Grounding the Angel City: Rebranding Los Angeles as a More Pedestrian-Oriented City

Jackie Salazar | Urban & Environmental Policy | Occidental '11

<u>Contents</u>

<u>Acknowledgements</u>

Thank you to my wonderful peers that have also survived this arduous, passionate process. Thank you to my professors, for encouraging me to delve into this project energetically, and for guiding the effort. Thank you to Reyner Banham, for capturing L.A.'s spirit. And thank you, L.A., for being so honestly dreamy and despicable.

<u>Dedication</u>

To the 780, for never having stood me up.

So come the day when the smog doom descends, when the traffic grinds to a halt, and the private car is banned from the streets, quite a lot of craftily placed citizens will be able to switch over to being pedestrians and feel no pain.

Reyner Banham in his 1972 documentary *Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles*

<u>Executive Summary</u>

Los Angeles is at a crossroads. What a long journey it has been getting here! L.A.'s entire history has been one of immense change. Never has there been a dull moment. The period since the middle of the 20th century has been especially interesting for Los Angeles, and the last decade more so. From 1950-2000, Los Angeles, unlike all other major cities in the U.S., saw its urban core grow.[i] The last ten years have been especially exciting for growth in the central city. Over this period, the city has of course grown more and more dense; no longer is it the low-density "suburban city" that so often comes to mind when people think of Los Angeles. This has meant that L.A.'s automobile-centric mobility structure has suffered and over the past 30 years, it has become more and more obvious that an automobile-dominated landscape is not economically, ecologically, or socially sustainable in a city of this magnitude, density, or diversity.

So, we must move from an automobile-dominated landscape to a people-dominated one. This means L.A. must reassess and redesign its mobility networks and streetscapes, to accommodate alternative modes of transportation and to create lively, scale-appropriate living and working arrangements that accommodate L.A.'s increasingly dense nature.

Reyner Banham, the British architectural historian from whom the inspiration for this project comes, identified Los Angeles as "the city of mobility" as he fell in love with Los Angeles on its freeways. Banham was so completely enamored of L.A., he learned to drive in his late thirties in order to "read Los Angeles in the original," with the help of the automobile.

The city has changed immensely since Banham first published his *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* and the aptly named documentary *Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles* in the early 1970s. The city has grown denser, more diverse, and is no longer a city in

which the old-fashioned suburban ideal of "the homesteading dream," as he called it, is sustainable. But our inability to sustain such a social and spatial arrangement only seems to matter less and less, as it has become less and less prevalent; dense housing and working developments are on the rise, along with the use of alternative modes of transportation.

This is indicative of a longtime-coming, but major, cultural shift in Los Angeles. A key goal of this study has been to destroy the myth that Los Angeles is a density-phobic city in which the widespread use of alternative modes of transportation is not possible. A second goal has been to describe the great challenges L.A. faces as it attempts to become a less car-centric city, such as the exclusivity in transit-oriented development, the widespread lack of "truly public" spaces, and the major design issues that many of our streets sport, making them hostile to pedestrians, bicyclists, and others that seek to use other alternative modes of transportation. However, the same streets are our greatest opportunity in L.A.'s transformation. L.A.'s wide boulevards, grid system, and multi-nodal nature create an urban fabric in which the creation of truly public, "peopled places" is actually *more* likely to thrive.

The last goal of this study has been to create a rebranding strategy to guide the revolution that is occurring in not only infrastructure development on the public sector's side, but in private development as well. Major transit initiatives and changes in development policy over the last decade have provided the framework for this rebranding strategy, such as the mayor's 30/10 transit plan (the plan to construct 30 years' worth of rail projects in just ten years, with federal loans). But major cultural changes inform the branding strategy as well. The enormous growth of bike culture, for example, provides a bottom-up movement to which a top-down branding strategy may appeal.

A number of values inform this study as well. This study is rooted in a firm belief that cities have a responsibility to maintain their roles as centers of democracy and culture, a role that is actually *more* relevant in the information age, rather than less relevant, as some academics assert.[ii] Architecture and urban design have similar roles; as dramatizers of space,

they have an unusual mission in that they may silently dictate an agenda, yet stay separate from it in their silence.[iii] A firm belief in the power of design is central to this project's methodology. Lastly, there is an ecological argument for decreasing dependence on the wasteful resources that have turned L.A. into a car-centric city. This is not a topic this study has not explored profoundly, but remains relevant nonetheless.

Out of necessity and desire, the city can and will become less auto-dependent. Centrally located and well-networked areas will continue to gentrify, and Los Angeles will grow, although most likely at a slower rate than decades past. Most housing construction now is high-density, and this is more than a trend; it is the norm. L.A. has already begun to rebrand itself as a more pedestrian-oriented city by capitalizing on areas like Downtown L.A. and initiatives like 30/10, amongst others. This rebranding strategy is targeted not only towards tourists, but residents as well. It is creating another "good life" myth that is replacing the conservative suburban one of yesteryear. Here lies a delicate balance: the eyes of the tourist can easily glaze over those left out of the "good life" L.A. myth and fantasy, but the resident (unless they are especially naive) must come to terms with the reality and the fantasy of it all at once as L.A.'s transformation uproots populations, as it most certainly has and will continue to do. There is a dilemma here— there is a great fear, anticipation, and excitement over gentrification. Most city dwellers struggle with the idea of such a powerful force; it is downright silly to fear investment in an area that is in bad need of it, but very wise to fear the displacement of the people that endured decades of disinvestment, but built a community despite the obstacles they faced.

This study is unabashedly pro-development and pro-density. But the worry remains for those that may be displaced in the absence of a rebranding strategy that adequately addresses the needs of these disadvantaged populations, such as the homeless population of Skid Row, at one extreme end, and simply the working class that may be pushed out to the least-well connected areas of L.A. as proximity to transit and walkable areas rise in both societal and monetary value. If L.A. does not recognize the need to address the needs of these people, its

rebranding strategy may fail. But if Los Angeles is able to shift from a car-centric city in both

reality and in the popular imagination by making the gentrification that will make that possible an

"accountable" process, such pitfalls may be avoided. Nonetheless, the city must march on

towards creating better networks of mobility and their associated developments, and these

networks and developments will have to appeal to upper-income citizens in order to garner the

critical mass that make such development politically and economically feasible. It is glaringly

obvious to many Angelenos, especially in youth culture, that constant accommodation of the

automobile is detrimental to the city's growth. A new vision for Los Angeles has long been

coming.

Preface

How I Got Here

      I was born in a nondescript hospital at the intersection of two freeways in the foothills. It was an evening in May. It was the 1980s. My mother had big hair and my father had a big car. When the time came to leave, they hopped on the 210 and cruised down Foothill Boulevard to our aging stucco apartment building, the parking jammed in the back shamefully, like old garbage bags. It was that spring that my life began, but my love affair with Los Angeles would have to wait.

      Like most people that come here, lost and starry eyed in their youth, my love affair with Los Angeles began with images. The movies, television, and music that I consumed voraciously as a suburban teen filled me with sunny delusions of a city where everyone just hopped in their cars and rode off into the sunset to happy, or at least well-written, endings. Feeding the fascination, this delusion even appeared to be backed up by some semblance of reality. There is a picture of my parents on our balcony in La Crescenta, their big Regan-era coifs billowing softly in the dappled sunlight shining through the cheap lattice that covers one side. Gigantic hills loom in the back--hills that my mother could not even see from the kitchen window during their first summer there, for all the smog that obscured them. In that picture, smiles float buoyantly on their young, tanned faces. That picture became my foundation for Los Angeles as the land of happiness and liberation. I made it my mission to get there, and get there quick.

      So, as a young college freshman, like so many migrants before me, I got here. The myth had filled me with a longing--for what, exactly, I didn't even know. Leading up to that, L.A. and I had fallen madly in love at the movies. Upon my arrival, we had an uppity sort of Eastside

honeymoon, strolling across watered collegiate lawns and sighing over faux Spanish columns in the heat of August. When the honeymoon ended, the jarring realization that the the freeway fantasy of the movies would not be mine dawned on me. As I explored uncharted territory on foot and on transit, I found myself wondering how something I loved so much could leave me stranded at bus stops so often under the hot Californian sun, or how it could promise me the ocean and the mountains and the desert but keep them so far away from one another, with so much to trek across in between. The vastness of the city both fascinated and frustrated me. When I discovered architectural historian Reyner Banham's *Los Angeles: Architecture of Four Ecologies,* I found myself writing love letters to this city all over again. Banham, a British architectural historian that had come to the U.S. via New York, had become completely enamored of Los Angeles on the freeway in the sixties. In many ways, his sunny city of mobility was a far cry from the city I had discovered with two feet on concrete in the twenty first century, but I found myself fascinated by Banham's observations regardless. Many of them, especially the cultural ones, still hold true. Los Angeles is still a city that is all about "doing your own thing." The city has grown and filled out since Banham's time, and has some extra baggage by now too. But its psyche is cardinal as ever.

This life that Los Angeles and I share has been an imperfect marriage. We have fought, stormed out, and come crawling back to each other many times now. Despite that, I do not long for the fantasy I harbored before my arrival. This inspiration is so much richer now. Occasionally, the image of what L.A. was supposed to be still sticks with me, maybe because there may be a trace of truth to it. Like my parents, I too live in the foothills, although you can see them better now. Like the people in the movies, I have a tan and occasionally, lots of fun. But I've never cruised down Foothill Boulevard or hopped on the 210, or any freeway for that matter, because I've never owned a car in this city. Both the environmental and economic costs of the automobile have pushed me out of the realm of the freeway fantasy, and automobile ownership and its associated burdens become less and less appealing—endless amounts of

traffic, the nightmare of parking, not to mention the loneliness that accompanies the insular nature of a closed, private vehicle. But the flipside has its negative qualities too—a transit system that is in need of great expansion and improvement, and a landscape that poorly serves the pedestrian in fundamental ways in many areas. To some, L.A. living with a car may seem blasphemous, the myth of Los Angeles blows so strong. But myths can and must be dismantled in order for us to fully understand them, and as an Angeleno transplant I've come to understand this city intimately from a perspective totally separate from the dominant representation of Los Angeles as a car-oriented city. I've ridden on a lot of trains, planes, and automobiles--not to mention the buses!--to understand what makes this place tick. I've left it, too, to explore the streets of other metropolises, but I find myself drawn back into the loopy loop of La La Land, inexplicably.

And every time I come back, only one thing is clear: Los Angeles is changing fast, and the tides are turning to embrace a population that rejects the automobile as the sole means of transport. Los Angeles is reshaping its future, and its image, myth and memory along with it.

My Inspiration: Reyner Banham's *Los Angeles: Architecture of Four Ecologies*

This could never dream of being an unbiased study. For I, like Banham, absolutely, shamelessly adore Los Angeles. Banham loved Los Angeles so much he didn't even care to hide the strength of his emotions in his vibrant writing, or even in the title of his lighthearted documentary, *Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles* (1972), released just one year after his immensely influential *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies.*

With the publication of *Los Angeles*, Banham appropriated the word "ecology," to be vaguely synonymous with the word "system" or complex," an association that seems particularly apt in the study of cities. The appropriation of the word has since been adopted by other academics, including, but not limited to James Corner, of the landscape urbanism movement,[iv] Mike Davis in his *Ecology of Fear,*[v] Kazys Varnelis of the Southern California Institute of Architecture,[vi] all whom have contributed to this study.

Banham created a system of "ecologies" he saw in the city. His four L.A. ecologies included "Surfurbia," the diverse coastal communities in which both patricians and plebeians mingled in the democratic pedestrian-realm of the boardwalk and beaches;" "Foothills," the exclusive residential enclaves in which L.A.'s best private architecture thrived; and "The Plains of Id," the great dull flat expanses between the valleys in which the lower and middle classes lived, enacting a suburban "homesteading dream," in a landscape dotted with commercial centers and gaudy fantastical commercial architecture. The last ecology, which he identified as the most important, was "Autopia"—the utopian ideal of mobility afforded by the automobile's dominance of the landscape. Autopia was an all-encompassing ecology—the others, like microclimates, interacted with one another in only limited capacities. But Autopia was the great macroclimate that defined cultural and formal expressions of urbanity in Los Angeles in Banham's time.

Banham was enthusiastic about the automobile, but he was somewhat prophetic in his understanding that it, like the homesteading dream, was an ideal that could only survive with a delicate, and somewhat stagnant, maintenance of the ecologies as they were. Increased population growth, which was inevitable in a city of such size and importance, would eventually chip at the illusion—which is exactly where we are now. Banham did not even address the issues of income and inequality inherent in automobile dependence, which perhaps were less obvious in Banham's time. In the 1960s and 70s, Los Angeles was a much whiter, middle-class city than it is today. This study, in a limited way, seeks to pick up where Banham left off, forty years after the fact. With an unapologetic zeal for Los Angeles, I have sought to explore the city with both a fervor for its changing development—for my subways are Banham's freeways—but with an understanding that it too presents a different ecology-creation strategy that will impact the city's future far more than we could ever imagine now.

Scope and Limitations of This Study

This is a study of the city of Los Angeles and certain areas very intimately entwined with it, such as the areas surrounded by it (Santa Monica, Beverly Hills, Culver City, etc.) and those particularly urban places bordering it (such as Pasadena and Glendale).

Statistically, when I refer to 'Los Angeles,' I refer to the city itself; any other distinction will be modified by 'metro area' or 'urbanized area,' according to their US Census Bureau Definitions. The same goes for any other specific neighborhoods, cities, towns, or other metro areas.

However, when delving into the qualitative details, my analysis becomes a little more dicey. The discussion of the city's street scene has one major limitation: the San Fernando Valley, beyond its statistical relevance as a part of the city of Los Angeles, was rarely taken into account. I realize the Valley is a part of the city of Los Angeles (and a large one at that), but the two have a contentious social history and its urban form often differs vastly from that of the basin. The two have long been at odds in the debate over what Los Angeles is, could, and should be--the Valley secessionist movement, that great bleating donkey that refuses to die, is proof of that. The Valley is an enormous place, and it is here that the image of Los Angeles as a low-density enclave for single-family homes most strongly endures. Granted, the Valley, like the rest of the city, has seen some sweeping changes in recent years, and it is not untrue that there are a few of high-density nodes of activity, such as Sherman Oaks, Pacoima, and North Hollywood. But in many ways, its density lacks the networked quality of that of the basin for reasons of geography, street design, and patterns of settlement, and its sheer vastness pushed it outside the scope of this research. The Valley, however, does have much potential for growth and I look forward to its forthcoming innovations.

Discussion

Point A to Point B: The Development of Los Angeles in Terms of Transit

> *The new abundance made the city overflow with new materials, buildings, objects; new people*
>
> *flocked in from outside; nothing, no one had any connection with the former Clarice, or Clarices.*
>
> *And the more the new city settled triumphantly into the place and the name of the first Clarice, the*
>
> *more it realized it was moving away from it, destroying it no less rapidly than the rats and the*
>
> *mold...The order of the eras' succession has been lost; that a first Clarice existed is a widespread*
>
> *belief, but there are no proofs to support it.*

"Cities and Names 4" in *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino

In 1781, 88 pioneers came to a flat, fertile place, built a church by a river, and settled there. Farms were formed, bought, sold; the rich grew oranges and the poor picked them. Wars came and went, markets went boom and bust, and then the railroad came to town.

