated Trails & Limited Crossings
 <p>Avenue</p>	Minor Arterial or Collector	4	25-35	1/8 to 1/4 mile	Local	Optional	Yes	Sidewalk	Yes-On Boulevard or On Street
 <p>Street</p>	Collector	2	25	300 feet to 1/8 mile	Local	Optional	Yes	Sidewalk	Yes-On Boulevard or On Street

Connectivity Indexes Supporting Housing Density

- Average trip length – the distance community or neighborhood residents travel normalized by population or area (e.g., per capita or TAZ). This can serve as a land use mix indicator as well as a transportation connectivity indicator.
- Intersection or crosswalk density - the number of intersections within a defined area (e.g., square mile, TAZ, other).
- The number of roadway links divided by the number of intersections or nodes – higher index means travelers have more route choice.

Citizen Involvement

- Design Charrettes
- Visual Preference Surveys
- Stratified Sample Surveys

Goals for Reducing Carbon Dioxide and Air Toxics

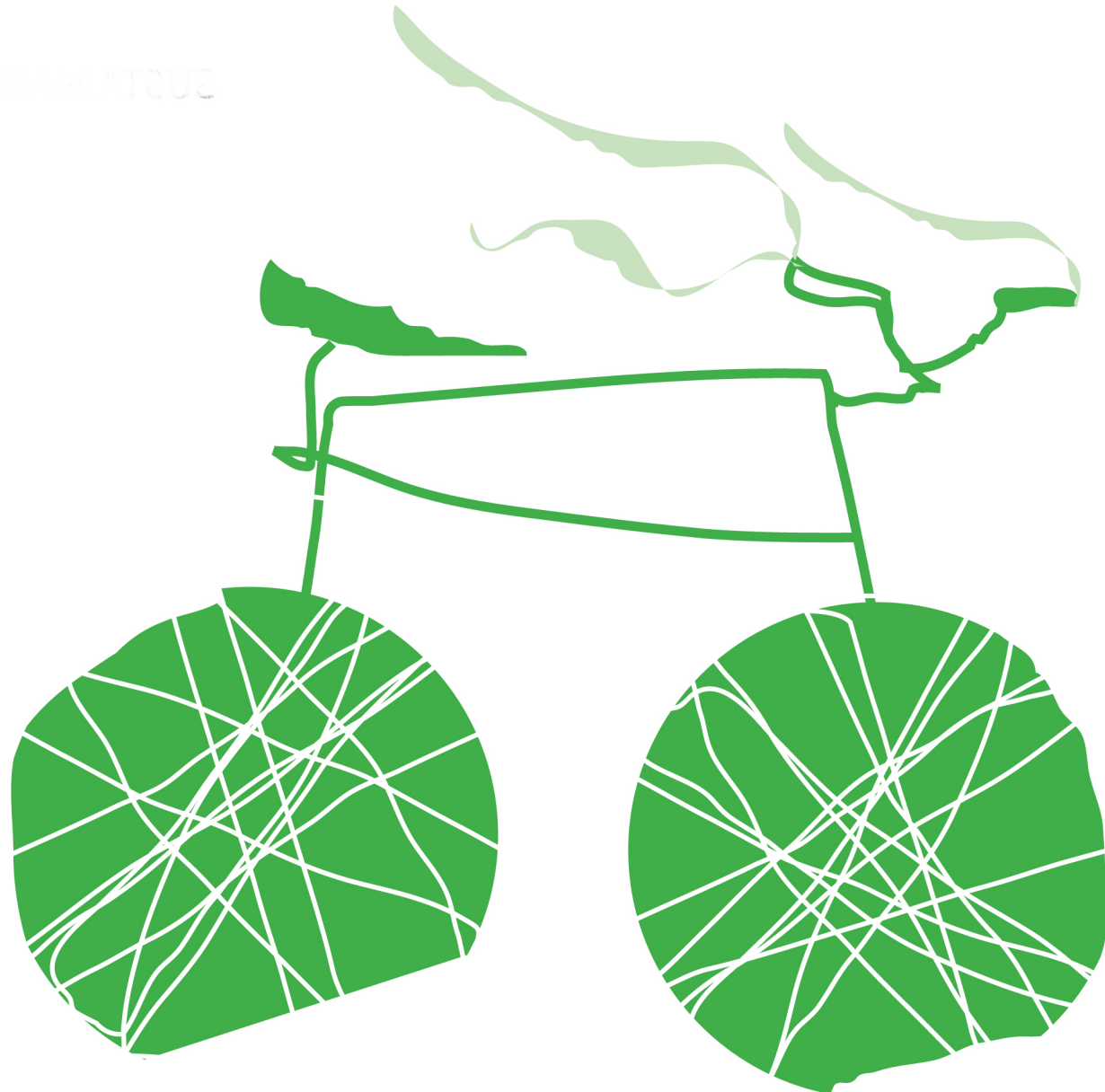
- A single-family home with 2 cars generates 12-14 metric tons
- A household in denser urban housing with 1 car generates 6-8 metric tons
- A household in denser urban housing with no car generates 3-5 metric tons (Source: Climate Trust Portland, OR)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Measures

