

A ULI ADVISORY SERVICES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

LEIMERT PARK VILLAGE

DECEMBER 2015



ULI LOS ANGELES MISSION STATEMENT

At the Urban Land Institute, our mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Los Angeles, a district council of the Urban Land Institute, carries forth that mission as the preeminent regional real estate organization providing inclusive and trusted leadership influencing public policy and practice.

ABOUT THE ULI LOS ANGELES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS

In keeping with the Urban Land Institute mission, Technical Assistance Panels are convened to provide pro-bono planning and development assistance to public officials and local stakeholders of communities and nonprofit organizations who have requested assistance in addressing their land use challenges.

A group of diverse professionals representing the full spectrum of land use and real estate disciplines typically spend one day visiting and analyzing the built environments, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a fashion consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives.

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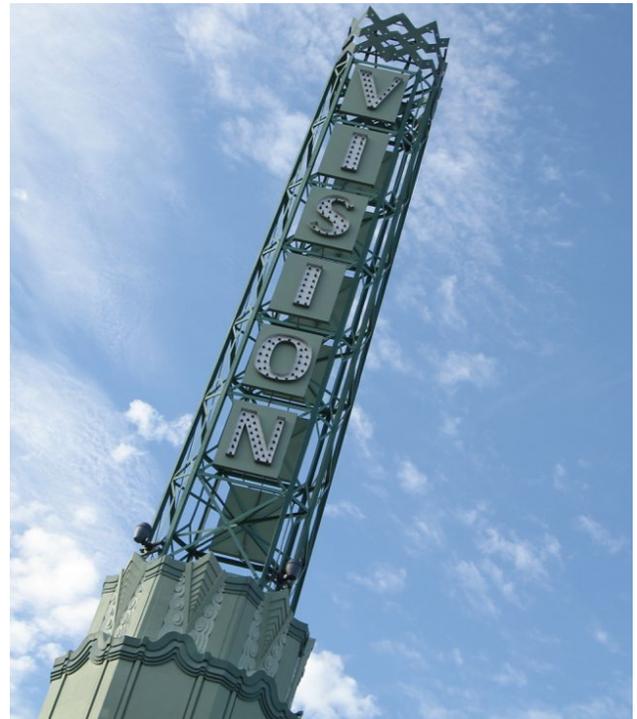
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Located seven miles southwest of Downtown Los Angeles, Leimert Park Village is a capital of African American culture in Southern California.

ASSIGNMENT AND PROCESS

In May 2013, a long process of advocacy and politics culminated with a vote by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to approve \$80 million for an underground station in Leimert Park Village along the planned Crenshaw Line.

The approval of the funding for the station came after years of uncertainty about whether the Crenshaw Line would provide new access to and from Leimert Park Village—the cultural district well known as the beating heart of the Los Angeles African American community.

Despite broad support in the community for the station, its approval contributes to a growing level of apprehension about gentrification in Leimert Park Village and proximate neighborhoods like Baldwin Hills, Crenshaw Manor, and Leimert Park. The pressures of the country's most expensive

housing market have already reached these established residential neighborhoods. Shortly after the announcement about the new station, reports indicated that local businesses are being priced out of Leimert Park Village.

Against that backdrop comes a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leverage a tremendous new asset for the betterment of the community—a transit line that will offer an easy way for visitors to discover and explore Leimert Park Village while also offering local residents new mobility options and access to jobs located all over the county.

With such potential benefits and current challenges in mind, the Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas asked the Urban Land Institute Los Angeles District Council to conduct a study of criteria and recommendations that could guide investment in Leimert Park Village.

KEY QUESTIONS

The Office of Los Angeles County 2nd District Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas asked a Technical Assistance Panel from the Urban Land Institute's Los Angeles District Council to generate strategic planning recommendations regarding the development and real estate market potential of Leimert Park Village (Village), where the arrival of a Metro rail station in 2020 is expected to bring new investment and economic development opportunities to the Village.

The panel was asked to consider the following questions during its study:

Market

- What is the strongest retail market niche for the Leimert Park Village in light of existing, approved, and planned commercial developments in the area, such as the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza, Marilton Square, District Square, and USC's University Village?
- What is the most effective marketing strategy for the Village? Should the marketing strategy focus on the cultural and historic assets of the Village? Should the Village be promoted as a regional, national, and international destination, or should the Village focus on the local market and opportunities?

Development

- What is the highest and best use for the city-owned parking lots that is also consistent with the community's vision for the Village?
 - Identify the types of developments the community should encourage, including: land use, density, and building height.
 - Identify cost effective solutions for providing replacement parking once the parking lots are developed.
- How can the Village be positioned and planned as a pedestrian-oriented district? What are the near-term and long-term opportunities for improving pedestrian linkages with the surrounding neighborhoods and other nearby existing and planned retail centers?

Implementation

- What financing options, both public and private, are available to achieve early results consistent with the near-term action steps recommended by the panel? Are funding mechanisms available that can facilitate local community ownership and further the goal of preserving cultural and historic resources?
- What are the near-term steps for attracting new investment to the Village that have the highest probability of success and that begin the process of achieving the shared art, cultural, and entertainment vision for the Village?

The Village's "good bones" include diverse architecture, pedestrian-friendly scale, prominent public art and a strong sense of place.



MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

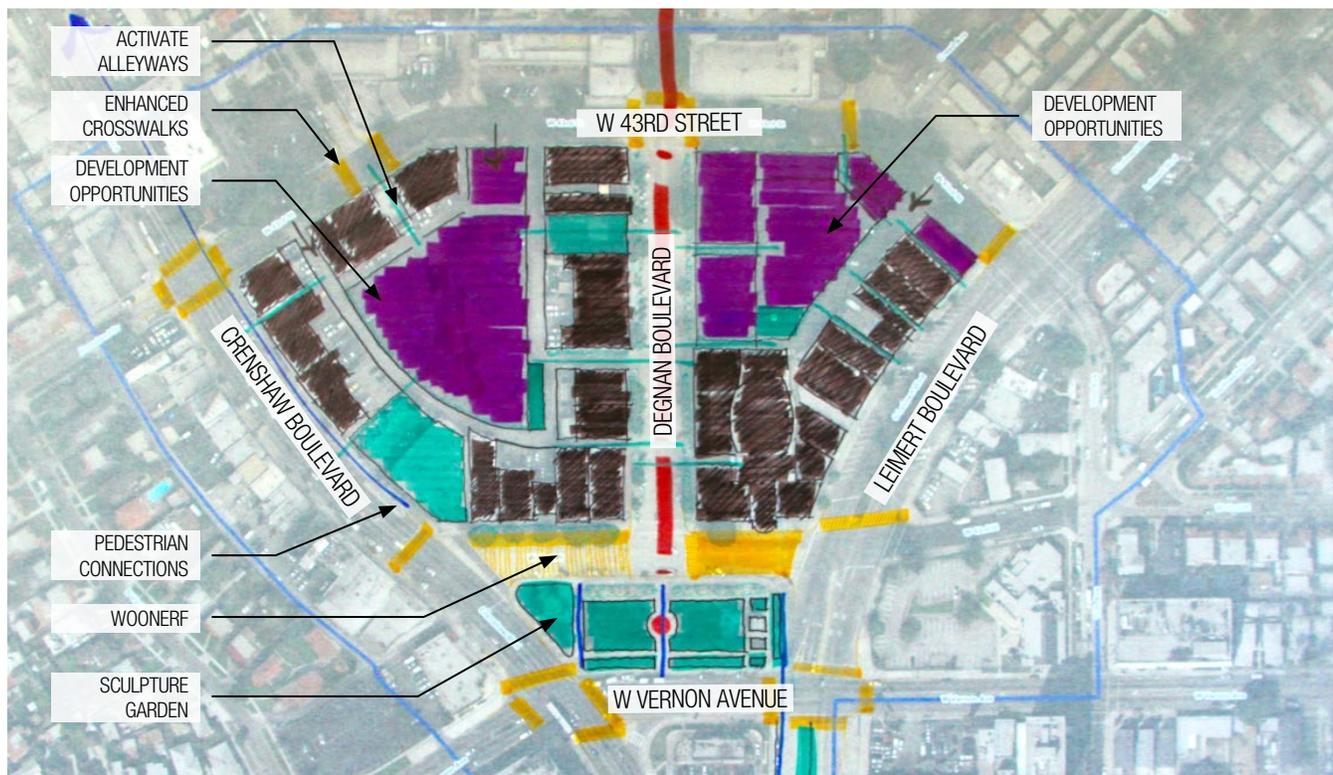
A complete account of the analysis and recommendations of the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) follows, but leading those recommendations are strategic actions to address the escalating neglect and deterioration of Leimert Plaza Park at the center of the Village and to complete renovations to the historic Vision Theater. Those locations should serve as anchors for cultural programming and as daytime and nighttime attractions for residents and visitors from around the city and region.