How funny that such a typical beginning should mark the history of Los Angeles! It could be the story of any number of cities, famed or forgotten. Not that Los Angeles has ever been much concerned with its origins, anyway. It has a bad habit of forgetting its history, to the point of total erasure. The original church by the river was whisked away by floods so many times, no one even knows where it originally stood. A new Catholic church stands on Olvera Street in representation of it, appropriately located right outside of Union Station.

The railroads are responsible for a fundamental shift in Angeleno thinking and personality—rail brought a frenzy for growth and change in Los Angeles that has characterized

it ever since. The construction of rail in Los Angeles is the single most important factor in all of Los Angeles' development history; rail brought more people, and more people meant more homes, and more homes meant more places to settle.[vii]The L.A. region is the most densely populated metropolitan area in the country, because of the railroad; with the arrival of the railroad, towns cropped up instantly, to be born out of thin air. The railroad became first and foremost a way to sell real estate and with the increasing popularity of transit-oriented developments, rail is now returning to that function. During this real estate boom, the railroad provided L.A. with the largest mass transit system the world had ever seen. It defined movement as a primary Angeleno value and ideal as it emerged from its awkward adolescence as an out-of-the-way boomtown. The far-flung developments provided ironically brought on rail's demise as mass transit was replaced with freeways. And so we have Los Angeles today: crowded, congested, carsick, and in search of options.

Los Angeles, as usual, is in a state of great change. Traffic inches by on the freeways we can no longer widen, and tracks are being re-laid on the streets they once graced. Buses languish in surface street traffic the same way their four wheeled cousins do. Los Angeles is reinvesting in rail, but at a snail's pace. The desire for alternative forms of transportation has not come over Los Angeles suddenly, either; since the 1970s, Angelenos have recognized the need to dramatically alter L.A.'s urban form to encourage and accommodate a less car-centric lifestyle.

This is well exhibited by the movement for high-speed rail, a movement whose strength persistently challenges the notion that L.A. is an automobile-oriented city. Since 1980, voters have consistently voted to tax themselves in order to fund rail projects. Over the past thirty years, the ultimate vision of rail in Los Angeles has transformed and expanded. The voter-endorsed commitment to fund rail began in 1980, when Proposition A levied a half-cent sales tax on Angelenos in order to simultaneously lower fares while raising rail funds. A crude map of the originally planned rail system, designed by the LA County Transportation Commission

(LACTC), survives from the early days of Proposition A. It includes ten lines, none of which run all the way to the ocean. Three of these lines have come to fruition (in the form of the Green, Gold, Blue, and Red Lines), while others wait on the books. Other voter-endorsed propositions have since been passed in order to fund unrealized transit projects, notably Proposition C (1990), State Proposition 108 (1990), and Measure R (2008).

The latest ambitious vision for rail in L.A. comes from Mayor Villaraigosa's 30/10 plan, the plan to fund 30 years of transit projects in ten years with federal loans, paid for by Measure R, another half-cent sales tax. The maps are similar; all the lines on the 1980 map are on the 2010 map, but have been expanded. L.A still has an unrequited love for the dreamy subway down Wilshire Boulevard, and in the latest renditions, it runs all the way to Westwood, with a possibility for it running to the sea. The Gold Line has been lengthened eastward at both ends, for a more regional focus. A regional connector unites all lines leading to downtown, further legitimizing downtown L.A. as a viable place to live.

But there are two lines are on the 30/10 map that were not part of the original vision that came out of the early movement to revive rail in Los Angeles: the Expo Line, and the adjacent Crenshaw line. Interestingly, in a deviation from the original master plan, it is the Expo Line that is next to debut. Its construction hums along excitedly, as this year marks a true turning point in transportation policy and availability in Los Angeles: for the first time in nearly sixty years, the Westside and downtown will be united by rail. It also marks a turning point in this city because it represents a major cultural shift away from the automobile that in Los Angeles will finally be validated by practical means.

The Expo Line's success from a planning standpoint has been viewed as both a top-down and bottom-up process. The desire for a line uniting the Westside and downtown had long been a source of frustration, for both citizens and transportation planners. Like the Blue and Gold Lines, the Expo Line runs directly over a preexisting route, previously owned by Pacific Electric. The Expo Line, in conceptual form, had been a part of transportation policy at the

county level since 1989, and nudged one step closer to reality in 1990 when Metro bought the

right-of-way from Southern Pacific. The project stalled thereafter, mainly due to funding and

design dilemmas. By the year 2000, a planning study, a cost study, and design study had been

undertaken, but there was still no plan to extend rail to the Westside.

That year, the Democratic National Convention was held at the Staples Center. A now-

defunct guerilla planning and design group called Heavy Trash[1] capitalized on the media

attention in L.A. by creating a fictional rail line, uniting the East and the Westside. They called it

"the Aqua Line." "Coming Soon!" their signs said, placed at "future rail sites" and appropriating

Metro's logo. Although the fictional line's stops were mainly situated along Wilshire, and not the

existing Expo track, the group openly criticized Metro for moving slowly with the Expo project,

for letting NIMBYism stall it.[viii] They identified the Expo Line as a key project in its power to unite

the East and West. The fictional Aqua Line was a reinterpretation of the same powerful vision.

What was most remarkable about the project is that people *believed* in it--and wanted it

to happen. Residents across the Westside were excited.[ix] Heavy Trash jumpstarted a

conversation. Judging by responses to the signs, desire for alternative forms of transportation

was evident *throughout* the city in the wake of Heavy Trash's project, despite the NIMBY

opposition of a few wealthy neighborhoods.[2] Three months later, over 100 people showed up at

an obscure transportation planning meeting to demonstrate overwhelming support for the

project.[x] Soon after, Metro finished the Environmental Impact Report process, and by 2005,

construction on the Expo Line was underway.

The details of Heavy Trash' rail vision as a subway that runs down Wilshire are not

important. Nor should it be assumed that Heavy Trash is soley responsible for the Expo Line's

ultimate development. Heavy Trash's line down Wilshire is still a dream yet to be realized, but

---

[1] Although Heavy Trash is inactive, its blog survives. It describes itself as such: "An anonymous arts organization of architects, designers and urban planners, Heavy Trash creates large, disposable art objects that draw community and media attention to urban issues. By explaining a particular urban problem and suggesting a solution, Heavy Trash seeks to provoke dialogue among the residents of Los Angeles."

[2] The civil rights transit activist group the Bus Riders Union also opposed major investment in rail at the time, but has since changed its position.

its original intent was not to make that specific line happen; it was to get Angelenos talking about new ways of moving around their city. Although Heavy Trash is now defunct, its legacy survives in the Expo Line. To this day, the color aqua is still used to represent the Expo Line, reminding us of the car-free connection downtown will once again have with the ocean. Its name has even been debated; the Expo Line still has a chance of being christened "the Aqua line." Incidentally, the Expo Line will run right up and past the Staples Center, the site of the event that inspired Heavy Trash to get L.A. to visualize an alternative future.

These major steps forward for the Expo line, combined with the subsequent openings of several Red and Gold Line stops in 2003, have been major catalysts for L.A.'s recent reevaluation of itself. The past ten years have been astonishing in Los Angeles; development has changed tremendously, due to both political and market forces. From a cultural standpoint, L.A. has also undergone some major transformations, and has reassessed its values and options as we move forward into an age in which the cheap resources that allowed us to build and move throughout such a massive city are in shorter supply. Alternative forms of transportation are clearly rising in popularity; there have never been more transit boardings or bikes on the road in Los Angeles' history.[xi] And people clearly want to live in more compact living situations. The last decade's real estate trends clearly show that Angelenos are far from density-phobic; in fact, they have wholeheartedly embraced it.

But this project is not only about rail and real estate. It is about the need, desire, necessity, and opportunities that Los Angeles has in order to move away from an automobile-dominated landscape to a people-dominated one. Whether someone has two feet or two wheels on concrete, there is no doubt that L.A.'s innovation lies in creating alternatives to the automobile an urban landscape that accommodates and encourages the alternatives. Without innovation in its built environment to accommodate a less car-centric population, L.A. shall surely suffer; anyone who has languished through agonizing hours of L.A. traffic knows that the city's codependent relationship with the automobile is absolutely unsustainable if it is to remain

a relevant component of the global economy as a financial and cultural powerhouse, and most importantly, a desirable place to live.

Increasing mobility in the form of alternative forms of transportation and enlivening streetscapes with more humanely scaled design are the only ways L.A. can compete with other innovative cities around the country and the globe. Literal and abstract forms mobility have become extremely important global values and priorities, and always have been for Los Angeles. "That freedom of movement [is] the prime symbolic attribute of the Angel City," cooed Banham in his praise of Los Angeles[xii]. But mobility, the great goal of the freeway design of Los Angeles, has fragmented in the wake of Los Angeles' great population growth. From 1950 to 2000, while all other major cities in the United States lost a large proportion of its population in its urban, the urban core of Los Angeles grew. The "significant exception," it was called.[xiii][3]In that half a century Los Angeles transformed itself immensely. It became a vast, diverse city, most distinctive for its huge immigrant population and creative class. It also lost an extensive streetcar system, and spent billions of dollars on another, while it debated the viability of the widening of its freeways as the population grew.

A main goal of this project has been to explore changes L.A. has undergone since 2000 that have greatly impacted Los Angeles' lifestyles and identity. Considering the immensity and popularity of these changes as the popularity continues to grow, L.A. is still clearly a "significant exception." The "significant exception" is a hot place to be, which is why a focused rebranding strategy for Los Angeles is long overdue, to heighten the impact that our rapidly changing infrastructure can afford the city in order to make it a more people-oriented, rather than automobile-oriented, landscape.

---

[3]Note that "urban core" does not mean downtown--it is to differentiate dense, centrally-located sections of the city from the suburbs or more suburban fringe areas.

The Density Problem

Los Angeles is just New York lying down.

English writer Quentin Crisp

In the discussion about the viability of alternative forms of transportation in American cities, much has been made of "the density question"—the debate over the necessity, desirability and effects of density. Los Angeles has been criticized for its perceived low density, and pessimists claim there is no future for alternative forms of transportation in an "Autopian" Los Angeles. It is true: density is a problem. But it's not a problem because we don't have enough of it. It's a problem because what it is and what it means are not invariable. It's also a problem because Los Angeles is actually a very dense city, but may find itself stuck in neutral if it does not prioritize alternatives to automobile dependence.

It is often assumed that very highly concentrated populations are necessary in order to support alternative forms of transportation. A certain level of density is indeed necessary in order to make transit viable, but Los Angeles has surpassed it. In many areas, and growing close to achieving it in others. Less dense cities rely less on the automobile without having to compromise their overall quality of life. In fact, lessening dependence on the automobile has the potential to greatly raise quality of life, given a high quality of urban and transportation design. This is what Los Angeles lacks; it has a relatively high density, but its urban design is fragmented, and in many areas it is hostile to the pedestrian. So we must ask ourselves, how relevant is density in Los Angeles' transition and transformation into a less car-dependent city?

In order to talk about density, we must talk about housing, and the way in which it affects the concentration of populations. Most people are familiar with density in terms of gross land area divided by people; thus we get the "standard" density measurement of people per square mile. Using this logic, some points of confusion arise; standard density can be deliberately misleading in that it does not take variance in the concentration of populations into account within the measured area, which is often vast enough to contain a great diversity of settlement patterns. According to standard density figures, the metropolitan area of Los Angeles, with a population of about 14 million people[xiv] is the densest in the nation,[xv] and is denser than fellow west coast metro areas San Francisco and Vancouver, and denser than its eternal rival New York. All of these cities shine with extremely dense urban cores and low-density suburbs. Los Angeles has a dense urban core and relatively dense suburbs--thus, the measurement of standard density might lead one to believe that the street scene of Los Angeles is more typically "urban" than that of New York. But this is simply not the case; Los Angeles, with a more evenly dispersed population than New York, is still longing for its Greenwich Village, but has no Greenwich, Connecticut.

The measurement of standard density, when used to measure other areas, continues to befuddle. The density of the city of Los Angeles, according to 2006 population estimates, is 8,208 people/square mile--a third of New York's.[xvi] This more specific measurement is more helpful when seeking to understand the level of "urbanity" a city exhibits, but it also has its limits. Standard density does not take many things into account--parkland, bodies of water, mountains, and other largely depopulated areas are not taken into account and controlled for, so areas with large swaths of uninhabitable areas appear to have less density than they may actually have in populated areas. In L.A., this presents a calculative issue in that our mountains and canyons—the wilderness hardest to conquer—are by necessity largely depopulated. A more nuanced measurement of density, "weighted density," attempts to control for these things; its basic methodology applies a "weight" to places with a larger share of the area's total population, and

disregards areas with no population, such as a mountain or canyon.[4] Weighted density is inherently higher than average density, and is biased towards cities that "clump," or cities that follow a traditional model of high density centers and gradually lower density outer areas.[xvii] The only data available using this method is calculated for urbanized areas--bigger than the city itself, but smaller than the metropolitan area.[5]

Unsurprisingly, New York and San Francisco have the highest weighted densities in the country--around 33,000 and 15,000 a square mile, respectively. But what is shocking is that Los Angeles is right behind, at over 12,500 people a square mile. Higher than Washington, D.C., Boston, Chicago--all urbanized areas that have drastically decreased automobile use in comparison to Los Angeles, and have vibrant, recognizable urban cores. The fact that Los Angeles has a high weighted density also destroys a major myth about Los Angeles; We can infer, based on the fact that weighted density is biased towards cities with "clumpy" populations, that L.A. acts very much like a "traditional city" with a typically dense urban core. Density maps tell us the same thing. But the difference between New York and L.A. is that L.A. has a very large urban core with a very high population,[xviii] beyond the visual expanse of the traditional "walking city," the way New York does.

Such numbers are baffling to those that perpetuate the myth that Los Angeles is a low-density city. In such a state of confusion, it is tempting to seek out other cities of similar densities, to search for solutions to L.A.'s mobility issues in another city's system. Upon close inspection, it appears that Los Angeles is the Mr. Hyde to another city's Dr. Jekyll--and that city is Stockholm, Sweden. Los Angeles' standard density is the same as Stockholm's urban area,[6]

---

[4]This method was created by Chris Bradford of the Austin Contrarian, the author of my weighted density data. The method is this: to measure the weighted density of an urbanized area, each census tract's standard density is measured, its population share of the total is calculated, and each tract is assigned a weight based on its population share.

[5]An "urbanized area" is most likely to contain the central city and its closest suburbs; a "metropolitan area" is much, much larger, to include exurbs and even farther flung cities.