- Fatal and serious crashes in Downtown LA

By using these methods, the City can begin to prioritize projects which will create greater connectivity, reduce traffic conflicts, and help move toward a more sustainable and equitable transportation system.

STAND
SUSTAINABLE



ISSUE NO. 5: URBAN DESIGN



Introduction

Our task with the urban design component of this particular SDAT was to identify those actions and interventions that would address the physical, 3-dimensional qualities of the neighborhoods. Recognizing that the City of LA has, over time, produced numerous plans, policies, programs and projects speaking to the urban design of these neighborhoods and is involved in a continuous process of evolution, we concerned ourselves with the local, grass roots level of design. Our efforts addressed those things that could be undertaken irrespective of governmental interventions and spoke to urban design and environmental efforts with an eye toward sustainability and local, individual responsibility.

Institutionalized urban design interventions are not always the most appropriate responses to community needs. Large-scaled, sweeping, grandiose solutions are often undertaken by city governments in one-time, one-off projects that have city-wide implications. We don't believe that this is the direction needed for DLANC and their efforts at transforming the downtown Los Angeles neighborhoods.

Our suggestions take a more grass-roots, "guerilla" approach to urban design and are directed at small scale, long term, sustainable efforts on the ground, block by block. In the aggregate, these efforts, made over time, will add up to something greater than a single gesture made by the power structure imposed from the top down. DLANC is a hands-on organization very willing to take charge of their destiny understanding that bottom-up efforts have a more lasting, sustainable quality.

Sustainable Neighborhoods

Walkable, transit-served urbanism integrated with high-performance buildings and high performance infrastructure tied closely to the needs of the resident population is the basis for sustainable neighborhoods. A



High performance building in neighborhood

model design for sustainable urban development promotes mixed-use urban neighborhoods served by residential, commercial and industrial structures that make the most efficient use of all energy and material resources.

Communities with defined centers and edges are the sort of places that make up neighborhoods that serve daily and life-long needs. These "complete neighborhoods" are those that emphasize connectedness – integrating transportation and land, use offering multiple opportunities for multi-modal circulation within and without.

Along with the "high performance" criterion for sustainability, neighborhoods have to be self-sustaining through grass-roots interactions with the environment. Small gestures at the street level contribute more in terms of quality environments than most large scaled capital intensive projects. The street level changes affected by collective efforts helps to create



Neighborhoods- Downtown LA

neighborhoods owned by the residents. Each individual tree planted by hand by members of DLANC has a greater chance of surviving because of the care and concern brought by that individual investment. It is this type of investment that is required in the downtown neighborhoods, and this type of investment will encourage the other, larger investments in housing, building rehabilitation and revitalization needed for a long term future.

Administratively, the City of Los Angeles has put in place plans, policies, programs and projects that clearly address physical design and the urban framework of the downtown neighborhoods. It is incumbent upon DLANC to monitor the effectiveness of the plans, policies, programs and projects to assure their relevancy to the over-arching goals and objectives of DLANC and that these efforts are motivated by sustainability in the broadest sense. Whether it is a revised zoning code to permit broader application of mixed uses, a bicycle plan or an infrastructure project, it is vital that the sustainability metric be used to evaluate each and that each has a relevancy to the setting.