The TAP also prioritized the need to fill what are now empty storefronts and surface parking lots along Degnan Boulevard with appealing daytime and nighttime uses. Community stakeholders should target community-serving retail and dining as the market niche for new businesses in the Village. On the large parcels, owned by the city of Los Angeles, that now serve as surface parking lots, the TAP recommends zoning changes that would enable a mixed-use development that would allow housing targeted to artists as well as cultural and commercial uses that would enhance and encourage the Village's thriving arts scene.

The TAP also calls for an entertainment-driven program to enliven the public realm, with public art, pedestrian improvements, and landscaping and other natural infrastructure systems, as well as improved connectivity in the form of expanded bike lanes and improved, accessible alleyways.

As a tool for implementing this ambitious vision, the TAP recommends that community stakeholders form or designate a single entity to act as a coordinated representative for the interests and desires of property owners, businesses and other stakeholders. As new projects and programs are achieved, this same entity would be positioned to market these accomplishments to a larger audience.

Land use development strategies proposed by the TAP for Leimert Park Village.



ULI'S TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANELS

TAP PROCESS

Prior to the TAP, ULI panel members met with representatives from the Office of Los Angeles County 2nd District Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas to determine the scope of the panel assignment. ULI selected panel members with practiced and professional skills that address the stated objectives for the TAP, as provided by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. Panel members reviewed background materials, including market and demographic analyses, the Leimert Park 20120 Vision Plan, recent news articles, and more, prepared by the Office of 2nd District Supervisor Ridley-Thomas prior to the TAP.

The TAP process is usually a day-long event, but given the desire of the Office of Supervisor Ridley-Thomas for a thorough study of the challenges and possible solutions presented by the study area, this TAP lasted for two days. On the first day, panel members toured the study area with community leaders along with representatives from the Offices of Supervisor Ridley-Thomas and Los Angeles City Council President and Leimert Park Village Councilmember Herb Wesson, Jr. On the second day, panelists worked through an intensive analysis on the specified issues before presenting their findings at a public event attended by many members of the community.

TAP PANEL OF EXPERTS

ULI convened a panel of professionals representing a variety of disciplines connected to land use and real estate development, such as architecture and urban design, real estate development, economic analysis, and development financing. The ULI panel members brought a robust array of professional expertise relevant to the Supervisor's objectives for the study and a working knowledge in the sectors of business, the real estate market, and the design typologies common in the study area. All panel members volunteered to participate in the panel process and did not receive compensation for their work.

Panel members and stakeholders identify opportunities and challenges within the Village.



LEIMERT PARK VILLAGE CONTEXT

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

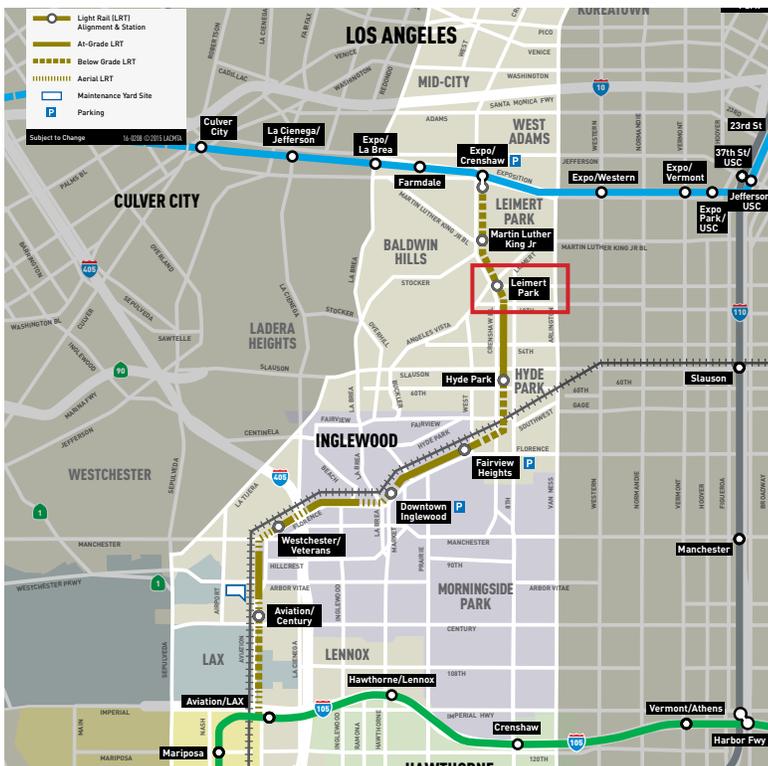
The forthcoming Crenshaw Line inspires both ambition and caution among local residents, business owners, and interested observers regarding the future of Leimert Park Village. The 8.5-mile light-rail line will connect the existing Exposition Line—which runs from Downtown Los Angeles, through USC, and eventually all the way to Santa Monica—to the Los Angeles International Airport. The new Crenshaw Line travels above and below ground and includes eight stations, including a station to be located underground in Leimert Park Village.

The 8.5-mile Crenshaw light-rail line will connect the existing Exposition Line to the Los Angeles International Airport and Metro Green Line, including a stop in Leimert Park.

Leimert Park Village is a highly valued cultural center for the region’s African American population, and is surrounded by some of the wealthiest African American neighborhoods in America. The approximately 1.19-square-mile Village

includes the highest concentration of African American-owned businesses in the city of Los Angeles—a status that is widely perceived as threatened by the pressures of rising property values and gentrification that are already infiltrating the Village and its surrounding neighborhoods. Included among those businesses are such famous and treasured locations as the World Stage, the Barbara Morrison Performing Arts Center, Kaos Network, Papillion Gallery, Gallery Plus, Eso Won, and many more.

Degnan Boulevard runs north from the central hub located at the Leimert Plaza Park, the historic Vision Theater (which was once owned by Howard Hughes and is undergoing a \$30 million renovation to be completed by 2017), and a People Street Plaza, opened with much fanfare in July 2015.



Map courtesy Metro

The Village is inscribed with many signifiers of its status as a cultural center for the African American community. Sidewalks along Degnan Boulevard, for instance, are lined with plaques inscribed with the names of African American cultural icons, and the People Street Plaza is marked by Adinkra symbols of the Akan people, an ethnic group in Ghana.

In addition to other recent planning processes, a grassroots effort known as the 20120 Vision Initiative has been launched to realize the potential of the Village as it gains new access to the region’s mass transit network and connects major hubs in Los Angeles to the “Crenshaw Experience.” The most recent public session of the 20120 Vision Initiative attracted nearly 200 participants.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ASSESSMENT

To organize its analysis and inform its recommendations, the TAP panel performed a “SWOT” analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats exhibited by Leimert Park Village.

STRENGTHS

Affluence of the neighborhood: With an estimated median household income of \$53,714 in 2015, the larger neighborhood of Leimert Park is about average in the city of Los Angeles. But “average” only tells part of the story: With African American enclaves like View Park-Windsor Hills, Ladera Heights and Baldwin Hills nearby, there are significant numbers of residents of considerable economic and social mobility living in proximity to the study area. For instance, Ladera Heights (71% African American) has an estimated median household income of \$111,920 and View Park-Windsor Hills (86.5% African American) has an estimated median household income of \$108,877.

African American cultural center: With its existing cultural attractions, Leimert Park Village has achieved a reputation as the capital of African American culture in Los Angeles and Southern California. Cultural attractions with such drawing power are a rare asset, lending the neighborhood a singular authenticity.