[6]Stockholm city, Stockholm urban area, and the Stockholm metropolitan area are all three different measurements, which increase in size and population in this order. The Stockholm urban area constitutes 11 municipalities within 145 square miles, and contains 1.25 million people. Its density is 8,593 people/square mile. I found this measurement most useful to compare to the city of Los Angeles because it acts similarly spatially--American cities, due to a long history of annexation, have taken on the form European

and central Stockholm's density is actually *lower* than L.A.'s weighted density.[xix] Such a

revelation is jarring; how could Los Angeles, a city whose urban landscape is fragmented by

freeways, have the same density of the graceful capital of an ecologically- and equality-minded

welfare state?

Why this confusion? Shouldn't something as seemingly spatially obvious to us as density

and its traditionally associated streetscape be less counter-intuitive? In this, we see a plethora

of urban forms, dazzling in its diversity, and in cities with densities similar to that of Los Angeles,

we see design opportunities for the city. Comparatively dense metropolitan areas have

mitigated some of the transportation and design issues Los Angeles has become rightfully

famous for, the root of which is automobile use. To these cities we might look to for inspiration;

Stockholm, for example, has had success with a public-private model of transit development

that has reduced transit costs immensely. But a word of caution: Los Angeles is a very unique

city.

The diversity of Reyner Banham's four Los Angeles "ecologies" have not been replicated

anywhere else on earth, in characteristics, quality, or magnitude.[xx] Surfurbia, Foothills, and The

Plains of Id—all criss-crossed and connected by Autopia—take up nearly 500 square miles of

land just to encompass Los Angeles city proper. While it may be inspiring to look to cities of a

similar density, as "the density question" informs so much of the discourse around transportation

policy and innovation, it is not always the most useful way to consider Los Angeles' future as it

moves away from the automobile. Referring back to our Swedish doppelganger, Stockholm's

density is essentially identical to Los Angeles', but we could fit three Swedish capitals into the

city of angels. Apart from its sheer size, Los Angeles is also considerably hillier and warmer

than Stockholm, and has no islands within the city. When we look at it this way, we are

comparing arctic apples to California oranges.

"urban areas"--essentially, city-like extensions of the central city, rather than a "metropolitan area," which, like the U.S.,
encapsulates a cluster of cities and their respective suburbs. This data dates to 2000.

The density question is not to be dismissed, however. Density is important in creating a more pedestrian-oriented city. But the Stockholm example shows us that one density analysis does not fit all those cities that, at first glance, have similar density attributes. The factors behind density (and its increase or decrease) must be explored and understood in a city at an individual level with a keen eye for market and cultural trends, and the design of infrastructure to encourage it must be considered at this level as well. The foundation of this approach is design. It has the power to alter the urban experience by injecting a sense of scale-appropriate drama— not one that panders to the automobile, as "Architecture Fantastic" did in Banham's time, but the kind of intimate drama that we instinctively seek as pedestrians.

The point is this: design trumps density. The measure of density, no matter how specifically or sophisticatedly measured, will never take design features--or the *quality* of the density--into account.

L.A. has always valued mobility; in fact, Reyner Banham identified it as its defining characteristic. Cities thrive when mobility is prioritized. The experience of mobility is the main feature and draw of urban living; people live in cities to experience many parts of it, and so attraction to a city requires the ability to move quickly, efficiently, and pleasantly from one place to another. No matter how short-lived its successes, Los Angeles' first mass transit rail system provided this amenity until it was usurped by the automobile. In fact, it is Los Angeles' past as a streetcar city that most pointedly exhibits density's irrelevance in the debate over transit; L.A. has done nothing but grow since its loss of the red cars, when it was an even less compact city, and grows more populous still. The question is not one of "should" we densify, or "will" we densify; density is inevitable, and density means nothing for promoting alternative forms of transportation in a city if it is designed first and foremost for cars. Design affects our perception of what kinds of movement are possible, expanding or limiting our options, first psychologically, and then practically. In Los Angeles, we have moved beyond "the density question"—Los

Angeles is already a dense place, and it will continue to get denser. We ran out of conquerable

wilderness long ago. Now, we must talk about the design question.

Destroying Myths About Los Angeles

The more you look into the layout of the city, the more you realize it consists, increasingly, of long lines of tall business towers, threaded through a sea of little houses. Classic is Wilshire Boulevard, where only a line of parking lots separates it from the residential suburbia immediately behind it. So, something like a million Angelenos could say something you'd never expect ot hear them say: 'I live within walking distance of my work.' But strangely, you have to explain this to Angelenos…

Reyner Banham, in his 1972 documentary *Reyner Banham Loves Los Angeles*

There is a destructive side to all that is creative. In order for Los Angeles to transition from an automobile-dominated landscape to a people-dominated one, some myths must be destroyed, or permanently altered. Myths are powerful. They haunt our history and inform us of our characters in dark periods of confusion and instability. Myths help us to define what resists definition--and cities, with the millions that move through them, are such beings.

An issue with all myths is that they perpetuate themselves, not only through popular media and culture, but often go unexamined in academic circles as well, especially when they are secondary to the primary topic of study. In the study of urban systems, it is easy to let an unexamined myth influence or even dominate the discourse about the future of our cities. In Los Angeles, the unquestioned myth that L.A. is dominated by car culture is detrimental because it affects how broadly we assess the city's potential for change, in turn affecting the decisions we make about the city's infrastructure. Bluntly put, if we assume this is a low-density, car-friendly city and keep on creating policies and infrastructure based on that assumption, the problems that assumption created in the first place will only grow exponentially, because the myths on

which these decisions are based do not align with the reality of the city's population concentration and attitude towards alternative modes of transportation. We must change the argument by dismantling the myths.

A rambling sort of urban form has entered the popular imagination as a trademark characteristic of Los Angeles, along with beach life, superficiality, celebrity culture, and the automobile, amongst many other attributes. Is all this true of Los Angeles? Certainly not, as any Angeleno will tell you. Most of us live miles from the beach, do not obsess over our personal appearance or hob-nob with celebrities in their exclusive enclaves. Such silly ideas are easily dismissed. But Los Angeles' relationship with the automobile is more contentious than these clearly fantastical qualities; it is so ingrained in the popular imagination that Los Angeles has reigned supreme in transit and traffic myths as a concrete dystopia, a page torn from a Futurist manifesto. But little of this turns out to be true. Admittedly, it is true that Angelenos spend more time sitting in traffic than residents of any other American city (Texas Transportation Institute, 2005). But once the statistician gets out of his car, the picture becomes much more interesting. The city of Los Angeles ranks second in the nation in transit ridership[xxi] and is the ninth most walkable city in the country.[xxii] It would appear the only reason we have the worst gridlock in the country is because of a population too high to be accommodated within our existing automobile infrastructure.

Myths abound about Los Angeles, but I am most interested in delving into just one: the "good life" myth, the myth that Banham referred to as the "homesteading dream," in which the "plainsman's house" dominated an automobile-oriented landscape. As optimistic as Banham was about L.A.'s low density development that characterized the homesteading dream, he too saw it for what it was: an illusion. *The Architecture of Four Ecologies* was published immediately following the heyday of the creation and promotion of the good life myth,[xxiii] during the wealthy, conservative culture of the two decades immediately following the Second World War, the myth in which the image of L.A. as a car-centric city has its roots. Banham saw the early indications

of the demise of the homesteading dream in the "dingbat apartments" that continue to dominate much of L.A.'s multifamily housing market—profitable, generally narrow low-rise apartments with tuck-under parking.

> *The dingbat, even more than the occasional tower blocks below Hollywood or along Wilshire, is the true symptom of Los Angeles' urban Id trying to cope with the unprecedented appearance of residential densities too high to be subsumed within the illusions of homestead living. But these symptoms are still quite localized; across most of the basic plain, the Angeleno, his car and his house can still sprawl with the ease to which almost unlimited land has accustomed them. The dream, the illusion holds still...*

At the time of writing, the illusion did hold still--because the dingbat phenomenon was relegated to areas immediately bordering freeways,[xxiv] to act a buffer between the territory of the "Plains of Id" and "Autopia." Dingbats were not only the consequence of an apparent density L.A. was not willing to accept within itself; they were a place to cheaply house those without access to the increasingly expensive suburban ideal of the homesteading dream, which grows more expensive still.

The dingbat and its related forms are now more pervasive throughout the city, and apartment dwelling is now the norm. The image of Los Angeles as a sea of single-family homes and freeways is not rooted in fact. In 2000, only 39 percent of Los Angeles' dwellings were single-family homes,[xxv] and as of 2008, only 22 percent of the city's housing stock was located in R-1 zones[xxvi], meaning nearly 80 percent of the city is zoned for some other purpose other than the construction of single-family homes. Since at least 60 percent of us[xxvii] already live in multifamily housing, it is clear that the "homesteading dream" of the single family home is not essential to life in Los Angeles. The popularity of multi-family housing grows, both out of

necessity and desire for more typically "urban" living. Los Angeles' explosive growth since its inception has left little land to develop low-density housing. In fact, Los Angeles' increasingly compact nature is now necessitated and sustained by the very forces that attracted so many residents and inspired its sprawl--the mountains, the ocean, and the desert keep Los Angeles tucked into its basin and valleys. The only way to go is up. Not only is there hardly anywhere left to develop more single-family housing, it is becoming less attractive to the consumer as well; this past year alone, multifamily home construction was up 63 percent, compared with only an 11 percent increase in the construction of single-family housing,[xxviii] reflecting a decade-long trend towards more compact living in Los Angeles.

The image of Los Angeles as a suburban city is clearly false. The problem of the suburban image is that it "asserts disconnection"[xxix]—and in many parts of L.A., such an element admittedly can be found, due to poor urban design. But it is not due to traditional suburban form. Indeed, the most "urban" fabric of L.A. is visible from nearly all areas where single-family homes dominate--the freeways and major boulevards that criss-cross the city are almost always perceptible, reminding us that we live in a tightly networked place. The stark division of the public and private that characterizes the traditional suburban realm does not exist in Los Angeles. The problem is that most of our public space, in the form of the streets and sidewalks, is of varying quality. But what contributes to the kind of poor urban design we see in these resources is actually most prevalent in our most "urban" infrastructure—our boulevards, our parks—in which we actually have the most potential to recreate the city to be more pedestrian-oriented.

This is not to say that Los Angeles is not a divided city. Indeed, it is--it is divided by income and geography, and strategically placed infrastructure such as freeways. Distinctions such as the Eastside, Westside, the Valley, and South Central are important to the Angeleno's identity. And so the "good life" myth of L.A. cannot be rooted in all of these, but it does borrow heavily from the landscape of the Valley and the Westside. The Eastside and South L.A. have

never been rich or white enough to appeal to the myth, which is firmly rooted in a bygone conservative era.[xxx] However, in the myth's evolution since the 1950s and 60s, the Westside has become a greater part of the myth, in its greater diversity. The image of the Westside appeals to the myth because it is home to a few of the most iconic images of L.A. depicted in popular culture--the beach, the boardwalk, the homes of the rich and famous. It is also less dense, more wealthy, and more car-centric than many other parts of L.A.--all qualities that validate the myth.

There are nearly sixteen miles between Downtown L.A. and the coast. The Westside and Eastside have no officially defined borders, but the Westside appears to begin when density levels begin to drop off and vehicle ownership increases. Observing maps of population and vehicle density,[xxxi] L.A. begins to look like a remarkably "traditional" city, especially in terms of the concentration of vehicle ownership. The population is most dense near the traditional eastern core, where vehicle ownership is very low; and vehicle ownership is much higher in the zone between the coast and about eight miles inland, halfway between Santa Monica and downtown--which appears to overlap with the usual geographic references to "the Westside." While population density is clearly highest in the areas immediately north of downtown L.A. and moderately dense in South L.A. and East L.A., the density levels clearly drop off as we enter the Westside. But the Westside is not devoid of dense population clusters--indeed, the several that exist there are proof that proof that the Westside-centric myth of Los Angeles is less and less true even there. Culver City, Santa Monica, and Wilshire Boulevard, all destinations of future rail projects, are especially dense, and contradict the image of L.A. as a suburban, car-centric city.

There is a division here, in myth and fact; L.A. is clearly fragmented by its geography, but also by other factors. Income[xxxii] plays a role in vehicle ownership; the two clearly overlap.[xxxiii] But this is not surprising in a city that is drastically divided in terms of access to alternative forms of transportation. If one has the income to afford to have a more regionally

expansive lifestyle, one will most likely spare the expense, in order to have access to all parts of the city. It is this manic mobility, after all, that has distinguished L.A. for most of its history.

The Westside-centric myth of L.A. is faltering, mainly because it is so much less true than it ever was before. Density on the Westside grows steadily, as it is doing nearly everywhere.[xxxiv] In all but the most wealthy single-family neighborhoods of the Westside, the "back house phenomenon" is as pervasive in the West as it is on the East; behind rows of closely-spaced single family homes lie rows of even more single-family homes or accessory apartments, plainly constructed, basic dwellings that provide a density that is almost shamefully hidden in areas that appear to be dominated by single-family homes. Across the Westside, aging dingbats line main thoroughfares and at the foot of freeway ramps, and they are slowly being replaced with taller, more slender, and more flashy apartment buildings and townhouses, as they have in more transit-viable areas closer to the large eastern core, such as Koreatown and Hollywood. Like these places did, the Westside also eagerly anticipates rail's arrival to Culver City, and eventually to the sea.

So as this myth crumbles, we must make way for a new one. Urban identities require myths in order to survive. L.A.'s identity crisis has been borne out of its trouble in dealing with unprecedented levels of diversity and density. L.A.'s diversity has always been a source of great conflict and comfort--its past is marked by many incidents of explosive racial tension, and its present continues to be marked by wide economic and social divides.

But despite its past, L.A. is now a remarkably tolerant place. This is not to suggest that lots of economic and some racial segregation is not rampant in Los Angeles, as they are nearly everywhere--more on that later. But diversity is a value in Los Angeles, perhaps originally by circumstance, but now it is deeply ingrained in Angeleno culture. Massive amounts of immigration since Banham's time have forever altered Los Angeles, both culturally and physically. Some argue that we are now living in "the era of the Korean taco."[xxxv] Banham likened Los Angeles to a popular, portable foodstuff in his time as well; "the hamburger," he

argued, was "an assemblage of functional and symbolic elements, or alternatively, a fantasia on functional themes." The Korean taco, like the hamburger, began as quite a basically mobile and plebby phenomenon, but its ingenious blurring of ethnic divisions, accessible to all and sold out of the window of a truck, has grounded the Angel City a bit in popular culture, literally and figuratively. The taco truck, a Mexican tradition appropriated by L.A. food culture, has lit up L.A.'s streetscape with the vivacity of the vernacular--nowhere in Banham's Plains of Id did middle-income young people gather on street corners--maybe even having walked there!--to eat immigrant fare off of paper plates, except possibly on Venice Beach, a place he identified as a uniquely democratically pedestrian-oriented place, the ecology in which the art of "doing your own thing" thrived.[xxxvi] Like the hamburger, the taco truck has been appropriated to create exclusive environments as well--at some food festivals, a $40 taco plate no longer surprises. Herein lies the harshest element of any myth: it has the power to be exclusive. The "Korean taco society" cannot possibly represent all of Los Angeles. But it is a driving force in its development, in that it represents the Millennials that have repeatedly rejected traditional forms of suburbia[xxxvii] and sought alternatives to L.A.'s car culture, most popularly in the form of bicycles, and to those who have access, increasingly in the form of transit.[xxxviii] From a market standpoint, Millennials are also extremely important—as Millennials move on to become home owners or higher-income renters, their choices and desires will strongly impact what kind of residential development comes to dominate L.A.