Smart Growth Principles

While our recommendations for building sustainable neighborhoods through “guerilla” tactics and grass roots efforts makes sense for DLANC, there are certain principles that should be kept in mind. All the individual efforts should share a common basis and we feel that the common basis might well be the principles of Smart Growth:

- 1. Create an array of housing choices and opportunities**
 - a. Housing choices that span socio-economic spectrums
- 2. Create walkable neighborhoods**
 - a. Assure safe, clean streets and sidewalks
 - b. Neighborhood watch program – “eyes on the street”

- 3. Encourage stakeholder collaboration and involvement**
 - a. Broader participation across the neighborhoods
- 4. Foster distinctive places with strong sense of place**
 - a. Neighborhood identity based on places within each
- 5. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective**
 - a. Monitor development application at the city;
 - b. Partner with the development community
- 6. Mix land uses**
 - a. Devolve the single use neighborhood;
 - b. Create neighborhoods with 18-24 hour activity patterns;
- 7. Create, preserve, & enhance open space and connections to nature**
 - a. Build pocket parks and link each with “green streets”
 - b. More tree planting
- 8. Provide a variety of transportation options**
 - a. Work with LA Transit to assure safe, clean, identifiable stops and stations
- 9. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities**
 - a. Infill development;
 - b. Revitalization utilizing existing inventory of buildings;
 - c. Adaptive reuse of buildings
- 10. Promote compact building design**
 - a. Using LEED practices on new and renovated buildings;
 - b. Build up and not out. Higher density and FAR for housing

By keeping these principles in the forefront of decision-making in the neighborhoods DLANC will have a better chance of creating a sustainable neighborhood structure. Using these principles as the basis for decisions on growth and development the downtown neighborhoods will evolve into walkable, connected, complete neighborhoods with easy access to alternative means of transportation.

These efforts will give the neighborhoods a fighting chance of establishing individual identities while being part of a greater whole. More pride and identification with a particular place has a chance of growing and ownership of the streets can occur. The neighborhoods will maintain an equitable diversity with a variety of housing choices, and the improvement of the physical environment while inspiring pride and care for these places.

Integrated Design – For Human & Natural Systems

Integral to smart growth is the creation of high performance infrastructure. This is the design of public facilities and spaces for environmental sustainability and has been defined by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development as:

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Los Angeles was historically a vast rolling plain of grassland scattered with large oak trees. The Los Angeles River and dozens of smaller streams meandered through broad valleys carrying fresh water to the sea. Grizzly bears roamed the hills and wild steelhead trout swam upstream to spawn. When oil was discovered, however, the diverse ecology of the region changed dramatically as naturally occurring wetlands were drained, oil derricks were constructed, and dams were built at a rapid pace.

Stormwater pollution, water shortages, flood control, climate change, & the availability of natural green space have all become pressing environmental issues for cities around the nation including the City of Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Stormwater Program addresses elements of Low Impact Development (LID) including replenishing groundwater supplies, improving surface stormwater runoff quality, stabilizing natural st-

reams, preserving natural site characteristics, and minimizing downstream impacts. Community organizations such as Friends of the Los Angeles River (FOLAR) have been advocating restoration and creation of a wildlife corridor. In spite of obstacles, such as the railroad, an opportunity exists for a bike trail along the river corridor.

Key partnerships have been established between the City's Stormwater Program in both the public and private sectors to help increase the awareness level and maximize the cost-effectiveness of outreach efforts in educating the public of stormwater pollution. Beginning at rooftops and streets, continuing along gutters and into catch basins, stormwater ultimately empties into wetlands, lakes and the Los Angeles River. Implementation of these best management practices will mitigate the flow to minimize flash flooding and assure that the water that reaches the river, lakes, and wetlands is clean and will support plant and animal life.



River view from 6th St. Bridge



Pockets of vegetation



Bike path potential



Green wall in Paris



Rain garden at transit stop

Recommendations

Our recommendations are general in nature so as not to be presumptuous about or usurp existing programs or projects that we didn't have time to understand and fully appreciate during our short stay in LA. DLANC is well organized and very ambitious in its charter, and these recommendations only speak to those particular issues we addressed in our urban design examination. They are based upon our understanding of the issues, challenges and expressed wishes of the SDAT steering committee.