Transit corridor: With the Crenshaw Line comes potential for new foot traffic and tourism from outside the immediate area. Conversely, the rail line will offer residents of Leimert Park and its surrounding neighborhoods easier access to jobs around the metropolitan area.

Engaged residents: Throughout the course of the TAP, panelists encountered numerous engaged, well-informed constituents. Planners, developers, and policy makers should expect a thoughtful and responsive process of community engagement when working in Leimert Park Village.

Strong political leadership: City Council President Herb Wesson, Jr., who represents the neighborhoods around Leimert Park Village, is well positioned to provide galvanizing leadership and to bring his constituents dreams to a reality. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas exemplified support for the future of Leimert Park Village by sponsoring the TAP process and by spearheading the effort to locate an underground stop for the Crenshaw Line station in the Village.

Good bones and scale: Leimert Park Village is crisscrossed by a system of alleyways and high-capacity streets that offer enough space to accommodate multiple travel modes. The majority of the sidewalks in the area are of substantial enough width to incorporate enhanced pedestrian features. The area owes much of its good scale and bones to its history as a streetcar suburb.

Historic architecture: Diverse architecture, representing a mix of historic development periods, lines the commercial corridors of Leimert Park Village, anchored by the Vision Theater. Charming, historic residential neighborhoods also surround Leimert Park Village.

Leimert Park Village is crisscrossed by a system of alleyways and high-capacity streets that offer enough space to accommodate multiple travel modes..



Vision Theater: A jewel of a building, with a captivating history, a picturesque exterior, and a glamorous interior. Having the People Street Plaza and Leimert Plaza Park as its front porch also ideally suits the Vision Theater to be the definitive anchor of the neighborhood.

Track record of cultural events: Residents and visitors frequent Leimert Park Village for cultural events and public programming at various locations around the neighborhood. Large, contiguous parcels under public control: Two city-owned parcels and a Metro-owned parcel are of rare size, offering flexibility and revenue potential for development on the site.

Vision Theater is a signature building in the study area, with a captivating history.



WEAKNESSES

Retail storefronts used for storage: Along both Degnan and Crenshaw boulevards, blocks are drained of vitality and potential by false and idle storefronts, incompatible with the commercial setting of Leimert Park Village.

Inactive streetscapes: The landscaping found in the Village could use more attention and investment, but some of the inactivity on the streets follows a lack of opportunities for visitors to linger in the neighborhood, at restaurants and cafes. The irregular hours of some of the businesses in the area also saps the vitality of the public realm in Leimert Park Village.

Perception of safety: Although not all stakeholders agree about the safety of the Village, especially around the plaza, perception is reality when it comes to public safety. A large and growing homeless population in the Leimert Plaza Park also creates an atmosphere that will continue to be unwelcoming to many potential visitors.

Lack of connection with surrounding neighborhoods: Residents of Leimert Park and surrounding neighborhoods report a psychological barrier obstructing residents from coming “down the hill” to make more frequent use of the amenities found in Leimert Park Village.

Lack of compelling competitive retail: Other than a few exceptions, the retail offerings of Leimert Park Village are not varied and attractive enough to compete for the homeowners and residents that have retail options nearby in Culver City, Santa Monica, or Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza.

Lack of code enforcement: Multiple participants in the TAP panel reported a lack of code enforcement for many of the buildings and land uses found in the Village, which contributes to a perception of blight and a lack of public safety.

Restrictive Specific Plan: The TAP panel considers the existing Specific Plan to be overly restrictive in its regulations, including its limitations on building heights and uses.

BID size and scope: The budget and operations of the Business Improvement District prevents actions and programs of Village-wide scale and citywide reach.

Perceived resistance to change: The threat of gentrification has inspired some local voices to resist any organized, outside investment. At the same time, the TAP panel heard reports of local resistance to affordable housing projects due to fears that they are not consistent with the existing character of the Crenshaw community.

OPPORTUNITIES

Leverage interest in community ownership: The active and informed involvement of a diverse group of constituents is a strong foundation with which to protect and invest in the cultural integrity of Leimert Park Village as it works toward a new level of prosperity.

Attract compelling destination anchor retail: With wonderful retail and entertainment offerings already in place, a few additional retail options could contribute to a critical mass of activity and attractions in the Village.

Maximize use of open space: The alleyways connecting the corners of the neighborhood, along with the existing People Street Plaza and Leimert Plaza Park, offer valuable opportunities for programming and community activities.



Establish the Vision Theater as a cultural hub: The TAP believes that the opening and stable operations of the Vision Theater is a fundamental first step in ensuring the success of Leimert Park Village in the decades to come.

A large and growing homeless population in the Leimert Plaza Park creates an atmosphere that is unwelcoming to many potential visitors.

Activate public realm through streetscape

improvements: Some of the work of activating the public realm around the Village can be achieved through a coordinated and cohesive streetscape program.

Integrate art into public spaces: The private businesses located in Leimert Park Village could orient art toward the public realm, even bringing it outdoors and into visible and accessible storefronts. In addition, the neighborhood's underutilized system of alleyways makes a natural canvas for artistic expression and programming in the public realm.

Increase public programs: Anchor institutions like the Vision Theater and the World Stage make it possible to schedule a full calendar year of programs, marketed in concert, whether held in public spaces, private spaces, indoors, or outdoors.

Increase BID capacity and engagement: A business improvement district of greater geographic reach and financial resources could go a long way in identifying and achieving marketing and development opportunities in Leimert Park Village. Although, even with any new geographic reach, the primary focus of the BID should be on the Village. It's possible that increasing the level of assessments might be necessary to achieve those goals.

Promote cultural assets through integrated branding campaign: A coordinated marketing campaign—bringing together a broad coalition of commercial and residential interests—should explore new ways to tell the story of Leimert Park Village, its people, and its events.

Utilize city parcels to increase daytime population: Development of the large city-owned parcels, currently used as surface parking lots, would deliver uses that ensure a larger population in both day and night hours.

Improve pedestrian experience: Following the example of the People Street Plaza in front of the Vision Theater, pedestrian infrastructure should be expanded and improved to contribute to the sense of place but also to provide multi-modal pathways through the neighborhood.

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THREATS

Inaction worsens park's perceived unwelcoming environment: Allowing the homeless camp currently established in Leimert Park Plaza to persist benefits neither the Village nor the people living in that environment.

Lack of engagement reinforces hostility toward change: Without active engagement and a focused outreach campaign that defines a culturally based “value proposition,” some residents, business owners, and property owners could default to the obstructionist politics of NIMBYism in response to a perceived threat of gentrification.

Gentrification perception: In some cases, neighborhoods facing the threat of gentrification have reacted by implementing “no-growth” policies, stifling potential investment and restricting access to the neighborhood's resources. Such an outcome would contradict the stated intentions of many of the Village's stakeholders.

Decline of existing cultural assets: Without a passionate group of art enthusiasts, a growing number of financial supporters, and improvements in the public realm, the momentum currently building in the Village could crest and break, taking with it new opportunities to improve the area.

Unrealistic expectations for impact of Metro: Although the TAP acknowledges that the new Metro rail station to be located in Leimert Park Village is a potential game changer, it might not be a catalyst by itself. Success will depend on the hard work of community engagement, economic fundamentals, and thorough planning.

Regulatory uncertainty: An ongoing lack of code enforcement, coupled with zoning codes that make it difficult to attract compatible and complimentary uses, is a recipe for lawsuits and other barriers to achieving the goals of Village stakeholders.

MARKET ANALYSIS

MARKET NICHE

After consulting with local business owners, residents, and political leaders, the TAP identified community-oriented retail as an ideal market niche to cultivate as opportunities arise in Leimert Park Village. First and foremost, such community-oriented retail would fit seamlessly into the scale and community-centric focus that already exists in the Village. Moreover, current community-oriented retail already makes Leimert Park Village a special and unique place—encouraging additional, similar uses that maintain the integrity of the neighborhood’s cultural identity would improve its appeal to outside populations.