So the Korean taco, for all intents and purposes, becomes a sort of metaphor—a "fantasia on functional themes." The fantasy of a city defined by diversity and density is there; the marinated beef and salsa are packed tightly and intimately between the folds of the tortilla, the most functional element that holds it all together. But with every taco, there reaches a point at which everything that's been crammed in there starts spilling out every which way, and you've got salsa dribbling down your chin in a place where you pay a premium for napkins. Los

Angeles is a sort of taco, jammed to the gills with a lot of people with nowhere to go but down—

or up.

Two Feet On Concrete: The Pedestrian Experience in Los Angeles

In order to understand major urban design changes occurring in L.A., we must examine the major changes to L.A. culture that are transforming the city. In L.A., the global need to do more with less has been felt as we too run out of resources and look to protect our natural environments. The desire to return to local economies and resources has also strengthened in L.A., evidenced by the popularity of farmers markets and the neighborhood culture in which they have incubated. This phenomenon, while strong in this city, is not unique to it; indeed, this kind of "locavore" attitude now characterizes most progressive cities. Biking has also exploded in popularity across such cities, as the environmental and monetary cost of owning an automobile rises. L.A. has a particular advantage in both of these areas: our sunny Mediterranean climate makes growing food and cruising down streets on a ten speed possible year round.

But issues of urban design abound in Los Angeles. The immensity of the city makes it difficult to embark on any truly effective urban redesign campaign from a top-down, governmental standpoint--indeed, the only way to really efficiently do this is by building an adequate rail structure, around which pedestrian-friendly development will cluster, as it has in those areas that have been fortunate enough to have rail stops. The rail project, as previously mentioned, is a work in progress. In the meantime, however, other features of L.A.'s urban design offer more opportunities for creating alternatives to the automobile and encouraging a pedestrian-oriented landscape. But key to taking advantage of all these opportunities is the prioritization of public space and the encouragement and accommodation of pedestrian friendly design from the public sector.

But ironically, the sheer vastness of L.A. has created a great advantage that will assist it in becoming a great transit metropolis, and a much more walkable one: L.A. developed not from one central core, but many. Its mutli-nodality creates a situation in which there is a constant "two-way all-day flow of demand"[xxxix] for mobility across the city's main corridors, increasing

transit's attractiveness and viability, and increasing the opportunities to capitalize on multiple walkable districts. A second advantage, intimately entwined with the city's multi-nodal nature, is L.A.'s grid system. The grid system, paired with multi-nodality, makes for a perfect potential transit metropolis[xl] as grid systems make transit connections and walking distances comprehensive and visually appealing.

This multi-nodal grid system is characterized by a network of wide boulevards, which we have valued immensely for both reasons of culture and mobility. These boulevards have the power to divide or unite neighborhoods, depending on the quality of their design. Most importantly we often overlook the most opportune quality of our boulevards: they are public space. In the potential of our master-planned boulevards, L.A. has much in common with Paris[xli]—but the quality of these places is compromised by automobile accommodation. L.A.'s boulevards are home to many far-flung "destination" areas, with stretches of pedestrian-friendly clustered separated by areas that are hostile to them, such as Sunset Boulevard. In short, automobile accommodation in these areas keeps them from becoming places more vibrantly populated with people. The root of this is poor design. The boulevard, and its sidekick, the sidewalk, epitomize the public realm in L.A. in the absence of more traditional public spaces such as parks and squares. The public realm needs to be visibly and visually prioritized in order to make L.A. a more pedestrian-friendly city. Visibility and visual components are not the same; visibility refers to access and visual components refer to the quality of design. In our wide boulevards we can increase their level of "publicness" and pedestrian-friendliness by expanding sidewalks, while decreasing lane width for automobiles, and we can create buffers between the automobile and the pedestrian, such as shade-providing trees and designated bus lanes for boulevards that are not served by rail. In short, we must make these "peopled places"[xlii] by scaling them to be more intimate. Los Angeles has recognized this need to better articulate the pedestrian environment, notably through the MyFigueroa Project, a project to humanize the scale of a three-mile stretch of Figueroa Street running from South Park to South L.A., a

traditionally underserved area. This street, most notably marked by the monolithic entertainment complex of the L.A. Convention Center, Staples Center, and garish L.A. Live, is to be transformed by a Dutch firm particularly attuned to what Jacobs calls "the complexity and coexistence of movement" along major streets. Returning to the example of Sunset Boulevard, West Hollywood has also recognized the economic, aesthetic, and urban value of drawing in pedestrian traffic with wider sidewalks, more trees, and other typically successful pedestrian amenities.[xliii]

But it is not only the poor provision of pedestrian amenities on our wide boulevards that contribute the most to a landscape poorly equipped to accommodate the pedestrian; it is the requirement and placement of parking that reinforces and fosters an automobile-centric mindset and spatial reality in many areas. Parking lots are most often set in front of large developments and thus create a relationship of dominance; the pedestrian must first weave through a sea of parking before reaching his destination, usually set at least thirty feet back from the sidewalk. In areas with many developments like this, the great distance between buildings in a landscape very much defined by cement creates a sense of desolation. While the need for parking will never be eradicated in any modern city, it can be managed in such a way to discourage driving by keeping it out of sight, out of mind, and by ultimately reducing its availability and access to surface area. The perception that driving is the norm may very well have a lot to do with the automobile's dominance of the landscape, in that it discourages the consideration of alternative options. From a design perspective, moving parking away from the front of a development moves its importance down a notch in the eyes of the viewer. The public sector has the power to do this not only by changing its parking requirements, but by changing parking design standards.

As Los Angeles becomes less car-oriented (or at least, as it prefers to think of itself that way), this aesthetic of parking dominance becomes less desirable. The basic aesthetic that attracts pedestrians is a simple one: a classic tenet of traditional urban design states that

pedestrians dislike streetscapes that are too tall, too long, or too boring. Variety and scale are

the keys to success in the creation of a pedestrian-oriented environment. The success of the

"lifestyle center" is testimony to a preference for such developments. Rick Caruso's Americana

in downtown Glendale, a sort of posh instant village, hides its parking away underground,

making way to a large square lined with shopping and restaurants, which are topped by

apartments. The development has been derided for its kitschy architecture and hokey

Disneyland-like atmosphere—but it's 99 percent leased, in a down market.[xliv] There is clearly a

desire to live, shop, and eat in environments that are not dominated by the automobile, as

contrived as they may be. In the absence of the public sector's investment in public gathering

places, the private sector fills this void, for better or for worse. Here we see a troubling indication

of underinvestment by the public sector in truly public space—the market fills this void, but at a

cost to the pedestrian realm in that spaces created primarily to engage in luxury shopping

experiences are never "truly" public. Without investment in truly public space, L.A.'s effort to

rebrand itself as more pedestrian-oriented space may suffer for its perceived exclusivity.

Nonetheless, the commercial march toward pedestrian-oriented spaces will continue, given its

profitability. Shopping destinations as mundane as the grocery store have even begun to catch

on to this trend; exclusive markets like Whole Foods and Pavilions[xlv] have avoided the

dominance of parking in front of their stores, and even solidly middle-income Vons[xlvi] and

Ralph's have begun to renovate several stores in key locations, to minimize or eliminate the

large setbacks and large concrete deserts of parking that repel pedestrians. These places have

drastically reduced or eliminated setbacks, and have moved parking to the rear or underground.

In these examples we see the most obvious reason that L.A. is becoming a more

pedestrian-oriented city: friendliness to the pedestrian, or at least such an aesthetic, is

profitable. In a way, L.A. has always been receptive to this traditional element of urban design;

L.A.'s most popular commercial districts most often are characterized by the wide boulevard,

and narrow, varied lots with little to no setback. Hollywood, Sunset, Wilshire, Vermont--the list

goes on. Some of these boulevards began to lose the older, pedestrian-friendly elements of their design as historic buildings were lost, most notably Hollywood and Sunset Boulevards, but in their recent gentrification, this older street pattern has been imitated by both residential and commercial developers, and reinforced by transit-oriented development. West Hollywood has gone so far as to dramatically widen its sidewalks along Sunset, in order to attract not only consumers, but developers as well. In Hollywood proper, remnants of its relatively recent history as a desolate drive of parking lots peppered with the aging shells of historic buildings still survive, especially outside of the area between Vine and Highland, but most are slated for dramatic redevelopment, as the value of land along Hollywood Boulevard's most well-preserved and newly residential section rises.

Existing physical capital that is friendly to the pedestrian is easy to profit from, through both rehabilitation projects and infill development that is already served by existing infrastructure. For this reason, some of the city's oldest neighborhoods, with main thoroughfares that are largely pedestrian-oriented, have been the quickest to gentrify. In this we see several cautionary tales, most notably in the case of Koreatown, which has become the densest part of the city due to the large immigrant populations that have settled there. Drawing comparisons to midtown Manhattan, it is the section of the city that feels most "city-like" to the reluctant transplant Angeleno or those that insist on maintaining L.A.'s urban inferiority complex, the result of constant comparisons to its older, taller, and richer brother New York. It is a unique enclave in L.A., not because it is the only typically "urban" enclave of the city, but because it is the most extreme expression of it. It is one of the few places in the city where nature does not dominate the landscape; here the enormous hills that frame Los Angeles are secondary to the looming high rises over Wilshire Boulevard and 4th Street. The worst effects of gentrification have run rampant here--displacement of some of the large low-income Korean, Mexican, and other populations that have made K-Town home has been an unsurprising side effect of its attractiveness to developers and consumers.[xlvii] What a change from Banham's Los Angeles--for

Koreatown, like most of the areas in the "Plains of Id" he dismissed unenthusiastically as "the place where L.A. is least distinctively itself," was not once even mentioned by name in *The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, for Koreatown only became Koreatown after a massive wave of Korean immigrants and investment flooded the city, demonstrating immigration's profound effect on urban form and culture. In its changing demographics, in Koreatown L.A. is very much itself-- in fact, in Koreatown we see the internal forces that are changing L.A.'s landscape most rapidly and forcing it to confront its identity crisis: access to reliable transit, a strong bike culture, and the large immigrant and yuppie populations that are forced to ruthlessly compete for space in a city without enough affordable housing.

This competition for space characterizes all cities, especially the greatest ones-- attraction to the city places a premium on space in it, especially in a place well connected to all the others. Koreatown is the epitome of such a situation; located in a flat, dry place, with access to freeways, major boulevards, transit, and the capacity to house many people, it is an obvious choice for the aspiring urbanite, not to mention the developer or landlord that has built or maintains his housing. Many parts of the Plains of Id have begun to take advantage of similar qualities; in fact, nearly all stops along the rail system located in flat areas (save parts of the Blue Line and the newest areas of the Gold Line) have resulted in development that mimics Koreatown's, although it is usually on the shorter side. However, transit-oriented development does appear to discriminate not only by location (e.g., Koreatown's flat topography and access to major arterials and freeways, ironically) but by income as well. Troubling is the extremely slow growth along the Blue Line and the East L.A. Gold Line extension, where low-income populations dominate. Once again, we see the exclusivity of the transformation of L.A.'s built environment as it densifies—for it is not profitable to house the poor, especially in parts of the Plains of Id that have been slowest to change since Banham's time.

Banham's "Foothill Ecology" tells a slightly different story from the Plains of Id, however. He was right to point out that L.A. acts as a "traditional city" most evidently in the way in which a

premium is placed on hillside real estate[xlviii]—the higher the altitude, the higher the value of real

estate. L.A.'s foothill neighborhoods are often marked by a combination of flatlands, through

which run commercial boulevards, overlooked by residences on steep hillsides. These areas

have almost always had a diverse mix of residents--the rich have always lived above the poor,

quite literally, in their detached hillside houses. In the foothill neighborhoods experiencing a

regeneration of their main thoroughfares, the rich and poor are separated by topography in

terms of housing, but brought together by the commercial strip, where an exclusive cafe culture,

mingles with the populist market culture of immigrant communities. In a sense, this is, in the

most optimistic assessment possible, the architectural equivalent of the Korean taco. Echo Park

and Silverlake have Sunset Boulevard; Lincoln Heights has Broadway; Highland Park has

Figueroa Street and York Boulevard. Some of these larger neighborhoods do attempt to make a

distinction between their haut and bas districts--sections of foothill areas such as "Montecito

Heights," "Mt. Washington," and "Angelino Heights" have historically felt the need to prominently

distinguish themselves from their flatland cousins so badly, they have implied greater altitude in

their very names. For now, some of these areas still appeal only to the most "adventurous" of

would-be gentrifying residents, but as the streetscape along the major boulevards changes, the

likelihood of these areas becoming more appealing to higher-income residents increases.

So here we bump up against the greatest hurdle in rebranding L.A. as a more

pedestrian-oriented city, once again: there is an exclusivity in this brand, if it is to revolve solely

around for-profit development and real estate. Real estate and commercial development

essentially creates *private* space; the Americana, as open as it may be to Colorado and Brand

Boulevards in central Glendale, is still a highly controlled private space. In L.A., where traditional

public spaces, such as parks and squares, are few and far between, we must capitalize on the

most underutilized resource we have: the street. This is not to say that L.A. should not develop

traditional public spaces; indeed, it is currently in the slow process of doing so in many key

areas, most notably downtown and along the shores of the L.A. River, another place that

presents many opportunities for public space creation. As for the street (or rather, the sidewalk), the important element to understand is that the streetscape is a tenuous grey area, where private development must interact with the multi-way mobility system encapsulated in all the street's features. Here, well-designed infill development presents the most opportunity in the private sector for creating a more varied, pedestrian-oriented streetscape. Infill development is also becoming the *only* kind of development possible in Los Angeles—as mentioned previously, there are few places where greenfield development is even possible or desirable. Infill development must "fill in the blanks" an automobile-dominated landscape has created for the pedestrian.

Density, Vacant Lots, and Filling in the Blanks

Good infill development forces itself to confront context, and an existing "audience"--the people that work, live, and recreate in a given area. Good infill development also often helps to breathe life into an area by offering amenities or design features that other buildings lack, varying the landscape. Paradoxically, infill development also helps to create a more "unified" streetscape, in that it vivifies once-bleak spaces, and creates connections between the surrounding spaces, simply by adding people to them (and very occasionally, a nice building). Essentially, infill development "fills in the blanks".

Areas pockmarked by parking lots have great potential for infill development. The past decade has revolutionized development in L.A., from both a public and private sector standpoint. What is has been truly remarkable has been the amount of development around rail, a major public investment in transportation infrastructure. Since just 1999, four metro rail extensions have opened, with one more on the way in November of this year. Rail has been a major catalyst to making dense infill development a reality in L.A.—such development is even be considered the norm in many areas, except (as mentioned previously) in very low-income areas that have become unfairly stigmatized.