Small gestures as well as large scale incorporation of environmentally sustainable elements in neighborhoods combine to "green" streets, alleys, and plazas. The development of parks and incorporation of decorative permeable paving, shade trees, vegetated roofs and walls, rain gardens, flow-through planters, bio-swales and pervious paving in new development and renovations will contribute substantially to reducing the urban heat island effect of downtown Los Angeles, contributing to its aesthetic appeal, and making it even more a place people care for and identify with.

Neighborhood Identity

It was made very clear to us that while there is need for cooperation among the various neighborhoods making up downtown, it is extremely important for each to maintain and enhance its own identity. While identity is often a function of land uses and particular activities within a neighborhood, there are elements that can be developed or enhanced that may add to the distinctive identity of a place. For example, the character of streetscapes in the New Downtown area is very different than those in South Park or the Fashion District. This uniqueness is something to be recognized, celebrated, and applied to the future vision and development of each area. Spreading trees that line a street, cooling pavement and offering shade to pedestrians in the Civic Center Neighborhood would obscure the historic facades of theatres in the Historic Core.



Neighborhood Map Courtesy USC Dept. of Geography

Green Squares

In our estimation, one of the key elements that should be studied for adoption and implementation would be the strategy of developing neighborhood "Green Squares". Our model for these squares would be the squares and parks in both London, England and Savannah, Georgia although the downtown LA neighborhood squares needn't take on the



Square- London, England



Square- Savannah, GA

formal design of these models. The models we speak of are centrally located in neighborhoods and are spaced at easy walking distances between each. Residents identify with their particular nearby square or park.

Similarly, in downtown Los Angeles these squares would function as focal points for each neighborhood, provide much needed park and open space, and offer the opportunity for creating gathering places within the neighborhoods. Their particular uses and rhythms would vary by neighborhood in response to the particular population that inhabits the neighborhood.

In a business district, employees may fill a square on a sunny day for lunch or coffee break. In a residential area the park might feature a community garden that comes to life during the growing season.

Existing green spaces and parks should be evaluated with this in mind. How well do they reflect the character of the neighborhood? Do they feel safe? Are they well used? What problems exist and how could they be resolved? Is the size and location of the park adequate? Are additional satellite parks or green



Downtown LA Historic Core Neighborhood

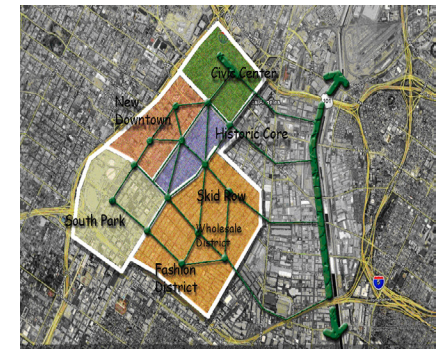
spaces needed? What do the residents, property owners, and businesses want to see in “their park”?

Green Connectors

The second tier intervention would be “Green Connectors” – green streets creating a network between the squares. The streets are pedestrian and bike friendly with significant tree and vegetation plantings providing much needed relief from the hard edge that now exists throughout most of the downtown neighborhoods. These green connectors will ultimately become recognized and heavily used pathways throughout and between the neighborhoods. These green connectors also function as linkages to the larger city-wide networks that exist or are being established.



Sacramento Green Street



Green Connector Diagram

Knitting the Neighborhoods Together

Blurring the edges while maintaining neighborhood identity is a suggestion we made in our presentation. The edges of each neighborhood fall on streets that become dividing lines between the parts of the downtown. While we fully recommend strengthening the individual identity of neighborhoods, we also see the need for blurring the boundaries & creating ways to stitch or knit all the downtown neighborhoods together.

er. The seams need not be seen as divisions but rather as ‘zippers’ across which commerce, transportation and communication is easily facilitated. How to accomplish this theoretical linkage in a physical, 3 dimensional manner is the trick. The strategy we recommend is to study the applicability of the “zipper”. A zipper functions to draw two halves together