Stakeholders should also focus on a complimentary use: compelling daytime anchors. Daytime anchors, which can include markets, schools, or cultural attractions, make it easier to maintain regular business hours for the local retail businesses. Examples of the daytime anchors recommended by the TAP include a natural foods market and activity-based uses, such as “Mommy and Me” classes, early childhood music classes, education uses, senior activities, bike shop, and yoga.

Critical to enabling a more consistent schedule of activities and attractions is the existence of a nighttime anchor to supplement those daytime anchors. The TAP recognizes the immense potential of the Vision Theater, supplemented by other venues such as the World Stage, to attract large numbers of people in the evening. In clear terms: the success of the Vision Theater is critical to the success of Leimert Park Village.

With those anchors in place—each serving and compounding the cultural identity of Leimert Park Village—a variety of supportive uses will be necessary to ensure that visitors and residents linger beyond show time. Dining options, which are in short supply, are often the most powerful attraction for

the purpose of lengthening the stay of visitors. In addition to more restaurants and cafes, Leimert Park Village could also explore a food hall, such as the Packing House in Anaheim, as a unique supportive use that complements the Village’s cultural identity.

A few tactical and strategic moves in the local real estate and land market will be necessary to attract new community-oriented retail and other uses to Leimert Park Village. First, neighborhood investors must absorb existing vacancies and reclaim retail spaces from incompatible uses. According to the calculations of the TAP, 52,800 square feet of retail is available for absorption. Another anchor business would help absorb much of that total, and it would provide an opportunity to launch the process of absorbing this space by first building in some of the many underutilized buildings that line Degnan and Crenshaw boulevards.

The TAP notes that many of Los Angeles’ neighborhoods are in the process of gentrifying. The Village and the broader Crenshaw community will not be immune from the market forces driven by the growth of the city and region

Current community-oriented retail makes Leimert Park Village a special and unique place.



as a whole. As some of the most affluent African American neighborhoods in the United States, the areas surrounding the study area will most likely be a magnet to other similarly situated ethnic populations interested in opportunities to experience greater diversity. The cultural focus of the strategies detailed throughout this report, however, is meant to protect and supplement the Village's strengths as an African American cultural enclave. The result of these recommendations should be a new Leimert Park Village that represents the best characteristics of this collection of neighborhoods to Greater Los Angeles.

A coordinated and comprehensive marketing effort will create a specific identity and association and be more effective in attracting new visitors.



MARKETING STRATEGY

The TAP recommends an “all of the above” marketing strategy—a comprehensive and coordinated effort that brings together organizations to put all the pieces together. Currently, marketing is scattershot and people don’t connect the advertising they see with a specific place or identity. A coordinated and comprehensive marketing effort will create a specific identity and association and be more effective in attracting new visitors that don’t already know about Leimert Park Village. No matter what the specific event, location, or other draw is—visitors need to immediately associate the marketing elements with Leimert Park Village.

To build marketing reach, the TAP recommends starting with a local and regional focus before reaching out to national and international markets. Marketing efforts should build on local success. Local success stories will be found in Leimert Park Village’s cultural and historic assets, with the Vision Theater as an anchor and flanked by existing amenities like World Stage and Kaos. As a local destination, restaurants and other activities will be necessary to attract local residents on a frequent basis during daytime hours. A critical mass of activity will be necessary to make regular business hours a feasible option for exiting businesses. Once that critical mass is in motion, larger events will draw more regional visitors.

The TAP recommends eventually partnering with other African American institutions to raise the profile of Leimert Park Village as a national and international destination. Potential partners include other historic African American venues, touring companies, and other institutions for shared promotion campaigns. Leimert Park Village boosters should also continue to partner with international cities, as it is already doing, especially for the Vision Theater.

DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The TAP identified several design principles, or themes, to organize its design recommendations: connectivity, the public realm, built form, and programming. The Village already has great qualities, such as the good bones and scale described above, to build upon. The following design recommendations will enhance and improve the great amenities and places already found in Leimert Park Village. In effect, neighborhood stakeholders should aim not to reinvent the wheel—but to help it run smoother.

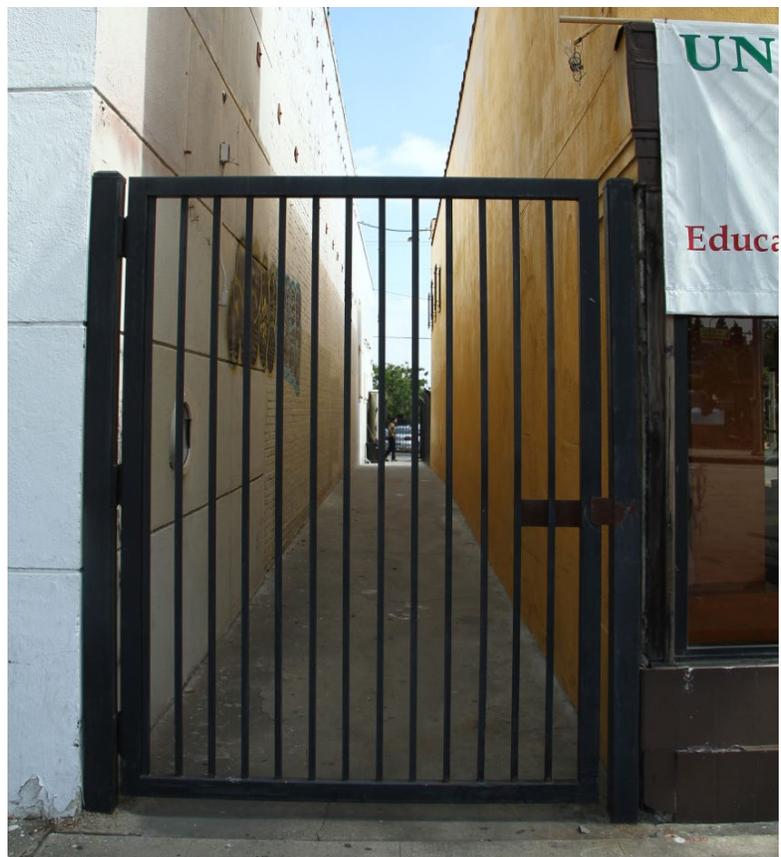
CONNECTIVITY: Improvements in the physical connections around the neighborhood should help celebrate Leimert Plaza Park and focus on Degnan Boulevard as an axis. There are a large variety of activities available within a ten-minute walking radius of the plaza. Because of the Village's past as a streetcar suburb, the street grid is already designed to provide easy access to the commercial corridors on Crenshaw and Degnan boulevards. Future investment in the connectivity of the neighborhood should focus on the good bones and naturally walkable character provided by that development and infrastructure legacy.

Multiple improvements would enhance connectivity, however, including expanded bike lanes. Strategic connections, by foot or by bike, with local trip generators like the high school, elementary schools, and the Baldwin Hills Mall, can also help draw more people into the Village. Bikeshare stations could potentially be located near the plaza, the new rail station, and trip generators like those listed here to supplement the transportation options in the Village. A pedestrian or mobility plan should be developed to identify gaps in the pedestrian network, opportunities to expand facilities and amenities, and a strategy for long-term implementation. Elements of the

plan should consider increased accessibility, improved street lighting, and perhaps even a distinctive Village landscape palette that is sculptural, colorful, and sustainable. The city's Great Streets program, as well as its Vision Zero initiative, along with Metro and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, are all potential funding sources for these types of planning efforts.

The large number of alleyways, many of which are currently closed off to the public, can provide a valuable contribution to connectivity around the Village. Simple fixes to activate alley spaces, include additional lighting, programming, and public art, such as murals. Transforming these alleyways into active, green streets that blend functional automobile and service

The large number of alleyways, many of which are currently closed off to the public, can provide a valuable contribution to connectivity around the Village.



access with pedestrian amenities would further enhance the sense of place in the Village. Such alleys create not just additional paths of travel, making the village more accessible, walkable, and interesting, but they also encourage business owners to adopt their alleyways as critical components of their outdoor spaces.

When new development does occur at the two city-owned parking lots, careful consideration should be given to the design of these projects to ensure they contribute to an integrated open space network throughout the village, and not become barriers to the station. They will also play a large role in defining the character and appeal of new inner-block connectivity paseos.

