



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Laying the Groundwork for Development in Vermont Manchester](#)

To cheers from residents, Los Angeles County on May 7th took possession of a four-acre property at the corner of Vermont and Manchester that has been dilapidated since the 1992 Civil Unrest, and began preparing it for development that would serve the community.

“It’s a big moment because the blight goes away,” said Robert Rubin, executive director of the Vermont Village Community Development Corp. “The County and the people have spoken, a judge has ruled in our favor, and now we’re going to get some economic development – it’s very promising.”

“I’m just very happy this is happening. It gives hope,” said Joy Fantroy, chair of the 90th Street Block Club. “It’s the answer to our prayers,” added Lillie Benbow Jackson, known in the community as Reverend Mother.

Acting on a motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the Board of Supervisors voted to take the first steps necessary to secure the site and prepare it for development, including installing perimeter fencing and demolishing the only remaining structure – the burnt ruins of a shopping center.

“We now have an opportunity to create a bright future,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said. “We see this is as a location for a development that can provide tremendous community benefits, including the first boarding academy in the state that will focus on preparing youth for careers in the transportation sector; 180 units of affordable housing; 50,000 sq. ft. of retail; and various transit-related amenities.”

“Now that we have site control, our focus will be to design all of this with community engagement, including identifying immediate opportunities to activate the site,” he said. “Two separate solicitation process are underway to identify operators and developers for both the boarding school and mixed-use components of the project.”

The County sued in December to condemn the property on the east side of the 8400 and 8500 blocks of South Vermont Avenue from owner Eli Sasson, who had left it largely undeveloped for 26 years. The two blocks have been subject to more than 35 notices of building code violations over that period.

In his ruling, issued April 26, LA Superior Court Judge Daniel Murphy wrote, “The Court finds that (the County’s) needs override any hardship suffered by (Sasson).” He added, “(Sasson) will not lose rents and (Sasson has) sat idly on the project without development for years.”

The landowner will receive just compensation for the property.

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