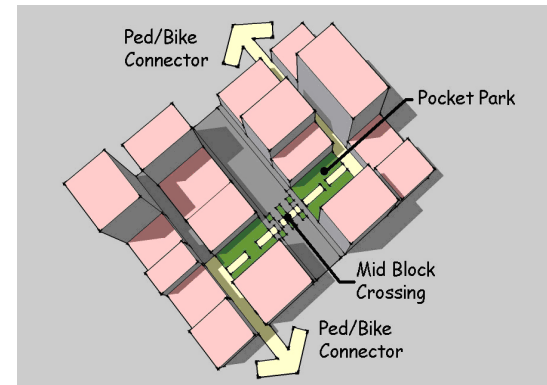


Streets that now divide act as “zippers” between neighborhoods

creating one larger piece and this is the notion of using the streets that now divide neighborhoods as zippers to join them together. Applying the principles illustrated in the “green squares” and “green connector” strategies, we would recommend that some of the “green squares” be located on either side of a “zipper” street where possible to create the connection across the divide. Pershing Square is an example of an existing “green square” that is located at the edge of the Historic Core neighborhood, along the “zipper” between the Historic Core and New Downtown. Connections here are possible between Olive & Grand along 5th or 6th,

or through the currently gated alley that lies between these two streets.

The adjacent diagram provides one possible scenario where there are two adjacent vacant parcels on blocks containing alleys. The vacant parcels are developed as “green squares” or pocket parks, linked across the street by a pedestrian crossing and utilizing the alleyways as further connectors to a larger ped/bike circulation system. As a collection of distinctive, identifiable neighborhoods, downtown LA is perceived as a diverse district offering a variety of experiences and opportunities. Using the “zipper” strategy



on the dividing lines reinforces this notion of a district with characteristic places functioning as a harmonious whole. This theoretical approach to connection can be implemented through small- scaled, guerrilla tactics accomplished at the local grass roots level.

Summary

In summary, our recommendations reinforce what the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council has been doing all along - leveraging the success of small interventions to attract larger investment in housing, infrastructure, adaptive reuse of buildings, reinvestment policies and revitalization programs. We are impressed with the Sustainability Committee’s efforts to develop strategies for community greening through outreach, events, and education. Its continuing work and achievements

toward sustainable design, bicycle transportation, ordinance responsiveness, river improvements, tree planting, retail greening, recycling, and community clean up are impressive. We hope that the above information and suggestions regarding the application of urban design principles to downtown Los Angeles will contribute to the richness and success of its future. It is a fascinating place with a rich urban fabric and tremendous potential.

MOVING FORWARD



Conclusion

The identities of cities have traditionally been defined by their core. Downtowns have established the framework through which economic health and civic identity have been nourished for centuries. In contrast to suburban sprawl and auto-centric development patterns, downtowns across the country have provided their residents with a comparatively sustainable lifestyle. Most importantly, downtowns have provided the public space for the creation of important civic narratives. The SDAT team finds that downtown Los Angeles offers similar potential to the city and surrounding region.

While the downtown faces a range of significant challenges, the team concluded that it represents the best place for the city to focus its future investments in sustainability. The cost of infrastructure downtown makes it a far more efficient investment than the alternatives. The sustainability of downtown is not only important to the residents, employers, professionals and institutions in the area, but for the city as a whole. Its future is inextricably linked to the city's overall sustainability. Only downtown can provide residents with livable alternatives to sprawl. As the region's job center, downtown Los Angeles is already leading in developing economic opportunity, and has the potential to diversify its job base and expand opportunity for all its residents. While the downtown has not had a high profile in citywide culture in recent decades, the SDAT team believes it can be at the center of a transformative urban renaissance for Los Angeles.

Therefore, downtown Los Angeles represents an extraordinary opportunity. It is blessed with great assets. It has an historic core which is home to an incredible building stock, an expanding public transit system which can be linked to pedestrian and bicycle improvements, and a concentration of public facilities and attractions unlike anywhere else in the city. It

can be a unique place that is celebrated for its history, authenticity, and its contemporary achievements.

Downtown belongs to everyone. The potential breadth of private and public institutions with a stake in the downtown is impressive. However, downtown currently lacks a civic leader that can convene these stakeholders and facilitate partnerships across sectors, involving public institutions, business interests and private sector organizations, and non-profit partners and residents in defining a collective vision for the downtown and making that vision a reality. There is no civic intermediary currently. The SDAT team believes the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council has the potential to become that entity, and can play a catalytic role in transforming the downtown. By convening downtown stakeholders to produce a vision that reflects common purpose among the diverse interests invested in the downtown, the DLANC can create a framework for public partnership which can facilitate ever growing investments in the area's sustainability. By working in small ways and large, the DLANC can begin to bring stakeholders together to implement that vision.