Wherever possible, the public realm should be branded in patterns, palettes, and other visual cues of the unique qualities of Leimert Park Village.

PUBLIC REALM: Investment should enhance the Village’s already strong sense of place, especially with streetscape improvements and public art. The TAP uses the term public art loosely—that can include 2D and 3D art, public art or privately owned art made accessible to the public.



To summarize, Leimert Park Village already has unique cachet as the African American capital of the city and the region, but expanding a public art program onto the streets, into the alleyways, on bus shelters, and in publically visible storefronts—not to mention through programming of art festivals and other events—would solidify the Village as a destination for art and artists.

Wherever possible, the public realm should be branded in patterns, palettes, and other visual cues of the unique qualities of Leimert Park Village, similar to amenities already found on Degnan Boulevard and the People Street Plaza. From street signage down to the crosswalks—the visual experience of the public realm should be a reflection of the authentic experience of the Village. Seemingly leftover, oddly shaped parcels and pockets of open space offer opportunities for heat-island reducing landscape and/or sculpture gardens. The southern edge of the Park currently acts as the edge of the Village, and its design and street face should be reimagined as a welcoming southern gateway.

The local BID could also work with the city to develop a special parking district, where revenues from the parking lots and parking meters in and around the Village go directly back to the benefit of the area. These funds could partially or wholly fund these small interventions, together with the sweat equity of neighborhood partners, to benefit the public realm.

The concepts behind “green streets” offer additional opportunities for improvements in the public realm that achieve multiple benefits. For instance, creating “bulb outs” at street corners can provide space for water infiltration systems and thoughtful landscaping while also shortening the time it takes to cross the intersection by foot. Similarly, an expanded tree canopy would provide shade and character to the Village. If possible, stakeholders could also consider expanding the existing public garden, possibly in a vertical arrangement that enables “edible parkways.”

BUILT FORM: The TAP recommends that neighborhood stakeholders consider strategic development of underutilized building to improve existing assets. Any new development or redevelopment offers great opportunities for focused, strategic investment because there are already so many fundamental components in place.

Beginning with the existing building fabric, several buildings fronting key streets are inaccessible, as their storefronts do not engage the public realm. Any opportunity to renovate facades for increased openness or re-engage the exterior with interior uses, particularly on main pedestrian ways such as Degnan and Crenshaw, should be leveraged to improve the relationship between building and public way.

The development of the city-owned parking lots, as well as additional government-owned land in and around the Village, presents opportunities for additional community and public benefit. New development, whether commercial, residential, or mixed-use, would bring new customers and businesses to the area, creating an even greater diversity of goods and services. Business and neighborhood leaders should identify what they want and need in their community, and support new developments during the planning process. Additionally, the community should work closely with the public sector and private developers to address the design of new development to ensure they supplement the existing character of the Village.

To support aspirations of increased mobility, sustainable development, and a healthy neighborhood, the TAP recommends a few principles to consider in defining the potential developments on the parking lots. Transit Oriented Development principles will be key, which includes supporting walkability and considering slightly increased (but not disproportionately so) density and mix of uses. An increase in height on these properties is recommended, though having that height step back from new and improved pedestrian ways would not only reinforce the existing Village character but could also create a compelling variety of usable public and private outdoor spaces—both on the ground and on rooftops.



PROGRAMMING: Make the most of the event spaces and public open space already found in Leimert Park Village. The Park is the heart of the Village and should be activated as such. The Vision Theater can anchor opportunities for programming in both interior and exterior settings. Stakeholders should empower the community to activate those spaces through programming. A curated collection of events could draw neighborhood attendees as well as regional visitors, sometimes separately and sometimes together.

The development of the city-owned parking lots presents opportunities for additional community and public benefit.

The practices of tactical urbanism, whereby local residents organize political and community support for small changes to the public realm, could add programming to the Village while also demonstrating the potential of physical changes. Tactical urbanism has the added benefit of leveraging the energy and political will already apparent in the neighborhood to effect noticeable change and, hopefully, inspire larger actions. Effective examples of tactical urbanism include Better Block, Park(ing) Day, wayfinding programs like Walk Raleigh, and guerrilla gardening.

DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

During its two days of study, the TAP produced a planning concept that maps out specific locations and opportunities for the kinds of interventions described above. Following along with the illustration provided in this report, the TAP elaborated on its recommended design strategies.

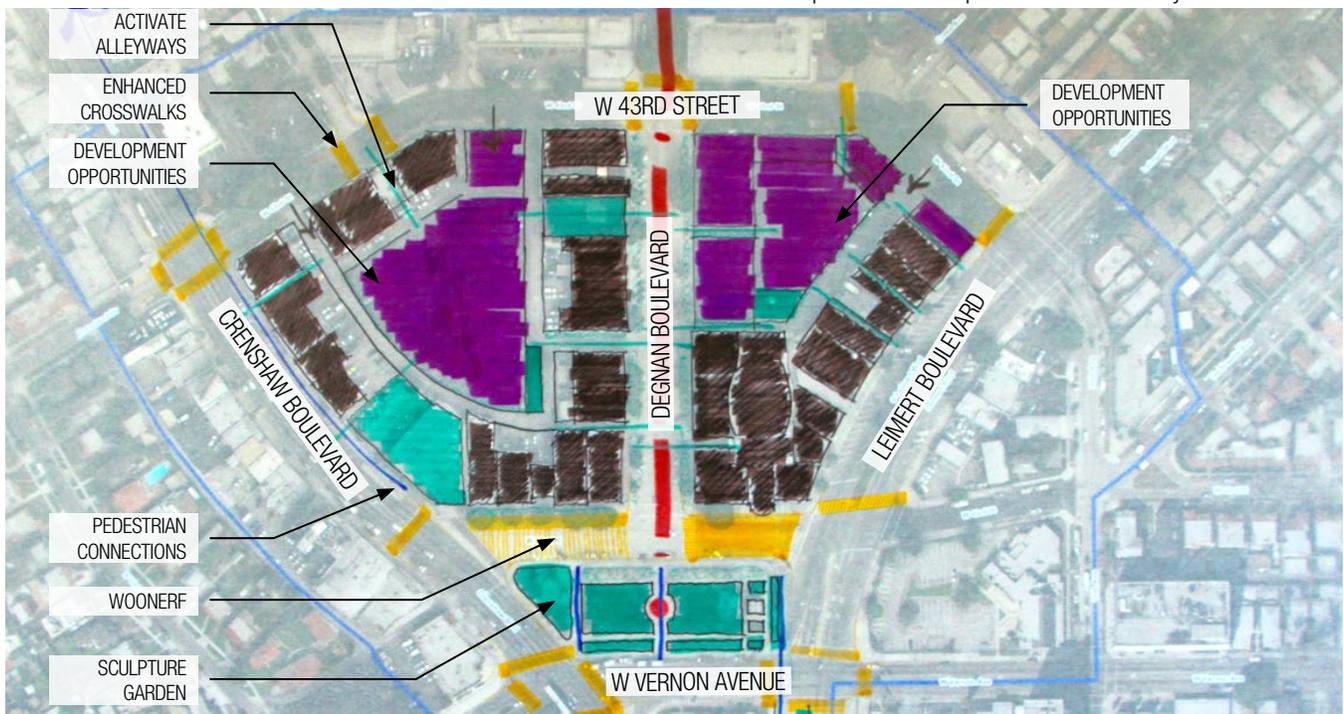
First, the TAP would identify Leimert Park Plaza as the heart of the Village, through additional signage and branding elements. Degnan Boulevard then would provide a solid and natural extension of that core energy by creating a promenade or paseo that reflects the values and aspirations of the community.

By increasing the perception of safety in and around the plaza and connecting with the alleys, an open space network would thread into the Crenshaw Boulevard corridor, out into surrounding neighborhoods, and directly into the future Metro rail station location. When it opens in 2020, the Metro station

portal can make a natural, culminating component of the open space network, as another public plaza for the Village.