This change in development gears is due to a few key policy changes. Since 2000, nearly 60,000 more units were added to the city's housing stock.[xlix] Strangely enough, only two markets appear to be growing--single-family homes and buildings of 20 units or more! All other categories of housing units have decreased very slightly or stagnated. Is this the death of the dingbat? The revival of the homesteading dream? Or the Manhattanization that anti-density conspiracists fear?[l]

At first glance, an increase of 33,000 units in buildings of 20 units or more does not require much of an explanation--a walk down 12th Street downtown, where new condos have been springing up on previously vacant lots in the popular South Park neighborhood, appears to

explain this away; it follows that such developments appear to be typical in centrally located

areas of big cities. But a walk down Spring, Los Angeles, or Main Streets downtown will reveal

something else--there clearly is an increase of housing units in buildings of 20 units or more, but

many are *not* located in new buildings, as they are in the "instant architecture" enclave of South

Park. The Adaptive Reuse Ordinance, introduced in 1999 specifically for downtown

development, has played a large role in the residential revival in areas filled with aging, non-

residential buildings. The Adaptive Reuse Ordinance facilitates the conversion of non-residential

existing buildings to residential units, with an expedited review process, which often cuts down

on project costs and delivery time. The ordinance proved to be so popular, it was expanded to

areas immediately surrounding downtown in 2002, and citywide in 2003. Density bonuses have

also greatly impacted the growth of high-density housing in L.A. First introduced in 1995, the

state offered a 25 percent increase in units in exchange for a total of 10 percent affordable units.

The law called for less parking in buildings that took advantage of the density bonus, decreasing

the space that must be allotted to it, leaving more space for units. This benefit proved to be

especially popular with developers, as a single parking stall can cost up to $40,000.[li] In 2002,

the law was revised to allow for a density increase of 35 percent in transit zones. Right around

that time L.A. was beginning to experience a major increase in transit availability, perfect timing

for developers to take advantage of the increased density bonus on brownfield sites.

Undoubtedly, the most residential growth has occurred in this high-density sector. But

the growth of single-family homes is not far behind; L.A. has seen an increase of 24,000 units

since 2000. How could this happen? L.A., as we have seen, has little available space left to

develop. The city recognized this--and so in 2004 it introduced the Small Lot Subdivision

Ordinance. The Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance allows lots to be divided in such a way that

houses may be constructed, nearly touching one another, to maximize the amount of units

permissible on a single lot. Space between the houses varies, but it is usually less than six

inches--a far cry from the previously mandated ten feet! The ordinance has proven to be popular

and profitable amongst developers, and its popularity amongst homebuyers is indicative of an interesting reinterpretation of the homesteading dream.

The growth of housing in these two markets exclusively points to a trend that culturally, is not dividing Los Angeles; despite the radically different urban forms they take on, it is an indication that L.A. is coming to terms with itself as a truly urban place. In its history, Los Angeles only really held on to the homesteading dream for an instant. Massive population growth and demographic changes forced L.A. to to psychologically embrace its urbanity long ago, but it had few outlets to do this in terms of residential development, beyond the realm of the dingbat. Creative policy that recognizes the need to do more with less, as these three policies do, are friendly to the pedestrian and the diverse population of Los Angeles in that they force developers to put a premium on shared space in order to sell the development, in recognizing that there is so little of it. For that reason, the quality of design rises in importance and contributes to the pedestrian realm not only visually, but in terms of the social capital it attracts. Although developers create private spaces, they must more directly confront the public in such close quarters, accommodating the pedestrian realm on the street.

In the absence of street improvements and targeted district revitalization, the private sector will continue to fill the void with exclusive pedestrian-oriented shopping destinations. As it stands now, great walkability from a design standpoint is a clustered phenomenon, and within these clusters poorer populations have been displaced as walkable streetscapes become more desirable. The affordability of housing remains at the forefront of the massive issue of displacement.

Promotion of infill development has the potential to flood the market, lowering housing prices, but the invisible hand of the market is not enough to lower housing prices at this rate of development, and it cannot act alone in order to mitigate gentrification. We need policies that make it easier to develop high-density housing (in order to flood the market to lower prices), but we also need policies that replace the affordable housing that is lost as L.A. grows most quickly

in older neighborhoods. The affordable housing unit requirements in density bonuses are not enough to offset the displacement that is inherent in gentrification. Inclusionary zoning is a tool the city could implement in order to prevent massive amounts of displacement that will occur in areas that present opportunities to create profitable, walkable destinations. The key to such development is infill development, managed by a system of checks and balances that does not displace low-income residents—or rather, a method of "accountable" development.[lii]

A Note on Downtown—or, Development in Downtown Los Angeles: A Critical Look Towards the Future

A note on downtown...because that is all downtown Los Angeles deserves.

Reyner Banham in *The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, 1971

The conflict between density and gentrification is a compelling one in Los Angeles. Downtown growth has been associated with densifying L.A., but under the pretense that that is the "traditional" place of density--that that is where density belongs. In Los Angeles, such an assumption is naive and out of touch with the reality of the multi-nodal nature of this city.

Downtown development takes advantage of existing physical capital and easy access to transit and attractions, like other areas that have been quick to gentrify. Great opportunities for density exist all over L.A., and indeed are being capitalized on. As mentioned previously, Koreatown is a particularly prominent example. But as we have discussed, Koreatown presents the classic negative side effect of gentrification: displacement. Gentrification is inevitable in any area that has been targeted for revitalization, because these efforts, while often spearheaded by the private sector, are most effectively realized by the private sector. But by choosing to promote the gentrification of places with less social capital than a place such as Koreatown, gentrification can minimize its impact on the displacement that otherwise would occur. However, this does not mean that the public sector must drastically increase its efforts to replace the affordable housing that is lost in areas with great amounts of physical capital—it merely presents a best practices approach in the absence of policies that would make gentrification more accountable to those who have been displaced (e.g., inclusionary zoning).

Hollywood may be the best example we currently have of such a situation. Hollywood, like downtown, is a district with a long heritage in this city. Hollywood is also a transit rich community; the Red Line stops at three key corners along Hollywood Boulevard. Hollywood/Western and Hollywood/Vine opened in 1999, and Hollywood/Highland opened just one year later, in 2000. Currently, all existing rail lines in L.A. (save the Green Line), converge at Downtown, along with innumerable bus lines, making Downtown an even more transit-rich area than Hollywood. But what is most interesting about the similarities between these two areas is that until recently, their central corridors were quite depopulated. Along these main corridors, there was little housing there to be destroyed, so most residential projects were either new construction or the rehabilitation of vacant buildings, resulting in a net increase of units**,** avoiding *some* of the major pitfalls of gentrification in areas with a long history of high population and strong social capital, such as Koreatown. This is not to say Hollywood has not seen displacement. Without inclusionary zoning (e.g., 1-for-1 replacement of affordable units) some displacement is inevitable; this is one of the most central elements of urban transformation, and is a major pitfall of the Planning Department's and the CRA's development strategies in areas they are actively trying to gentrify.

Downtown is paradoxically both an anomaly and microcosm of major development trends in Los Angeles. It is an anomaly, because like Hollywood and Koreatown, it has dramatically different street patterns from the rest of L.A.—they are older, more humanely scaled. Many of the physical features for a pedestrian-oriented environment are already in place, as several planners have identified in some of the downtown areas that are transforming quickly.[liii] Downtown has a rich alley culture, most evident in its commercial districts, such as Santee Alley. It also has a great number of existing buildings that are attractive to developers for residential and commercial conversion. This makes downtown a perfect redesign opportunity for developers, who have been offered incentives to develop downtown with the allure of CRA funds.

Downtown, has had a highly controlled history of development over the past thirty years. Downtown, after all, is the only reason the CRA ever came to exist in Los Angeles; its first mission was to raze and revitalize Bunker Hill, then a dense, lower-income area that was "blighted." Bunker Hill remained at the forefront of the CRA's downtown rebranding and revitalization strategy until the last decade, when the CRA took on a more holistic rebranding strategy downtown, uniting its disparate neighborhood revitalization projects within the downtown area, and moving the focus away from corporate and commercial development to residential development and its associated amenities.

With dramatically altered missions from the top-down organizations that have historically guided downtown development, most notably the CRA, downtown is now faced with the challenge of attempting to meet this need in an area with a residential population that is increasing extremely quickly. Both Hollywood and downtown are representative of the CRA's efforts to invest in iconic places in order to attract development. Recent reinvestment in downtown L.A. would not have happened without these top-down strategies, which have clear rebranding strategies that present specific visions of new possibilities for Angeleno living. The CRA's promotion of downtown as a transit-rich alternative to automobile-centric living is part of a larger effort permanently to alter L.A.'s image in the popular imagination.

A combination of a new CRA rebranding strategy, major policy changes (most notably the Adaptive Reuse Ordinance), and cultural shift that indicates a "return to the city" approach to housing has dramatically and forever altered downtown over the past ten years. Downtown's population, while still by no means as impressive as that of Koreatown or Hollywood in its numbers or density, grew 43 percent from 2000 to 2010.[liv] This increase in population is largely due to an increase of high-end apartment and condo construction and rehabilitation. This is evident in downtown's median home values, which have soared astronomically over the past decade. From 2000 to 2010, property values increased anywhere from 82 percent in Central City East (an area that includes Skid Row, the Warehouse District, the Toy District, and an

industrial zone) to nearly 3500 percent in largely residential South Park.[lv] An increase of 82

percent in Skid Row is astounding, but is nothing compared to South Park's insanely inflated

home values. Based on these numbers alone, it is clear that downtown living is becoming more

attractive. However, this distinctive gap between Skid Row's census tract and South Park's is

representative of a major divide between downtown's population that pre-dates 2000 and the

more recent influx of residents. Although downtown's population was quite small prior to the turn

of the century, downtown was, and continues to be, most densely populated in Skid Row, where

a large housing-insecure population has historically existed since at least the 1930s.[lvi] This is

downtown's most at-risk and stigmatized population, which explains why property values have

been slower to rise there.

　　　　Perhaps that is why a lot of the most visible residential reinvestment downtown has been

in the neighborhood of South Park, a previously economically-depressed industrial and

commercial district just west of the Historic Core that, up until the construction of the massive

entertainment complexes that now dominate it, was most notable for its car dealerships and

decrepit single residency occupancy hotels. In fact, South Park's only claim to fame, before the

construction of the L.A. Convention Center in 1971 (and more importantly, the opening of the

Staples Center in 1999) was it's having served as the backdrop for the cover of the 1970s Doors

album *The Morrison Hotel,* shot in front of an SRO Hotel of the same name. On the cover of the

now famous-album, the hotel, located in an aging building on Hope Street, advertised one night

stays for only $2.50 (the equivalent of $13.66 in 2009 dollars), indicative of the kind of economic

depression that dominated the area. The folklore of this building has been taken and

transformed by now, as part of the gentrification that is sweeping South Park. The Morrison

Hotel is no longer an SRO, as few remain in South Park; instead, it has taken advantage of Jim

Morrison's brief, if highly visible, association with the building, and now panders to the rising

yuppie population as a gallery and private loft space—a far cry from the South Park Jim

Morrison knew.

Much of South Park has been instantly transformed through real estate development and the changing demographics that accompanied it, à la the Morrison Hotel. But there is no point in yearning for Jim Morrison's South Park. Gentrification is not a wholly good, nor wholly bad force in neighborhoods. South Park is a far more pleasant place than it must have been in 1970; the landscape is not the desolate one of run-down buildings, industrial parks, and parking lots that it was until the late 1990s. South Park is a more populated, if more sterile place now. At this point, we cannot tell how many people have been displaced in the last ten years due to rapid real estate development there. But considering the fact that South Park's population has historically been extremely low, centrally located, yet poorly populated, areas like South Park may present a best practices model for gentrification that encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation and the creation of a more pedestrian-oriented environment, as Hollywood's central corridors remind us.

The catalyst for South Park's rapid transformation has been the monolithic entertainment complex of the Staples Center and L.A. Live (which may soon be joined by a new football stadium), all of which are projects of Denver-based AEG. These projects serve as examples of the poor quality of the private "public" space that has come to characterize downtown's limited gathering places since the CRA began to mandate the creation of communal space in the 1970s with Bunker Hill redevelopment projects. The Staples Center and L.A. Live dominate Figueroa Street and face massive parking lots, which have become a community eyesore, as essentially dead places at the central focal point of the neighborhood. This is evidenced by the reimagination efforts for the space, which revolve around the creation of public space and alternative modes of transportation.[lvii] As a public space, the L.A. Live Complex is both reassuring and disconcerting in South Park, as this massive parking lot's foil. Although it is open to the public, it is a heavily policed, privately owned and operated space that is as over-stimulating as its opposing parking lots are underwhelming. Like a hyper-adrenalized lifestyle center, it is a "brandscape"—it is brashly commercial and as a place primarily to promote global

brands, its disregard for context degrades its degree of "publicness."[lviii] Its design reflects a clear desire to make the act of consumption more efficient, by forcefully drawing attention to brands with flashing lights massive advertisements, and dull seating and gathering arrangements. It says nothing about South Park, or even about Los Angeles; it could be anywhere.[lix] In L.A. Live we see a cautionary tale for the creation of "instant" public spaces that disregard history and context, especially where the brandscape aesthetic dominates any sense of place that might arise from humanely scaled, if unoriginal, design.

This is not to say that instant architecture has no place in the creation of viable communities. Indeed, the "instant" quality of these spaces also characterizes most of the surrounding residential and commercial architecture. However, despite their instant appearance, these developments have created vastly more pleasant, walkable and bikable areas. From an architectural standpoint, little of this residential development is even noteworthy in its originality, but it is intimately scaled , dense, and it has created an anchor location for the growing residential population of downtown. "Instant architecture" has often been derided for being unimaginative in its design, in order to simply provide as much housing as possible in a short amount of time. But some of the most charming neighborhoods of the east coast cities that L.A.-haters pine for were the result of instant architecture of their time—Bostonian examples include high-brow Back Bay and low-brow Mission Hill, and an example from New York includes all of the upper east side—which was developed only between 1885 and 1895.[lx] These places went through an awkward adolescence, marked by an unsettling uniformity in their lack of architectural distinction and sparse landscaping. South Park is experiencing that now. But if Boston's State Street grew out of it, L.A.'s Flower Street can too.

The real challenge, not only downtown, but across the city, is to enhance the quality of the pedestrian realm in areas dominated by large developments like L.A. Live. Downtown, a trend towards highly unimaginative and insular corporate developments, often rooted in an "ecology of fear",[lxi] dominated the landscape. These corporate developments produced a slick,

cold, and unfeeling atmosphere (*L.A. Lost and Found*, 1986), most notably on Bunker Hill,

where the CRA's redevelopment efforts in the 1980s mandated the creation of public spaces.