The SDAT process demonstrated there is significant public will across the community to begin making investments in developing healthy institutional partnerships and engaging the community in the process of neighborhood planning. The DLANC and its downtown partners can take advantage of increasing public interest and leverage it to begin a larger conversation about the downtown's future, to establish partnerships that begin to implement the community's vision of its future, and to convene a broad array of institutions and stakeholders to redefine downtown Los Angeles as a 21st century sustainable place.

Los Angeles Sustainable Design Assessment Team Roster



Walter Sedovic, AIA LEED- Team Leader

Mr. Sedovic is Principal & CEO of Walter Sedovic Architects, established in 1986. Following his 10-year tenure with the National Park Service in Boston and New York, working with historical sites of national significance,

he formed a highly specialized office—dedicated to historic preservation and sustainable design—that provides the skill and resourcefulness gained through his NPS experience to cultural, institutional, commercial and private sites. The success of his firm's approach is revealed in the consistent quality of its work since 1986; client satisfaction is demonstrated in the level of repeat business that the firm enjoys, particularly at sites where projects developed tend to be more comprehensive and complex. The firm's numerous awards and media attention further attest to the respect and interest of its peers and the general population at large.

Mr. Sedovic received his professional degree at the University of Kansas and was selected as the U.S. representative for the Architectural Conservation program at the International Centre for Conservation in Rome, Italy (ICCROM). He holds multiple licenses and is NCARB-certified to practice in all 50 states. A LEED-accredited professional, Mr. Sedovic has lectured and published widely on the subject of sustainability and its symbiotic relationship with historic preservation. In the vanguard of incorporating sustainable design technologies into virtually every one of his firm's preservation projects, the benefits of his vision and dedication are proving to have tangible and far-reaching effects.

Jim Diers- Neighborhood Development & Governance

Participatory democracy has been Jim Diers' preoccupation and his career for the past 30 years. In his work with grassroots community organizations, with the nation's largest health care cooperative and with city government, Jim has found ways to get people more involved with their communities and with decisions that affect their lives.



Jim moved to Seattle with his wife, Sarah Driggs, after graduating from Grinnell College in 1975 with a major in Colonialism and Nationalism in Third World Development. For six years Jim worked as an Alinsky-style community organizer in the low-income, racially diverse community of Rainier Valley. Jim helped the South End Seattle Community Organization grow to include 25 member churches and neighborhood organizations. Jim spent the next six years with Group Health Cooperative of Puget Sound, where he organized medical center councils to review budget and quality-of-care issues. He also helped members organize special interest groups and organized—and reinvigorated—the cooperative's annual meetings, which attracted as many as 3,000 members.

In 1988, Mayor Charles Royer appointed Jim to direct Seattle's new Office of Neighborhoods. Jim was reappointed by the subsequent mayors, and by the end of Jim's 14-year tenure, the four-person Office had grown into a Department of Neighborhoods with 100 staff. The Department's mission is to decentralize and coordinate city services, strengthen communities and their organizations, and work in partnership with these organizations to preserve and enhance the neighborhoods.

After leaving the Department of Neighborhoods in 2002, Jim worked for a year as Interim Director of the Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association and for three years as Executive Director of the South Downtown Foundation. Currently, Jim spends most of his time at the University of Washington, where he teaches courses in architecture and social work and supports community initiatives with faculty and students across all disciplines. Jim also speaks frequently in other cities as a faculty member for the Asset-Based Community Development Institute and as the author of *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way*.

Sara Geddes- Streetscape, Open Space, & Sustainability

Sara Geddes, a graduate of the University of Oregon, is a Portland landscape architect in private practice with over 25 years of professional experience in Oregon and California. Her experience in urban, suburban and rural settings, located in valley wetland, high desert, chaparral, coastal, and inland environments has made her an expert at recognizing and responding to the unique character of places. She has planning and design expertise in a wide range of landscape architectural focus areas, including parks and open spaces, multi-modal transportation and streetscape corridors, educational and interpretive facilities, civic centers and commercial areas, neighborhoods, communities, and residential development including affordable housing.