The large surface parking lots, located between Leimert Boulevard and 43rd Street as well as between Crenshaw Boulevard and 43rd Street, represent the clearest opportunity for large-scale physical intervention. Given the size of these parcels and the prominence of their position in the center of the Village, the TAP panel quickly arrived to the conclusion that their current use as surface parking lots is not the highest and best use. The TAP acknowledged, however, that any development on those parcels is potentially fraught with controversy. The TAP generated its own, preferred scenario for the lot between Leimert Boulevard and 43rd Street, but any development proposal in the future should include a thorough public engagement process. The fact that these parcels are already publically owned should make it easier to offer substantial ownership of the planning and development process for those parcels to the community.

Land use development strategies proposed by the TAP for Leimert Park Village.





The TAP's recommendation would develop a mix of uses, with a sizable component of housing targeted to artists—which could be styled as studios or live/work spaces and branded as a transit-oriented mixed-use community. Adding residents to the Village would contribute to a “24-7” environment, create local demand for more of the retail and cultural uses stakeholders would like to see in the Village, and add the “eyes on the street” component of public safety.

The TAP recognizes the current pedestrian experience and great scale along Degnan Boulevard, which would be kept intact by potentially extending the existing street wall, while stepping back the third and fourth floors, raising the current height limit, and stacking and shrinking the footprint of the

parking to maximize the other uses in the development. That kind of development creates a “back street front” that would integrate well into the Village’s system of alleyways and open spaces and create another opportunity for artistic and cultural expression.

Although the idea of raising the height of a development to 60 feet—above the current height limit for the Village—could potentially be controversial, the TAP believes that given the much higher height of the Vision Theater nearby, a new development of the recommended size and massing would fit well into the context of the Village, stepping down from the theater, and wouldn’t harm views from surrounding residential neighborhoods. The step back from Degnan Boulevard is critical to making that height and integration into the Village context possible.

New development on the parking lot between Leimert Boulevard and 43rd Street would fit well into the context of the Village by stepping down from the Theater and stepping back from Degnan Boulevard.



A new development on the parking lot between Crenshaw Boulevard and 43rd Street could create a "back street front" that would integrate well into the Village's system of alleyways and open spaces and create another opportunity for artistic and cultural expression.

Any development partner that works with public agencies to develop the surface parking lots in the Village should explore the possibility of seeking density bonuses. These would allow for new height and larger numbers of residents, which would provide larger demand for the kinds of community serving uses stakeholders desire. The track record of the Metro joint development program provides models of success that can be applied and tailored to the smaller parcel owned by Metro in Leimert Park Village.

The TAP discovered that the land used for these parking lots used to lie in the path of a river, so the soil could make some types of development difficult or more expensive. Importantly, that includes underground parking. Without enough information to say definitively, the TAP recommends a stacked parking arrangement, which would make room for

the aforementioned setback as well as more of the housing and mix of uses that will activate the site and the Village as a whole. The parking lot component of the development could include a rooftop solar array to help mitigate the environmental burden of the building over its lifetime and establish the Village as a leader in green building practices.

In addition to the housing component of a the new development, the TAP also envisions a collection of uses along ground floors, and possibly above, that creates a kind of cultural and new media incubator. Such uses would meet the demand for community serving uses, as described earlier in this report. The TAP also noted that any development on these parcels, especially at a building height of 60 feet, would create stunning views and a beautiful environment for a restaurant or a rooftop garden.

The community must also consider additional development sites owned by public agencies, especially south of Leimert Park. Redevelopment of this parcel could create an enclosure for the park and a greater sense of place by increasing connectivity across West Vernon Avenue. An anchor tenant like a grocery store, restaurant, or even small boutique hotel that caters to artists could activate the park and contribute to the energy of the Village. Other underutilized or vacant sites across Leimert Park offer opportunities to focus on infill development and rehabilitation of the existing building stock. While not as “sexy” as new development, this type

of development should also be seen by the community as important, incremental steps to realizing the community’s full potential.

Finally, a critical element of the design and development strategies recommended by this report is to ensure the complete renovation and activation of the Vision Theatre. A fully realized Vision Theatre should become the anchor of the “Cultural District” that extends along Degnan Boulevard, connecting with the new Metro rail station and into the surrounding neighborhoods of Leimert Park and beyond.

A critical element of the design and development strategies recommended is to ensure the complete renovation and activation of the Vision Theatre.



IMPLEMENTATION

ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

Throughout the duration of its study, the TAP encountered an involved community, which has already participated in several rounds of community engagement as part of planning processes. Despite this tradition of engagement, the Village still lacks one lead entity to take the vision to reality of the development of the community. Whether it's a task force, non-profit, or another entity, the entire community should have a focal point of representation as the process of developing Leimert Park Village unfolds.

The success of such a coordinated effort will depend on a well-funded group or individual, deeply invested in the success of these efforts. In the end, most development is entrepreneurial, and Leimert Park Village stakeholders will have to decide the level of value they can bring to the community in an effort to achieve their goals.

Throughout the duration of its study, the TAP encountered an involved community.



The question of which entity can (or should) take the lead will be determined by its capacity to meet key responsibilities, like organizing and leading a community of diverse stakeholders; reaching into the three distinct communities of Leimert Park, View Park, and Baldwin Hills; representing the interests of property owners; partnering with the city of Los Angeles, especially the Department of Cultural Affairs and the City Council District; and working with the BID and Metro to undertake effective, far-reaching marketing and branding campaigns in line with the community's desires. Such an entity should also look beyond the traditional government and commercial interests for leadership. Churches and cultural groups can also be incredibly valuable in mustering political support.

Any entity tasked with leadership in the process of planning and developing the future of Leimert Park Village should have defined expectations and responsibilities, with accountability built into its operations and adequate resources to ensure success.

FINANCING OPTIONS

A database of existing and potential funding sources would be a useful tool for encouraging development and infrastructure investment activity. Property owners, business operators, and government representatives should have easy access to this database. Such a database will be of critical importance to the success of any entity working to manage the development of the Village.

The TAP brainstormed an initial list of potential funding sources, though more certainly exist, if discovered by an intrepid researcher:

- The existing BID: Are there opportunities to increase revenue for the BID? Are the BID's existing funds being used in ways that reflect the desires of local stakeholders?
- Banks with Community Reinvestment Act programs that serve the Los Angeles County metropolitan area.
- New Market Tax Credits.
- Historic Tax Credits.
- California Competes Tax Credit—Go Biz.
- Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District: EIFDs, as they are known, have replaced redevelopment funding in California. Such funds, generated by tax increment financing, could be used for street improvements and park improvements. These funds could be used immediately.
- Crowdfunding: Another strategy that could provide multiple benefits, by enlisting the support of the community to support smaller-scale projects, which could then lead to community buy-in on larger, more ambitious projects.
- Major philanthropy, especially around the Vision Theater.
- EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program



- Cap and Trade Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32)
- Banks with Community Reinvestment Act plans
- Community Revitalization and Investment Authorities (AB 2)

It's important to note that funding availability will vary depending on the project. Deeper research into potential sources of funding should guide the efforts directed toward specific projects.

Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District: EIFDs, generated by tax increment financing, could be used for street improvements and park improvements. These funds could be used immediately.

PHASING AND TIMING

The timing of implementation on these various projects will help establish good faith and momentum toward later, more ambitious projects. Stakeholders should focus their efforts strategically on projects that allow space and time for later work while also building coalitions in the process.

The TAP recommends organizing these projects into short-term and mid-term goals, as follows.

PHASE 1 – SHORT TERM

In the short term, initial effort should be devoted to improving Leimert Plaza Park, activating it for use by the community with programming and other activities. Certain physical improvements could contribute to a greater perception of safety, such as improving lighting in the park and in the alleys that cut through various parts of the Village. The BID should also consider providing more resources toward security and other public safety improvements.

Certain physical improvements could contribute to a greater perception of safety, such as improving lighting in the park and in the alleys that cut through various parts of the Village.



Because of its fundamental importance to the Village, work on the Vision Theater should remain constant in both the short- and long-term. In the short-term, stakeholders will have to find answers to the following questions: What will draw people to the theater during both the day and the night? How can a more consistent program of activities be developed and managed? What partnerships with organizations and individuals can contribute to the success of the theater?