These spaces are often hidden or inaccessible from the pedestrian realm, and

unaccommodating to the *dérive*[lxii]—the free, unencumbered pedestrian movement through the

city—that the world's most attractive pedestrian-oriented spaces provide. The public spaces

created by CRA-mandate on Bunker Hill are often dominated by a dull color palette, a poor, cold

choice of materials (such as concrete and tile),[lxiii] and a constrained landscape design that only

underscores these spaces' totally inorganic ambiance. Banham argued this kind of Downtown

design ran contrary to the city's youthful, spontaneous spirit; he called downtown architecture of

the 1960s and the 1970s "gutless…[the buildings are] memorials to a certain insecurity of spirit

among timid souls who cannot bear to go with the flow of Angeleno life."[lxiv] Most disconcerting

about these spaces is how hard it is to even find them—often perched on top of parking

garages, or down flights of stairs, they are unapologetically, coldly uninviting. The poor quality of

downtown gathering spaces represent downtown's poor track record in their creation, due to

poor design guidelines and standards on the public sector's part, and a fear of downtown living

and recreation on the market's part. As a part of the decade-old renewed branding strategy, in

addition to encouraging residential development through the use of various ordinances and

CRA subsidies, Los Angeles' Planning Department has adopted more stringent design

standards and guidelines that explicitly emphasize the importance of pedestrian-friendliness and

streetscape amenities[lxv] that the CRA's Bunker Hill revitalization efforts actually explicitly

discouraged.[lxvi] In its redesign guidelines, it addresses not only aesthetic design issues, but

systemic ones as well. Most laudably, it the new downtown design standards actually create

parking *maximums,* usurping the culture of ruthlessly enforcing parking *minimums.* For

residents, this means that access to parking is no longer a given; they must pay a premium for

this amenity. This is indicative of an extremely impactful culture shift in planning in Los Angeles,

a city whose downtown's surface area would be 81 percent parking, if all of its parking spots were laid out across it.[lxvii]

This reversal on the Planning Department and the CRA's part, combined with the market's desire for downtown living, has helped to create more pedestrian-oriented environments in residential areas, but the challenge lies in extending these amenities to areas that do not require the kind of humane scale that residential developments need in order to appeal to potential homebuyers or renters. L.A. Live is an example of such a place—it will attract people for its entertainment amenities, but beyond that it does not have much potential as a pedestrian-oriented space without a dramatic redesign of the streetscape that surrounds it. The public sector has recognized the potential in L.A. Live and the Staples Center's regional relevance, and has embarked on a major redesign project on a three-mile long stretch of Figueroa Street, from South Park to the University of Southern California. Interestingly, its inspiration was European, and is being directed by a European firm; the MyFigueroa project, as it has come to be called, has been given to the Dutch firm Gehl Architects in order to remake what I have argued is one of L.A.'s most undervalued existing amenities: the wide, automobile-oriented boulevard. This desire for a European-style streetscape, in the absence of a specific project, is often misguided and fragments the conversation about how to make L.A.'s landscape more pedestrian-oriented. But with a specific vision to strive for, such a retrofit has the potential to be highly successful.

In the past, it is these kinds of specific visions that have resulted in the most successful CRA projects downtown. Little Tokyo is perhaps the most transformative example of decades-long investment in downtown. Like much of the area, it has been largely non-residential until the last ten years' massive reinvestment in residential development.

Little Tokyo is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Its development began around 1866, when a Japanese restaurant opened on the corner of 1st and San Pedro. The community grew slowly, attracting Japanese immigrants that had come to the United States. In

1906, the community's population exploded due to an influx of Japanese immigrants moving from San Francisco, escaping the damage of the famous 1906 earthquake there.[lxviii] In 1907, Japanese immigration to the U.S. peaked, really establishing Little Tokyo as Los Angeles' Japan Town. A stable residential population put down roots, and flourished throughout the 1920s. Originally, Little Tokyo's geographical area encompassed more than what is defined as Little Tokyo today—it stretched further into what is now the Arts District, Skid Row, and the Downtown Industrial District. But during the Depression, the residential population, and thus its geographical area of relevance, began to shrink and never fully recovered. Between the internment of Japanese during World War II and the move of wealth to the suburbs, Little Tokyo became more and more of a destination, and less of a home.

During the 1950s and 1960s, even more residents began to leave the area, out of fear of major changes within the community, pertaining to both physical and social capital. Socially, downtown was changing and becoming less and less residential, and adjacent Skid Row was gaining a reputation for violence and homelessness.[lxix] The physical capital of Little Tokyo was changing too. In the 1960s, the city planned to widen 1st Street, the main commercial artery of Little Tokyo. In 1963, the Little Tokyo Redevelopment Association was formed through grassroots means and community members rallied to get an official redevelopment for Little Tokyo to prevent such changes.[lxx] In 1970 the city took up the LTRA's cause and the first city-sponsored Little Tokyo redevelopment plan was published. However, the CRA was intent on making Little Tokyo more car-friendly. A major goal stated in the original redevelopment plan was "the elimination of certain environmental deficiencies, including, among others, an obsolete street pattern of dead end and diagonal streets which contribute to poor traffic circulation and to odd shaped and small, shallow lot patterns which prevent proper and economical utilization of the land."[lxxi] Despite the community's efforts, 1st Street was widened, although the buildings on the eastern side of 1st Street remained intact and are now a nationally recognized historical landmark.

Little Tokyo's first redevelopment plan was active 1970 to 2000. This period coincided with increased wealth in Japan, and Little Tokyo found itself in the midst of an economic revival due to overseas investment from Japan, much like Koreatown is experiencing today as a results of increased Korean investment in the area. In the 1970s, the CRA facilitated this investment with the creation of a major Japanese cultural facility, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. The JACCC is a major component of the promotion the expression of Japanese culture a priority in the community, by acting as a regional cultural center for the Japanese community in of Southern California. It has been able meaningful spaces to the pedestrian realm, as well, in the form of Noguchi Plaza, the large open area fronting the JACCC's main building, and the main building's serene gardens. However, these spaces still bear an element of fear in their design. Noguchi Plaza is sparse and somewhat hidden from view from the sidewalk, being slightly elevated and walled off from San Pedro St. The JACCC's gardens, while beautiful, are not visible from the street at all; they can only be accessed by stairs descending down into the garden's fenced hollow, which is locked during non-operational hours. These areas are "truly" public, in that they are not commercial spaces, but they are not always accessible and Noguchi Plaza's sparseness speaks to outdated design principles that characterized so much of downtown redevelopment through the 1990s.

Little Tokyo's most vibrant pedestrian-oriented space was actually the result of private development, facilitated by the CRA. During the 1980s, Little Tokyo saw a number of new, large developments, mainly commercial in nature.. As Little Tokyo is best known for its food, most of these developments consist of restaurants, with the occasional retail shop. Most of these developments are unremarkable—they mainly consist of dull, inward-facing mall developments (such as Weller Court) or bland strip malls (such as Honda Plaza). However, one real gem did emerge during this period of development: Japanese Village Plaza. Japanese Village Plaza is a small, pedestrianized mall that runs between 1st and 2nd Streets. It is a "festival marketplace," a development prototype that was popular in the 1970s and 80s and is now being reinterpreted in

the form of the lifestyle center. It seeks to re-create the feeling of a traditional market square

with intimately scaled thematic architecture. The traditional Japanese theme is evident in the

Yagura Tower, modeled after a traditional Japanese Fire Tower, which was a CRA project

completed in 1978 that flanks the dramatic 1st Street entrance to the plaza. Japanese Village

Plaza is adorned with iconic Japanese images and forms, layered pagoda roofs, and an

understated color palette. Ironically, it re-creates, at the pedestrian level, the exact kind of street

pattern the CRA attempted to eradicate in its original redevelopment plan for Little Tokyo—

Japanese Village Plaza winds around Koyasan Buddhist Temple and a nearby housing

development, and intentionally interrupts the pathway in the center of the development with a

small performance area. Perhaps this is why it is the liveliest part of Little Tokyo on any given

day—it gives the oldest buildings in Little Tokyo (the "original" Little Tokyo) a boost in self-

esteem by acting as a literal and figurative throughway between historical 1st and 2nd Streets.

What is most interesting about Japanese Village Plaza is that it appears to intentionally avoid

the "Disneyland effect"—that is, the visual containment of the viewer's entire experience, the

way the lifestyle center does (such as the "visually complete" experience of The Grove). The

older buildings on 1st and 2nd Streets are visually embraced by Japanese Village Plaza,

whether or not the viewer is inside or outside of the development. For this reason, it is often

considered the "heart" of modern Little Tokyo.

Since that period, development in Little Tokyo has switched gears. While a couple of

commercial developments have appeared since the 80s, they have mostly been small and

unadventurous. What has really changed is the amount of residential development, which is

contributing dramatically to the gentrification and changing demographics of the area.

According to the most recent Census data available, 3,386 people live in Little Tokyo's census

tract, which also includes a small portion of Skid Row.[lxxii] It is a diverse population. Only 35

percent of residents are Asian, and more and more are actually of Korean descent, not

Japanese.[lxxiii] Blacks make up about another 35 percent, and Hispanics and whites are about

evenly split around 15 percent each.[lxxiv] So how Japanese is Little Tokyo, exactly? It is hard to say—some community members recognize that Little Tokyo is becoming less Japanese, but that may be because the Japanese population of Little Tokyo is mainly an aging population. Two developments exclusively devoted to seniors are within the redevelopment area, and the affordable development Casa Heiwa, although not exclusively a senior development, was developed by the Little Tokyo Service Center, an organization whose primary function is to assist non-English speaking seniors in the area, and 40 percent of the development's units are reserved for seniors.[lxxv] New housing developments mainly cater to a young, childless crowd, and Little Tokyo is recognizing the need to maintain the attraction for that population in order to remain economically viable—because Little Tokyo is changing fast. Because of an aging population, Little Tokyo, like South Park, may present a best practices model for gentrification within the existing policy framework. Bringing in a younger, more mobile population is key to keeping the neighborhood economically viable as a residential place. However, the recent development of so many luxury apartments has greatly impacted the community's cost of living. Median monthly rent has risen 25 percent since 2000 in Little Tokyo, and 40 percent in the census tract that contains the nearby Arts District. Median monthly home values have seen an even more dramatic increase—in Little Tokyo, the median home value doubled, and in the Arts District, it rose even more sharply, by 129 percent. This mirrors trends in other luxury apartment-friendly areas of downtown. South Park is perhaps the most extreme and curious example. Median monthly rent has increased by 83 percent in the past ten years, and median home value increased by nearly 3500 percent.

In November of 2009, the Little Tokyo/Arts District light rail station opened on the corner of 1st and Alameda. Light rail stations in areas that present many opportunities for new development are a major catalyst for residential development. Little Tokyo, like the nearby Arts District, has been flooded with high-end luxury housing in just the past five years, and a single developer called Related Companies is responsible for most of it within the redevelopment area.

Related Companies is responsible for the Hikari (2008), a mixed-use apartment building on the corner of 2nd and Central, as well as a half-completed development called "Block 8." Block 8 is an entire block of Little Tokyo, surrounded by 3rd, San Pedro, 2nd, and Los Angeles Streets. Almost the entire block is owned by Related Companies, save a small stretch of unpretentious turn-of-the-century buildings along Los Angeles St, and Casa Heiwa, an affordable housing development completed in 1995 along 3rd Street. In Block 8, Related Companies has built two luxury apartment buildings: Sakura Crossing (2009) and Teramachi Senior Housing (2007). Originally, Block 8 had planned to be developed with two more mixed-use developments, but it appears the poor state of the economy has stalled progress. Where two more luxury developments were supposed to be constructed, a massive fenced-off parking lot languishes along 2nd Street. No one has heard a peep from Related Companies about its plans. Development outside of the official redevelopment area of Little Tokyo has also begun to trend toward luxury housing. Within the redevelopment area, most development has focused on new construction, but immediately east of the redevelopment area, heading into the Arts District, are a number of new and rehabbed apartments and lofts. What is interesting here is that developers within the redevelopment area did not or do not have the chance to take advantage of the Adaptive Reuse Ordinance, an ordinance adapted in 2000 that allows developers to rehabilitate non-residential buildings for residential use, with expedited review. In the Historic Core, the Downtown Industrial District and Arts District, it is clear that developers have taken advantage of this in the last 11 years. The Adaptive Reuse Ordinance has created an interesting mix of both old and new residential developments in these areas a vibe that is much missed in the new residential developments within the Little Tokyo redevelopment area.

Since the construction of Japanese Village Plaza, Little Tokyo has seen little creation of dynamic gathering spaces. One project immediately outside of the redevelopment area that aimed to create such space was the Nikkei Center, an ambitious mixed-use project that would have also resulted in 390 units of luxury housing and thousands of square feet of luxury

shopping—a space that would have been "public," but highly commercial and exclusive in nature. Interestingly, the city owns this site, on the corner of 1st and Alameda, adjacent to the tracks of the Gold Line. This presents a rare opportunity to create truly public space downtown In February of 2011, after it became clear that the Nikkei Center was not going to happen, the city called for a workshop to learn the community's ideas about what should be developed on the site. It has now become the site for the new Regional Connector subway project downtown. At the first workshop, the community members recognized the need to keep attracting young people into Little Tokyo, but no one called for more luxury housing, [lxxvi]reflecting a burning desire for more places to congregate, and their economic significance.

Despite all this residential development, there is still the odd feeling of Little Tokyo being a place where few people live, like many of the older parts of the central city—pointing to instant architecture's potential for success in downtown, even when compared to the rehabilitation of existing physical capital. While wandering the quieter back alleys of many parts of downtown, one gets the feeling of creeping through the hallways of a house that has gone unlived in for a long time. Downtown's street life is confined to just a few key corridors. Little Tokyo is a place with a thriving street life because it acts as a meeting place for a strong regional ethnic community, and has a pleasant streetscape to make spending the day there an enjoyable experience.

So while Little Tokyo attracts Japanese Americans for its history and cultural facilities, it also attracts people from outside of this ethnic community for its intimate street design, restaurants, shopping, and cultural institutions such as MOCA. Lofts and other luxury apartments have begun springing up in Little Tokyo, but they attract a niche of the market whose presence is usually impermanent, affluent, and generally childless. In fact, the 2005-2009 American Community Survey detected only 7 elementary school aged children living in the Little Tokyo census tract. It is doubtful that Little Tokyo is really losing families; it is simply not attracting them. Its neighbor, the Arts District, may or may not be helping the problem. Like Little

Tokyo, it too has seen massive amounts of growth in luxury housing, and Traction Ave has become a hotspot with new restaurants and bars. But the back alleys of this area retain a ghostly industrial feeling, a symptom of simply not being home to enough people. Incidentally, despite the growth in residential development, from 2000 to 2010, Little Tokyo actually lost about 100 residents.[lxxvii] Little Tokyo's density remains low and it acts as more of a destination rather than a place that feels lived in, once one has wandered off the main paths of activity. It is an area in transition, and the Gold Line and Regional Connector will undoubtedly make Little Tokyo a more desirable place to live, growing its residential population. The more eerie factory phantoms and warehouses will most likely be sold off to developers looking to profit, and more housing will result, resulting in increased commercial development as well. But in the interim, it is a still a strange place—less of a permanent community, more of a meeting spot.