Following completion of her studies in fine art and landscape architecture, Sara's career began in San Diego where she gained a foothold in the profession, working for three separate firms. In 1984 Sara took a job



at the Sea Ranch on the northern California coast as executive director of the architectural design committee, acting as liaison between the committee's professionals, the board of directors, and the membership while overseeing development and landscape management along 10-miles of coastland. While there she also enjoyed her own private practice, designing coastal residences and working on the Mendocino Botanical Gardens master plan. In her more recent work with Satre Associates in Eugene, Sara has been project manager and lead designer, working in concert with owners, regulatory agencies, and consultant team members. As adjunct instructor at the University of Oregon, Sara has taught numerous design studios covering wetland interpretation, cluster housing, Native American culture, mass transit, botanical gardens, and open space. She continues to participate in studio review sessions, offering insight and direction to students. Sara's respect for the unique context of places, her passion for aesthetics and improving the quality of life, as well as her dedication to the sustainability of the natural and built environment are tenets that have guided her life and work throughout the years.



Jane Jenkins- Business Improvement

Jane Jenkins is the new President and CEO of Downtown Oklahoma City, Incorporated. Previously, Jane was Executive Director of the Downtown Boulder Business Improvement District in Boulder, CO. With over 23 years experience in downtown revitalization and management, Jane is an internationally recognized speaker and expert on urban issues. She currently serves as Chairman for the International Downtown Association Board of Directors. As a former high school educator, Jane was named Teacher of the Year at Union High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Ms. Jenkins was born in Virginia and grew up in Charleston, SC. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Arts Education from Oral Roberts University in Tulsa and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Texas in Denton. She taught secondary school in Chandler and Tulsa before beginning her downtown management career in Wagoner, OK as the Main Street Manager. After serving in the same capacity in Pawhuska, Jane moved to Denton, Texas where she managed the downtown development program there for eight years before joining the staff of the National Trust for Historic Preservation as the Regional Director of the Southwest Office in Fort Worth, TX. She accepted the position as the first director of the Downtown Boulder Business Improvement District in 2000.

Working through the National Main Street Center, Ms. Jenkins consults with many downtown programs across the US and Canada. She has also served on R/UDAT and SDAT teams for the AIA and been a member of IDA and ULI advisory panels.



Mark McDaniel- Neighborhood Revitalization

Mark McDaniel is senior research associate with the Center for Community Capital at the University of North Carolina. He consults with foundations, policymakers and others on strategies that help connect low-income

populations to economic opportunities.

These strategies include connecting neighborhoods to regional workforce opportunities, connecting the unbanked and underbanked to financial services and leveraging investment in low-income areas for hou-

sing, community facilities and other economic development opportunities.

McDaniel brings a diverse set of experience in conceptualizing, designing and implementing initiatives intended to improve the socio-economic outcomes of low-income residents and the neighborhoods in which they reside. He has demonstrated capacity in establishing and maintaining rapport with diverse constituencies including low-income community residents, public- and private-sector officials, direct service and policy practitioners, and evaluation/research professionals. McDaniel has particular interest in the economic challenges and pathways to opportunity taken by different subpopulations, including students, residents of public housing, youth and the formerly incarcerated. McDaniel has a B.A. in Geography from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a Master of City and Regional Planning from Morgan State University.

Eve Picker- Downtown Revitalization

Eve Picker's expertise in inner city regeneration, specifically downtowns, has earned her much recognition in the Pittsburgh community at large, and nationally as well. Pittsburghers have called her their 'folk hero'. Her

professional interests lie in the redevelopment and revitalization of the inner City and its neighborhoods. She is committed to good design and making a positive contribution to the public realm with every project.

Eve has led a varied professional career, as architect, city planner, urban designer, non-profit development specialist, real estate developer, pub-



lisher, event coordinator and economic development strategist. All of these have provided her with a rich understanding of how cities work, how deals get done, how downtowns can be revitalized, what policy needs to be in place, and the type of marketing that creates the buzz necessary for regeneration.

Eve began her career as an architect and then urban designer, working for architectural ateliers all over the world - Sydney, Vienna, New York, Princeton and Pittsburgh. After relocating to Pittsburgh, Eve became a senior urban designer at the City of Pittsburgh Planning Department at the same time launching a non-profit Community Development Corporation. There she developed their first residential project. While continuing her urban design and strategic planning work as a consultant, Eve began to tackle a portfolio of blighted buildings. In 1997 Eve launched no wall productions, inc. She built an entrepreneurial real estate company focused on downtown and urban neighborhoods that others have ignored, transforming neglected buildings into highly desirable loft-style residences and offices, and using that experience to provide innovative consulting and marketing within her agenda of "all things urban". In 2001 Eve launched we do property management, inc., to manage her portfolio, and to provide 3rd party management and brokerage services as well.