Answering some of these questions will require that planned renovations be completed. Once the renovations are complete, the staff at the theater, as well as community members and other stakeholders, should incorporate events in the theater space and seek out other ways to rent out the various spaces in the building, such as to schools or other education uses. A well-cultivated art program could also serve as a draw to the theater when events are not scheduled.

As the primary commercial arterial in the Village, early effort should also focus on Degan Boulevard. The hard work of finding more compatible uses, and finding ways to bring more of that building stock into code conformity, will have to commence early, though it will likely remain a challenge. Whenever possible, stakeholders should encourage creative activation of the idle storefronts that line that street.

The short-term is also a good time to prioritize completion of sidewalk and pedestrian improvements, such as the branded crosswalks and alley improvements, to enhance the sense of place around the Village.

Finally for the short term, the city has already launched a process to explore the development of the city-owned surface parking lots near Degan Boulevard. The community should be involved in that process as it moves toward planning and potential development. The community could also provide feedback on potential development partners to assist in feasibility planning.

PHASE 2 – MID-TERM AND BEYOND

On a longer planning horizon, stakeholders should consider supporting a planning process that creates a new Leimert Village Specific Plan. Modifications to the existing Specific Plan to create a new, focused zone in Leimert Village would also yield potential benefits. According to the TAP's analysis, the existing specific plan is overly prescriptive and focuses too much on prohibitions. The Village really requires a new plan that focuses on what Leimert Park is and can be, rather than what it shouldn't be.

A new plan could focus on protecting and enhancing historic-cultural uses and activities while encouraging a mix of uses. Some streamlining of preferred uses would also be helpful. By-right development of restaurants and cafes would help deliver the kinds of additions local residents desire for the Village. As new businesses come online, encouraging businesses to seat patrons outside would also help activate and enhance the streetscape.

The TAP also would recommend exploring the modification of existing height limitations on selected parcels while preserving the scale of uses along Degnan Boulevard. Adjustments to those regulations could enable interesting developments that maintain the cultural identity of the Village—much more than building nothing would.



Along with possible adjustments to the height requirements in the Village, the TAP also recognized the potential to modify parking requirements, particularly in proximity to the future transit stop, similar to the model provided by other neighborhoods in the city (the most complete example coming from the Cornfield Arroyo Specific Plan, approved by the city in 2012, which was the first plan in the city of Los Angeles to remove parking requirements for new developments). Reducing parking requirements could make it easier to finance the kinds of new development that community stakeholders would like to attract to the Village.

The TAP recommends exploring the modification of existing height limitations on selected parcels while preserving the scale of uses along Degnan Boulevard.

At this point the city will likely be moving along with its plans to develop one or both of the parcels it owns. Community stakeholders should remain fully engaged with that process.

For a potentially more aspirational recommendation, the TAP saw potential to create a pedestrian plaza, or woonerf, on 43rd Place between Crenshaw and Leimert. Additional study would be required to determine whether the Village needs that street capacity for cars, or whether it would be better suited as a public space for pedestrians.

CONCLUSION

Leimert Park Village has arrived at an inflection point, signified by the arrival of the Crenshaw Line and the potential for attracting capital targeted for catalytic investment and urban revitalization that will surely follow. The recommendations included in this report comprise a large collection of small interventions and small collection of large interventions—all designed to enhance, not redefine, the existing character of Leimert Park Village as the cultural capital of the African American community.

The conclusion of the TAP is resoundingly positive: Leimert Park Village has all the key ingredients in place—an engaged community, strong political leadership, and an authentic and unique built environment.

The vision of taking Leimert Park Village, in the words of Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, to the “next level,” will require the continued, passionate involvement of a diverse collection of knowledgeable and engaged community

stakeholders, public and private investment, and community development competency. Attracting new development, businesses, and residents, programming culturally important public spaces, and launching effective marketing and social media campaigns will require leadership. What’s left is the hard work of bringing all of these ideas together with a transparent plan.

The conclusion of the TAP is resoundingly positive: Leimert Park Village has all the key ingredients in place—an engaged community, strong political leadership, and an authentic and unique built environment—to enhance its prominence and prosperity while also protecting its cultural integrity.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Technical Assistance Panel is thankful for the commitment and participation of stakeholders, city staff and elected officials. The following is a list of individuals who were interviewed or provided valuable information and perspective during the TAP process.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas,
Second District

Los Angeles City Council President and Councilmember
Herb J. Wesson, Tenth District

David Riccitiello, Office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

Lacey M. Johnson, Office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

Sherri Franklin, Design Center

Roland Wiley, RAW Architects

Nick Saponara, Metro

Samuel Hughes, City of Los Angeles Economic and
Workforce Development Department

Jackie DuPont-Walker, President, Ward Economic
Development Corporation and Member, Metro Board of
Directors

Sunny Sasajima, Senior Lead Officer Southwest Community
Police Station

James V. Burks, Director of Special Projects, City of Los
Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

Brenda Shockley, Executive Director, Community Build and
Leimert Park Village/Crenshaw Corridor BID

Kelli Bernard, City of Los Angeles Deputy Mayor, Economic
Development

Johnnie Raines, Resident, LA Police Advisory Board, Metro
Crenshaw/LAX Leadership Council, Empowerment Congress
West Adams Neighborhood Development Council, Co-Chair of
LPV Stakeholders and 20120 Committee Member

Lee Walker, Resident

Heather Presha, Resident and local Realtor

Brian Bowers, Resident, Ambassador of Leimert Park Village
Business Development and People's Street Facility Manager

Carl Morgan, Resident, member of the Neighborhood Council

Alan DiCastro, Property owner

Dr. Fred Galloway and Dr. Tony Galloway, Property owners

Ben Caldwell, Property owner and curator of Leimert Park
Village Art Walk

James Fugate, Business owner

Reginald Woolfolk, Broker, Charles Dunn

Panelists meet with Los Angeles County 2nd District Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas to better understand the key questions for the Leimert Park Village TAP.



PANEL MEMBER BIOGRAPHIES

MICHAEL BANNER

President and CEO of the Los Angeles LDC

Michael Banner is the President and CEO of the Los Angeles LDC, Inc. (LDC), a U.S. Department of Treasury certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) with a mission to provide capital and advisory services to foster positive community development impacts in distressed neighborhoods by aligning the needs of borrowers and investors. Under his leadership, the LDC has been responsible for the delivery of \$250 million of capital into transactions located in the low income and distressed communities it serves while stimulating the development of new businesses and creating new employment opportunities.

Banner has a long and successful record of managing complex multimillion dollar transactions with a wide variety of institutional and public sector capital sources to meet the capital needs of both bankable and un-bankable borrowers to achieve the LDC's community and economic development mission. He is active in numerous business and community development initiatives and serves on the USC Master Plan Community Advisory Board and City of Los Angeles Business Tax Advisory Committee.

Prior to entering the field of community development finance in 1988, Michael Banner was a Vice President with Security Pacific National Bank - a \$35 Billion ("NYSE") commercial bank headquartered in Los Angeles. During his tenure in the banking industry, he has held a variety of positions in commercial lending, credit administration, credit training and retail bank management. He is a graduate of the Ross Minority Program in Real Estate at the University of Southern California, and holds a degree in Business Administration from Loyola Marymount University.

DENISE BICKERSTAFF

Housing Analyst, County of San Bernardino Economic Development Agency

Denise is currently developing and implementing foreclosure prevention and neighborhood stabilization programs for the County of San Bernardino Economic Development Agency. Using innovative approaches to creating public-private partnerships to address the foreclosure crisis, she has developed programs with non-profit and for profit organizations to assist struggling homeowners and stabilize the housing market.

Denise is a former Principal in the Los Angeles office of Keyser Marston Associates, Inc. (KMA), a real estate and economic development advisory firm, where she managed redevelopment projects and studies on behalf of clients in the Western United States.

Prior to joining KMA, Denise worked in environmental compliance and on joint development projects for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and provided engineering and environmental due diligence in the Boston office of Aldrich, Eastman & Waltch (AEW), a real estate firm that advised pension funds throughout the U.S.