The CRA's role in this is obvious in the physical capital that Little Tokyo has been able to develop with its support. Compared with the grungier Arts District and Toy District, within the official redevelopment area, the streets are much more lively and attractive, the design of individual developments more conscious. The CRA has specifically chosen to fund street improvements and subsidizes developments within the redevelopment area, at both the large and small scale, such as façade improvements.[lxxviii]The assumption is the market will follow the CRA's lead, and in some cases it has—the condos on the Arts District's Traction Ave, for example, did not receive CRA assistance. But in other cases, the differences between designated redevelopment areas and undesignated ones are striking; walking up 3rd Street, the physical state and function of the buildings on either side of the street were obviously a result of different levels of investment by not only their owners, but the city as well. On the side outside the area of redevelopment, turquoise paint chipped away at the brick façade of a century-old building, while next door small retail shops sold imported drug paraphernalia and cheap, low quality clothing hung behind the dirty windows of neglected buildings. Granted, the redevelopment side contained two relatively new developments (Casa Heiwa and Sakura

Crossing), but the old building on the corner of 3rd and Los Angeles, although selling cheap goods out of a weathered building like the rest of the Toy District, retained a solid air of respectability in its rigorous upkeep.

Little Tokyo, while just one part of downtown, is important because it quite aptly illustrates the top-down kind of development that has steered downtown's transformation. This top-down kind of development is ruthless in its vision—and that is its greatest strength and weakness. In areas like South Park, we see its strength—an unpleasant sea of parking lots has been turned into an attractive residential neighborhood (despite L.A. Live's unabashed ugliness). In Little Tokyo, the picture is not as clear: while Little Tokyo did have a very small population, the CRA did not stay loyal to the group of citizens that urged its responsible redevelopment—it widened 1st Street, it razed historic buildings, and ultimately imposed car-culture on the street pattern the citizens originally sought to protect. Interestingly, it did not result in massive amounts of displacement of the small population, because 1-for-1 replacement of affordable units was initially part of the practices of the CRA[lxxix]. That element of the CRA's mission has been lost.

With it, the CRA's lack of accountability to residents has only become more detrimental. This lack of accountability permeates redevelopment efforts throughout the city, driving resident resentment. Downtown presents an opportunity to displace few during the gentrification process, thus making the policies that assisted its transformation appear to present a best practices model for gentrification. It may indeed be such a model *within* this system that is not accountable to residents, but that does not mean it is the best system.

Nowhere is this more clear than in Skid Row, Little Tokyo's social and spatial opposite. It has become the great elephant in the room in the discussion about development in downtown Los Angeles. As stated previously, Skid Row has been populated largely by the homeless or housing-insecure since at least the Depression[lxxx]. The city does not have a comprehensive plan to house the homeless here, and that is one of the major obstacles to making downtown a more

attractive place for residents. The city has continually swept the problem of homelessness under the rug by pushing the homeless population into a smaller and smaller portion of downtown, always marching east. In confronting the problem of homelessness downtown, the city has the potential to add a compassionate component to its downtown development strategy. Here, planning might go back to its original ideals of social reform. One of the CRA's main original goals and purposes was not only to redevelop areas for commercial purposes, but to provide affordable housing as well. It still does this, but at a glacial pace—only 20 percent of units in residential developments that receive CRA money are required to be affordable. Due to budget cuts, the CRA will face either complete elimination or a major reorganization of its priorities very soon. In redefining the provision of affordable housing as a goal at its forefront, it might be able to shed the profit-happy image it has created for itself over the last few decades, for which it has been criticized by the governor and others that would have its budget slashed or eliminated. I do not pretend that the CRA or any organization whose primary function lies in transforming the built environment alone can solve all of Skid Row's problems—the problems Skid Row suffers from encompass much more than urban form. The CRA or the Planning Department alone cannot resolve all the issues of the housing-insecure population in Skid Row. Skid Row will probably be slow to gentrify, in the absence of any action taken on the city's part to assist the homeless population—but it will happen, as rising property values tell us. Skid Row, unlike most of downtown, represents a real possibility for displacement and complacency on this issue will not win the hearts of developers or voters on the CRA or Planning Department's part.

Nevertheless, downtown is developing quickly, and I believe it will become home to a much larger residential population. Downtown development may displace less people than development in areas with populations that are already rich in physical and social capital and population, but in order to truly develop a sustainable community in the central city, the city must confront the real problem of housing insecurity amongst its limited low-income population, which has a longer history downtown than the recent yuppie migrants do. It must also maintain the

higher standards it has created for itself in creating quality urban design, not only by requiring

that private developers adhere to them, but by creating truly public space, free from private

ownership and policing, by itself. Admittedly, it has started such projects, in the hope of

promoting the dream of the kind of democratic, open, and lush downtown that other world class

cities enjoy, most notably in the form of the Civic Park Plaza project—a project that is still, after

over two years, under construction. The hope is that the increased residential population

downtown will be the catalyst for the creation of meaningful public and private spaces

downtown, as it has been in Hollywood and Koreatown. In L.A.'s transition away from the

automobile, downtown has the potential to become a symbol of a newly democratized urban

landscape, in its transit-orientation, density, and humanely scaled streets, but only if it follows

through with the creation of truly public spaces.

The Tipping Point

And what comes next? The freeway system is not perfect—what transport system ever is?—and even though it is vastly better than any other urban motorway system of my acquaintance, it is inconceivable to Angelenos that it should not be replaced by an even better system nearer to the perfection they are always seeking.

Reyner Banham in *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies,* 1971

"(500) Days of Summer wouldn't have made sense in our parents' generation. It reminds me so much of 2009," sang Joseph Gordon-Levitt, star of the 2009 summer blockbuster (500) Days of Summer, to a New York Magazine reporter soon after the movie's release[lxxxi]. The movie, a romantic comedy about two young people in a "hook up" relationship—a relationship with no physical or emotional definitions or boundaries, all too familiar to the under-30 crowd and all too alien to many outside of it—takes place in downtown Los Angeles.

Much has been made of its portrayal of the younger generation's rejection of traditionally defined romances. But just as importantly, its dazzling setting has not escaped its audience— downtown L.A. is, in a debatably un-nostalgic fashion, "playing itself." The film's main characters, lovers Tom and Summer, are young, transient, and live, work, and play in L.A. Only one scene takes place in a car; two take place on a bus, two on a bike—and much more on foot within the city. Angel's Knoll, a small, intimate park that overlooks historic downtown and abuts Angel's Flight, a miniature homage to L.A.'s original streetcar system, becomes a character within itself. The object of the protagonist's affection is a slim, pretty girl who has come from Michigan in search of excitement, much like the Midwesterners who came to Los Angeles to buy up the cheap subdivided housing that now characterizes so many of the city's older

neighborhoods. But the characters and their friends are decidedly not of the generations of yesteryear that founded and formed the city we have today. They do not look, live, or love like their parent's generation.

To young people everywhere, the uncomfortable lack of definition and downward spiral of the development of Tom and Summer's relationship painfully resonated on a personal level. To the young Angeleno, or young L.A. transplant, *(500) Days of Summer* represented an idealized version of what the city could be—and the state of Tom and Summer's relationship becomes a metaphor for Los Angeles in flux today. Spontaneous and poorly planned, fuzzy in its origins, seemingly never ending (and thus indefinable) in its breadth, part fantasy, and so much more than the sum of its parts—that is Los Angeles.

The image of Los Angeles is immensely important in its redefinition. In popular culture, L.A. is still largely portrayed as a car-centric city, despite *(500) Days of Summer*'s critical and financial success. It generated an excitement in Angelenos that recognized another face of their city, but these same Angelenos also recognized that the world of Summer and Tom was also necessarily limited. The furthest the two protagonists stray from downtown's historic core is IKEA in Burbank, a self-contained fun house that all viewers understand always feels a bit out of context anywhere. The suburban warehouse feel inherent to IKEA outlets is underscored by Burbank's distance from downtown. The transit-minded Angeleno cannot help but wonder how they even got there. The quaintness of *(500)*'s portrayal of Los Angeles is both its biggest strength and weakness—the image is appealing, as it presents L.A. at a remarkably human scale often overlooked in other popular portrayals of Los Angeles. But it is also debilitating. Los Angeles' has never had just one core; downtown L.A. is just one of many. But the current reality for those that eschew automobile use in Los Angeles means that our urban orientation must face downtown to one degree or another, as recent transit infrastructure development has revolved around it. In order to accommodate the new myths peeping through in Tom and Summer's failed romance, we must allow the image of transit-viability and walkability to grow

through the expansion of the infrastructure that accommodates it, by allowing the infrastructure to move beyond its downtown focus.

"And what comes next?" asked Banham. Go west, young man.

To restate the obvious, this study has not only been about pedestrians. That is because we cannot talk about pedestrians in Los Angeles without first confronting the issue of their greatest ally in a city of this size: rail. Rail has been at the heart of the debate over this changing city's direction nearly since the day the last streetcar stopped running in 1963. L.A. has recommitted itself the reconstruction of its railways, but remains a city whose residents with access to a car still primarily rely on the automobile for basic transport.

What will it take to get people to ditch their cars? The dream of the subway to the sea is a calling. Inaccessibility to the sea and everything between it and downtown is currently the greatest hurdle that rail's success faces in this city. Rail can only be taken seriously as an alternative primary mode of transportation if it is truly viewed as a city-wide system. A critical mass of people that believe in the efficiency of such a system, and make good use of it, is crucial. Until tracks are laid one end of the city to the next, obtaining such a critical mass is not possible. Rail must both embrace and reject the massive myth of Los Angeles, by prioritizing what is real and what is not; the ocean is a vital ingredient to the myth, while the freeway is not. Until the Expo Line reaches the Pacific and trains swoosh below Wilshire, our great "linear city" that unites the east and the west[lxxxii], rail will merely remain a cute notion in the eyes of many Angelenos, and they will continue to spend hours on the freeways as they are denied access to the dream of a city developed at human scale, encapsulated in (*500) Days of Summer*. Broadening access to this dream is a vital component of making Los Angeles a less car-oriented city.

L.A. is far too vast to ever accomplish what eastern cities have with their extensive rail systems. But a desperate yearning for eastern cities that developed around cow paths is both

misguided and useless. L.A. is a different kind of animal; in its immensity there is great fervor for complexity and change. For this reason, it is entirely possible to make L.A. less car-oriented by having other modes of transportation, such as walking or biking, pick up where rail leaves off. L.A.'s burgeoning bike culture is perhaps its greatest asset as we prepare to enter an age in which the accomodation and promotion of alternative forms of energy consumption are absolutely necessary to a city's growth and survival.

Part bicycle popularity's strength as an asset is that it is a primarily cultural phenomenon. Metro can stall projects, the CRA may go bankrupt, the mayor may not keep his promises. But none of that can keep a bicyclist from hopping on his bike. This, combined with the limited rail infrastructure we do have, is a powerful force. In fact, when the Expo line arrives to Culver City later this year, that is the exact situation we will have, for the time being: from the corner of Venice and Robertson, it is only a short ride down to the river, where the bicyclist can ride all the way down to the sea, uninterrupted, until the river gives way to ocean, and the very end of America has been reached. And then that is all there is.

Rebranding Los Angeles: Policy Recommendations for a City at a Crossroads

So we destroyed the myth. We picked apart the numbers; we delved into boxes of other images, alternative ways of experiencing this city. But the image of L.A. as a car-centric city in the popular imagination lives on. What will it take to vanquish such a detrimental myth, in order to really change the way people move around this city?

Image is powerful. It is in image that branding derives its immense power over how we think of ourselves and our possibilities. "Brand" is most typically first and foremost a commercial tool, and the use of such overtly capitalist language in a discussion about the future of this city may seem jarring. But if the post-political era has taught us anything, it is the power of brand. In the world of New Media, speed, movement, and image have more power than ever, and the modern brand is reliant upon those three qualities in order to succeed. Brand is, essentially, identity linked with consumption, which is why it is such a powerful element of capitalism. So in order to "rebrand" L.A., we must prioritize the ways in which we want to change the way people "consume" the city, which is reliant upon what people think the city's identity consists of. The "consumption" of a city is essentially experiential—it combines not only our preconceptions about what a city is (its "identity" but the practical and sensory information it feeds us in the form of experience. Developers already know this, which is why the new development of innovative physical capital that shifts the experience from a more automobile-dominated one to a people-dominated one is a key component in the rebranding strategy of Los Angeles.

Cities, like people, have constructed identities. The difference between an individual and Los Angeles is about 14 million—that is to say, perception of an urban identity and the

multiplicities of such an identity are not ever exactly the same, but they inevitably depend upon one another, in that all of its residents and users individually assess the city's meaning and then reassess it within social networks and the city's existing infrastructural framework. Understanding this assessment is key. How does one assess the urban experience, and how does the collective reaction and memory of this shape the city's identity?

These are pressing questions for the city today. Cities compete for investment resources, from both companies and individuals, in many forms. In the absence of large-scale public support (i.e., from the federal government), cities are forced to promote themselves the way a private company might. The dire consequences have become glaringly obvious in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis: attract large amounts of private capital to the city and keep it there, or go the way of Detroit. This becomes especially evident in urban design in Los Angeles[lxxxiii], where the "private" bit of "public-private partnership" has clearly gained the upper hand in design, especially of public spaces, as the disastrous example of corporate public space development on Bunker Hill tells us[lxxxiv].

L.A.'s continued relevance in a global society depends on its ability to innovate and attract investment, not only from businesses, but from individuals as well. The public sector has accommodated the market to create places that are appealing to those people through policy changes in real estate and commercial development, but the public sector must also do its part by creating the public spaces that pedestrians need in order to for the public realm to thrive. In the creation of these spaces, the city creates even more opportunities to rebrand itself, and attract investment not only from the outside, but renewed investment from the inside as well.

Los Angeles must rebrand itself in order to sell itself. In order to sell something, a need for it must be created. As the global center of the entertainment industry, that position is secured—for now. But as talent and resources become more mobile, especially amongst Millennials, L.A. will have to become more appealing not only to attract outsiders, but to keep its current residents here as well. In order to do that, the city must figure out how to fill the voids in

the urban experience—it must satiate the desire for a better networked, "more livable" Los Angeles, a subjective term wrapped up a varied array of visions that reflects the diversity of Los Angeles, which is both an opportunity and a challenge.

A clear focus on concrete goals, values, and vision is key to a successful rebranding strategy[lxxxv] in order to make this effort appealing to as large a group as possible in the most just way possible. The concreteness of these elements must be encapsulated in visible projects, through which the city may define a "more livable" Los Angeles as one that accommodates and promotes the use of alternative forms of transportation and the creation of more pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.

The creation of a viable vision, legitimized by the completion of projects that promote the goals of pedestrian-friendly development, is key to successfully rebranding L.A. In the past, Los Angeles has branded itself through its most visible industry: the entertainment industry. When L.A. established itself as the global entertainment capital, it immediately took to the streets. Charlie Chaplin danced down the streets of downtown during his reign in the silent movie era, one of the most memorable images from this time being 1921's *The Kid*, shot on Olvera Street. In 1937, Shirley Temple gushed with excitement in a film advertisement for a new branch of the streetcar line, then the largest streetcar system in the world. When the streetcars disappeared, Los Angeles played New York when New York couldn't play New York. But at the same time, when Los Angeles played Los Angeles, images of a dense urban core were Gone in Sixty Seconds, lost to ferocious freeways.