In early 2006, tired of waiting for others to trumpet the many good things happening in Pittsburgh, Eve launched an e-publication, Pop City, aimed at breaking the bad news cycle so typical of rust belt cities. In September 2007, Eve launched the cityLIVE! event series. Now heading into its third year, the purpose of the series is to change the conversation about Pittsburgh and the region, and to expose creative and intellectual talent that the city owns, speak to its transformation and create a community of people interested in all things Pittsburgh, on a monthly basis.



Paula Reeves- Transportation

Ms. Reeves has been developing transportation projects for the State, cities, counties, and transit agencies for seventeen years. She currently manages the Community Design Assistance Branch at Washington State Department of Transportation and

serves on the Board of Directors for the American Planning Association Washington Chapter. In both these roles she provides a range of transportation planning and engineering services to cities, counties and transit agencies including: expert advise regarding transportation and livable communities, pedestrian and bicycle facility design expertise, safe routes to schools, scenic byways, and transportation planning support relative to Washington's Growth Management Act. She has a broad transportation background that includes urban design, engineering, environmental experience, and is a trained mediator. She serves on the National Transportation Research Board's Pedestrian Committee and the AASHTO committee responsible for developing national bicycle and pedestrian design guidance. She earned her master's degree with engineering and law school course work in urban and regional planning from the University of Florida.



Robert Yakas, AIA, AICP- Urban Design & Sustainability

With over 30 years in urban design, architecture, planning and transportation planning, in both the public and private sectors, Mr. Yakas has led teams in all scales of community design projects. From individual site de-

sign to master planned residential communities utilizing Transit Oriented and Traditional Neighborhood Development strategies. He has worked successfully in the public and private sectors in short and long range planning, and on projects from concept through implementation. His international experience includes work in Mexico, Canada, Turkey, France, Japan and most recently in Johannesburg, South Africa.

As a leader of and key member of design teams Mr. Yakas has been involved in major development projects for towns and cities from Alaska to Florida; transportation projects in Washington, Oregon, California, Colorado and Utah, and has lectured and presented at forums for the American Planning Association and the National Light Rail Transit Conference. He was an adjunct professor in the department of Urban and Regional Planning at Portland State University for 12 years teaching all the core urban design and site design courses offered in the graduate curriculum.

Joel Mills - AIA Staff

Joel Mills serves as Director of the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects. He provides process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, he works with AIA components, members and partner organizations to provide technical assistance to communities across the country on sustainability and urban design. His expertise is in civic health. His experience includes community-based technical assistance, process design, facilitation and training across a number of fields including juvenile justice reform, local government, education, family strengthening, civic media and emergency management. During the 1990s, Mr. Mills spent several years supporting international democratization initiatives by providing technical assistance to parliaments, political parties, local governments, civic and international organizations. His

scope of work included constitutional design and governing systems, voter and civic education, election monitoring and administration, political party training and campaign strategy, collaborative governance, human rights and civil society capacity building. He maintains active memberships in the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD). He also serves on several public and private boards. His work has been featured on ABC World News Tonight, Nightline, CNN, The Next American City, Smart City Radio, The Washington Post, and other major media sources.

Erin Simmons- AIA Staff

Erin Simmons is the Director of Design Assistance at the Center for Communities by Design at the American Institute of Architects in Washington, DC. Her primary role at the AIA is to provide process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, she works with AIA components, members, partner organizations and community members to provide technical design assistance to communities across the country. To date, Erin has served as staff lead on over 30 design assistance teams. Prior to joining the AIA, Erin worked as senior historic preservationist and architectural historian for an environmental and engineering firm in Georgia, where she practiced preservation planning, created historic district design guidelines and zoning ordinances, conducted historic resource surveys, and wrote property nominations for the National Register of Historic Places. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Georgia.



Communities by Design

ENVISION. CREATE. SUSTAIN.

www.aia.org