Prior to her work at AEW, Denise was Director of Operations for Building System Evaluation, a building diagnostics and environmental consulting firm where she led the building diagnostics division. She is past president of Commercial Real Estate Women Los Angeles (CREW-LA) and a member of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). She is an alumna of Leadership California, a prestigious leadership program for executive women in California.

Denise has a Bachelor of Science degree in Architecture from USC and an MBA from the Peter F. Drucker School of Management at the Claremont Graduate University.

LEIGH CHRISTY

Associate Principal, Perkins+Will

Leigh has nearly twenty years of professional architecture and urban design experience. As an Associate Principal at Perkins+Will's Los Angeles Office, she is a member of the firm's Resiliency Task Force, the head of the firm's Innovation Incubator microgrant program, and the leader of the Los Angeles Office Social Responsibility Committee. She has previously practiced in Rockland, Maine; San Francisco, California; and New York, New York.

Her public and private sector experience encompasses management, design and technical realms at a variety of scales, offering her a perspective on projects that is both comprehensive and forward-looking. Leigh's project work has been honored with numerous design awards and has been featured in publications including Architecture, Architectural Record, and World Architecture News.

Leigh grew up in the rust belt, outside of Akron, Ohio. She received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Michigan and a Master of Architecture from the University of California, Berkeley. She has been an adjunct faculty member of Woodbury University since 2008. Using both research and project work as a basis, Leigh frequently publishes articles and presents on issues dealing with social and environmental sustainability at all scales.

In 2010, Leigh was named as one of Building Design + Construction's "40 under 40" honorees. Her recent work on the Urban Greening Plan for an underutilized industrial area of Los Angeles is leading to the creation of a healthy, sustainable Los Angeles River neighborhood through the lens of urban agriculture.

ANDREW FOGG

Partner, Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP

Andrew Fogg is a partner with Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP, where he is a member of the Land Use and Natural Resources team. Andrew represents private developers and public agencies in all aspects of land use and entitlement law, including compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Andrew focuses his practice on urban infill and transit oriented development projects, but has worked in virtually every sector, including retail, office, multi-family residential, medical, hospitality, planned communities, and industrial.

Andrew is a Los Angeles native; he grew up in the nearby neighborhood of Ladera Heights, where his parents still live. Andrew received his BA from UC Berkeley and his law degree from UC Davis.

Panel members consult with key Village stakeholders.



GUNNAR HAND

Senior Urban Designer, SOM

Gunnar Hand is a native of Kansas City, Missouri, where he last worked for BNIM Architects. Ever engaged in his community, he served as an elected member of Kansas City's school board, as well as on his neighborhood HOA, the Metropolitan Energy Commission, and the Kansas City Regional Transit Alliance. He recently moved back to Los Angeles to launch SOM's City Design practice in Southern California. During his first round in LA (2006-2010), he worked for the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, and was a Founding Board Member and the first Executive Director of rail-based transit advocacy group railLA.

Gunnar holds a Master of Science in City and Regional Planning with an Urban Design Certificate from the Pratt Institute, and a Bachelor of Environmental Design from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Gunnar's professional career and personal passion focuses on building community consensus, developing a clear vision of the future, and then setting upon a course for strategic implementation.

MALCOLM JOHNSON

Executive Director Real Estate Banking, JPMorgan

Malcolm Johnson leads JPMorgan's efforts in covering institutional real estate companies in Southern California. Johnson oversees a portfolio that includes some of the largest real estate development companies and fund managers on the West Coast. Johnson serves on JPMorgan's Los Angeles Market Leadership Team, the Executive Committee at the University of Southern California Lusk Center for Real Estate and the NAIOP board.

Prior to joining JPMorgan, Johnson was a vice president at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, where he underwrote and arranged over \$2B in financings for a number of prominent Los Angeles-based commercial real estate companies. Johnson previously worked as an internal consultant for PNC Financial Services Group while completing his MBA studies. At PNC, Johnson focused on the launch of the company's residential mortgage division.

Johnson played professional football from 1999 – 2003. His NFL career included stints with the Cincinnati Bengals, New York Jets and Pittsburgh Steelers.

Johnson earned his MBA from the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon University and his BBA from the University of Notre Dame. He has been a guest lecturer for The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, UCLA, the New York Giants and numerous schools and non-profit organizations in South LA and his native Washington, DC. Charities that Johnson supports include The Fellowship Initiative and The Brotherhood Crusade. Johnson is a founding parent at The City School, an advisor to the board of the Crenshaw Family YMCA and is a member of the Gonzaga College High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Johnson resides in Los Angeles with his wife and their three children.

WALTER MAYNARD

Executive Vice President, TELACU

Walter Maynard is the Executive Vice President of TELACU Residential Management, Inc. (TRM) and TELACU Property Management, Inc. (TPM), within the TELACU Family of Companies. He collaboratively works with the department Directors and is responsible for enhancing the internal organizational processes and infrastructure to allow TRM and TPM to grow and fulfill their Mission Statement.

Prior to joining TELACU Walter was the Asset Manager for The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) Asset Management Department, where he oversaw the management of HACLA entity controlled portfolio of approximately 2,500 units and enforced HACLA's redevelopment agreements resulting in the recovery or reinstatement of payments of approximately \$2 million to HACLA.

As the sole Asset Manager for the Festival Retail Fund #1 (joint venture between Goldman Sachs and the Festival Companies), Walter provided integrated business and financial management through the close of the deal and thereafter the comprehensive management of all the Retail Fund Assets, as well as fund level organizational and departmental initiatives.

Walter earned his MBA in Finance from the USC Marshall School of Business and a BA from UC San Diego in Economics and minors in Environmental Chemistry and Philosophy, where he was a member of the Howard Hughes Undergraduate Science Enrichment Program. He serves on the board of REAP Los Angeles' host Committee and is a former MTA CAC member.

SHERRY RUDNAK, MA, LEED-AP

Vice President, BAE Urban Economics

Sherry leads BAE's Los Angeles office, contributing her strong problem-solving skills to BAE's clients. Sherry specializes in providing practical development advisory services and feasibility analyses to BAE's engagements. Sherry has worked on numerous TOD area plans and Specific Plans, providing practical market analysis, financial feasibility analysis, and financing strategies. Sherry is currently leading a TOD Station Area Strategic Plan for the City of Lynwood, providing development advisory services to the City of Long Beach, California, and conducting a feasibility analysis and financing strategy for a potential streetcar in the City of Riverside.

Sherry received an MA in Economics from California State University, Sacramento, and a BA in Economics from Georgia State University. She has lectured on real estate market analysis for the ULI Real Estate School, and participated as an expert member of AIA's Urban Development Advisory Team for the Elysian Fields Avenue corridor in New Orleans. She currently co-chairs the ULI Los Angeles District Council's Urban Marketplace and sits on the District Council Advisory Board as Treasurer. She earned her designation as a U.S. Green Building Council LEED Accredited Professional in 2007.

LAURIE STONE

Associate Senior Vice President For Real Estate and Asset Management, University of Southern California

Laurie Stone was named associate senior vice president for real estate and asset management in September 2013. She is responsible for the oversight and management of a wide variety of real estate matters, including the acquisition and sale of university property, negotiation and management of university leases, negotiation and oversight of ground lease agreements with third-party developers, management of all tenant-occupied properties owned by the university, land use master planning and entitlements, management of the faculty-staff housing assistance programs, property tax payments, exemptions and appeals, and the management of title to certain non-real estate assets. Laurie Stone and her staff also work with the office of planned giving and restricted fund accounting to document the acceptance of gifts to the university and to manage the disposition of all gifted real estate and gifts-in-kind.

Laurie Stone joined the university in 2006 as university counsel and program director for capital construction development before joining the real estate department in 2010. From 2010 to 2013 Laurie served as executive director for real estate and asset management. Prior to joining USC, Stone was an associate with the law firm of Latham & Watkins from 1997 to 2006, where she specialized in land use and environmental law.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a Masters in Construction Management from USC, and graduated magna cum laude from Pepperdine School of Law.



Panelists from left to right: Walter Maynard, James Brasuell, Sherry Rudhak, Jonathan Nettler, Laurie Stone, Gunnar Hand, Denise Bickerstaff, Leigh Christy, Andrew Fogg, Panel Chair Michael Banner.

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