Hollywood, as a crafter of brand, is as prone to fantasy as any of its audience. If Los Angeles seems part fantasy, that's because it is. Who can tell us what the real Los Angeles is? It lies in the subjective 14 million that fill and surround it. But formal and informal branding strategies have always informed the fantasy. Brand is a successful tool because it inhabits a strange place between reality and dreams, firmly rooted in image, that exploits our desire to define the indefinable, much like Hollywood.

For now, we cannot leave it to Hollywood to be the primary promoter of L.A. as a car-oriented city, although it will be a powerful ally. Banham recognized this particular power the entertainment industry had in shaping L.A.'s identity: "There is a particular authority...through the eyes of Hollywood," he wrote, suspiciously. Film is as seductive as *(500) Days of Summer'*s female siren Summer Finn, but it can also be as flighty. If Hollywood is to aid the city in its redefinition as a less car-oriented city, the city must be proactive by literally, explicitly redefining its goals and values set in a focused, formal rebranding strategy, so that these values come to be associated with a renewed urban form that caters to the pedestrian, rather than the automobile.

These values and goals must be wrapped up in the form of a vision. The vision the city seeks to promote must be one that not only transit-, bike-, and pedestrian-friendly, but one that must balance being Millennial-friendly and family-friendly. The tension between these two groups, as usual, emerges in the conflict inherent to gentrification—which is why L.A. must redefine its value set in its rebranding strategy, and promote and enforce strategies of "accountable" gentrification[lxxxvi]. There are three prongs to this redefined values set: diversity, democracy, and compassion. Diversity is deeply rooted in Los Angeles' history and culture, and only grows more relevant, as Korean taco eating Millennials are evidence of. Democracy and compassion are the real caveats here: in the dramatic transformation of L.A.'s urban form through increased access to alternative forms of transportation and more densely clustered nodes of activity, L.A. has the opportunity to destroy its reputation as the exclusive, segregated, fragmented dystopia that influential academics like Mike Davis have promoted[lxxxvii]. A more pedestrian-oriented city has the power to positively impact L.A.'s image by making it appear more democratic. Pedestrian-oriented development is essentially about the spontaneous congregation of people—although they may not create completely inclusive environments (re: the lifestyle center as "enclave"). There are many complex obstacles that face the promotion of these values whose solutions lie far beyond the confines of the built environment, especially for

working-class families, most notably job quality and school quality. I do not pretend that the answers to these problems lie in the construction of new buildings, train stations, or whatever urban amenity that contributes to the "pedestrian" realm—indeed, that will be one of the major limitations of this rebranding strategy, if it is not able to incorporate other policies that ameliorate these quality of life issues that keep L.A. from being perceived as a humanely scaled family-friendly metropolis.

However, the discussion of the built environment does encompass a major quality of life problem at which the values of "diversity", "democracy," and "compassion" converge: housing insecurity. The high cost of housing in Los Angeles is the main reason displacement runs so rampant in the gentrification of our neighborhoods; with already high housing costs in many neighborhoods, working-class individuals and families are especially sensitive to even the slightest cost increase. The most extreme example of housing insecurity in the city that rightfully challenges the promotion of the values of "compassion" and "democracy" is the city's large population of the marginalized homeless clustered in the Skid Row neighborhood of downtown. If L.A. is able to house and help its homeless, compassion and democracy have the potential to be a hugely visible component of its rebranding strategy, and would also help to meet the city's decades-old goal of downtown revitalization by altering the reputation of the industrial district that Skid Row inhabits. But if the city blindly adopts these values as part of a focused, formal rebranding strategy but does not address the issue of housing insecurity for its most marginalized residents, the rebranding strategy will fail and be criticized as a cheap appeal to real estate developers and wealthy homebuyers—because in the absence of an effective model for accountable gentrification, that is exactly what it will become.

These visions and values in the rebranding strategy contribute to the creation of a new myth for Los Angeles, the one that a generation that rejects an automobile-dominated urban form yearns for and is in the process of constructing. But these visions and values cannot stand alone; they must be validated by infrastructural projects that confirm and reinforce them. The

clearly defined goals of this rebranding strategy can be categorized as follows: 1) alternative transportation innovation, 2) humanely scaled and designed private development, and 3) similarly scaled and designed public space development.

These goals must be embodied in specific projects in order for the public to have faith in them. Mayor Villaraigosa recognized the tremendous opportunities L.A.'s position at a crossroads embodied when he entered office in 2005, and immediately began a campaign to rebrand L.A. as "the greenest city in the country" in order to attract investment from employers, and reinforced this campaign with residents by embarking on a major ecological makeover of some of the most visible city services, most notably the Department of Water & Power and waste management systems[lxxxviii]. With the same fervor with which he kicked off his Green L.A. campaign, the Mayor has relentlessly promoted his 30/10 Plan—the plan to construct 30 years' worth of transit projects in just 10 years—and has been able to take advantage of the Expo line's debut to identify as it as a turning point for Los Angeles. For this reason, 30/10 is the ultimate vision—it combines the fantasy of a complete L.A., served by rail, with the reality of the Expo line, finally breaching the gap between east and west, and a long-held dream and reality.

In the transportation realm, there are several reasons I believe a well-executed rebranding strategy will be successful. The public cost of automobile infrastructure and the private cost of owning an automobile have gotten more expensive. In fact, many things have become more costly, relative to earnings, thanks to the Great Recession. Despite major budget pitfalls, the Great Recession is actually an opportunity that assists, rather than deters, the mission to remodel L.A.'s image, development patterns, and mobility habits. Culturally, the Great Recession is an opportunity because it has forced us to reassess our values. It is easier to convince people we are in need of great change to our society when we are forced to confront the reality of having less. As the price of owning an automobile rises, people are more likely to view as a luxury, rather than a necessity. People also put a higher premium on living in centrally located places for this very same reason. Some of this is economic, some of this is

cultural (e.g. *Retrofitting*)—after all, as we have seen, dense housing developments' popularity and rail fever began in the boom years, meaning the Great Recession cannot be soley responsible for their rise.

Some say the Great Recession is over, as unemployment has slowly dropped in many areas over the past few months, but interestingly, the use of alternative modes of transportation seems to have less to do with unemployment and more to do with gasoline prices. According to Metro's boarding history, transit appears to do well when the economy is good and gas prices are high; L.A. County Metro ridership peaked in 2008, right before the bubble burst[lxxxix], and dropped off slightly as unemployment and gasoline prices fell. But now that unemployment is decreasing and gas prices are reaching 2008 levels, people are much more inclined to take transit. With a job to get to while the cost of and automobile ownership increases, people seek out alternative modes of transportation[xc].

So here we have one of the most important elements of the rebranding strategy: alternative modes of transportation must successfully compete with the automobile. A major goal of the transportation strategy must be to get people to ditch their cars—or second to that, use transit when it is more convenient (by making it more convenient!). The automobile already has one strike against it, which is its cost in this fragile economy. But it has a major advantage: despite even the astronomical amounts of traffic L.A. is famous for, its convenience is currently unparalleled. As it stands today, the closest we might come to it would be the bicycle, which in traffic is often faster and at off-peak hours considerably slower. The use of the bicycle, however, is attractive in that it does not cost a dime, aside from the original investment in the vehicle and the occasional repair. The bicycle, as a symbol, has come to represent an upsurge in discontent with L.A.s automobile-centric urban form. As a sort of renegade underdog, is has become an important icon amongst Millennial Angelenos, as an image that embodies the freedom and spontaneity of L.A.'s spirit that the freeway represented for Banham[xci]. The bike is both trendy and populist; not only do well-heeled hipsters ride bikes as an alternative form of transportation,

but those priced out of automobile use, such as L.A.'s large, largely minority working classes, rely on the bicycle as an affordable primary means of transportation.

But compared with the bicycle, transit isn't as sexy; it is considered slower, less autonomous—a bit old-fashioned, fixed in its ways. If the goal of the rebranding strategy is to convince people to ditch their cars, transit needs an image makeover. In every city, there are the transit-dependent—those that use transit because they cannot afford or drive an automobile—and then there are discretionary riders, the people that have a choice between their independent means of transportation and public transportation. This population is Metro's largest untapped market, a sector that will only rise in importance as the price of owning an automobile increases and they seek alternatives.

Convincing discretionary riders to use transit is difficult if the image of transit they hold in their minds is one of a slow, inefficient, and inaccessible system. In order to convince discretionary riders otherwise, a good rebranding strategy must combat this image by providing an alternative one not only in its marketing, but on the street as well, by prioritizing transit in the public realm. Often, the debate around transit development comes down to a rail vs. buses issue—where should we invest our limited funds? This question presents a misguided attempt to dichotomize the argument.

As stated previously, my sincere belief is that L.A. must have tracks running from either end of it for transit to really acquire the kind of prominence the automobile has as an integral part of Angeleno identity and Los Angeles' urban experience. First of all, rail has an innate attraction that buses do not have—it is constantly perceived as safer, more reliable, and more pleasant than buses, even if reality runs contrary to experience[xcii]. Second of all, rail is necessary for two reasons: it more efficiently moves its passengers[xciii], and it becomes a more permanent fixture in the urban landscape. By the nature of its fixed route, stations and the actual tracks themselves are constant reminders of rail's relevance to an area. That is why the 30/10 plan has captured the support and imagination of so many—it represents a major

infrastructural investment that neighborhoods can literally grow around, a growth in development that people can actually visualize. Station design becomes a community effort, and transit-oriented development has the immense power (and sometimes, responsibility) to recreate or redefine community centers. The subway to the sea, along with subsequent rail projects, will certainly better transit's image problem in this city, but it will only partially solve the actual and perceived accessibility problem that transit has. For this reason, the rail vs. buses debate must be reframed. L.A. needs them both to successfully move people around this city and in order to rebrand itself.

Despite the inherent attraction of rail, buses will continue to be the main way people move around this city. Buses are cheaper and much faster to implement than rail, and can serve areas without the density or population to make rail expansion politically tenable. L.A. already has an extensive, reliable bus system, which is a mixture of short-range Local buses, and long-range Rapid buses. Locals have more stops than Rapids, and are usually better suited for short trips or to more remote locales. Rapids are limited-stop lines that debuted in 2000, and tend to run along major thoroughfares. It is the Rapid system that is most useful to a viable, cohesive rebranding strategy, not only because of its speed and great potential for even greater success, but also because the Rapid system's debut coincides with many of the policy changes that have so dramatically altered L.A.'s real estate and commercial development over the past decade.

For the bus, remaking its image will be much harder, because buses do not loom large in our imaginations, the way trains do (Richmond, 2005). Because of their variable routes buses are a less visible component of our streetscape; most lack the kind of branding iconography, allocation of space, and environmental design that rail is afforded. By prioritizing buses as a positive and valued streetscape amenity, we can recraft their image, accessibility, efficiency, and heighten their attraction.

The greatest opportunity L.A. has within our existing bus system is to better promote the system of Rapid buses as a fast, efficient, and pleasant alternative to rail, by dramatically

altering the street design that serves it, and by expanding Rapid service to include the extensive schedules that rail enjoys. In fact, this was the Rapid's original intent; although it never explicitly sought to replace rail[xciv], it sought to mimic the efficiency of rail within Metro's tight budgetary restraints. For the transit dependent, the Rapid system has mostly been a welcome innovation, although it has been criticized for decreasing access to those who have had Local lines cut, to be replaced by limited-stop Rapids[xcv].The Rapid system is by and large faster and more efficient than Local buses, and has the potential to have major appeal for discretionary riders. However, the Rapid system faces a major obstacle in the promotion of its brand. Rapid buses, despite their popularity and distinct image, are poorly accommodated on our streets, keeping them from acquiring the prominence and respect of rail.

The Rapid system has benefited from a focused branding strategy since its inception, but the brand's integrity has suffered from limited service (as many lines are cut on nights and weekends), their lack of visibility on our streets[xcvi] and the fact that they are not always as "rapid" as they ideally would be during the hours of peak surface street traffic. If Rapids are to have to respect and prominence of rail in the Angeleno psyche, they must acquire their own territory on our streets, for both the sake of efficiency and the promotion of the service in the form of designated bus lanes. The fact that they run along main thoroughfares is one of their key strengths; this already puts them center stage on L.A.'s streetscape. This means they often intersect at busy intersections, where activity levels and visibility are high. The Miracle Mile serves as an example here; at corner of Fairfax and Wilshire the looming red mass of Rapids has become a regular part of the landscape, as the 780 bustles north and south along Fairfax and the 720 hurries east and west along Wilshire. But this corner has also come to represent the limited quality the Rapid brand is afforded by the constraints of the area's transportation and street design. The 780, which runs down Fairfax, comes every ten to twenty minutes, but its signage is nondescript and few bus shelters are available to its passengers. It might get you to Hollywood or Pasadena pretty quickly, as it was originally intended to do—but only if Hollywood

Boulevard and Colorado are not clogged up (a fantastic occurrence that requires a divine alignment of the stars). The 720 Rapid, which runs down Wilshire, has the best signage of all of our Rapid lines, and prominent bus shelters. But it is packed to capacity at almost all hours, and must languish in traffic just as any other motorist must down our most congested boulevard. Even with limited stops, it cannot possibly compete with the automobile if it is forced to go as slowly as one on a street that is almost always filled with traffic.

Here we have the bus' biggest stumbling block: most of the problems that keep Metro from successfully rebranding its services as a viable alternative to the automobile have to do with the speed of its services, because the bus is forced to act like a giant automobile, for which the rider must wait. Almost always, it is faster to drive than it is to take transit, except in the rare case that the rider is lucky to have a starting point and destination that are both served by rail. That is why rail has been, and continues to be, extremely popular. In L.A., BRT has the same potential, if only given the resources to capitalize on it. In any big city, space becomes a highly valued commodity. We see that in our high rents, our congested boulevards and freeways, and the standing room only status of the 720. If some automobile space is sacrificed for the sake of Rapid transit in the form of the designated bus lane, the true power of the BRT could shine through as motorists proceed at a slow creep down L.A.'s major arterials, while the bus whizzes by. This is the single most important thing Metro can do to promote its bus services: it must literally give its services the space to succeed. Discretionary riders will only be convinced to ditch their cars if the automobile's efficiency begins to visibly pale in comparison to transit's on our surface streets.

The viability and attraction of a mode of transportation is an issue not only of efficiency, but of convenience. The challenge of convincing discretionary riders that transit is fast and efficient is difficult enough in a city where a car-centric myth of (im)mobility and identity dominates. Obstacles of convenience only make it that much harder to convince them to embrace transit.

A major issue of convenience for transit in L.A. is the Transit Access Pass (TAP) card, L.A.'s electronic fare pass, commonly referred to as a "smartcard." L.A. was late to jump into the smartcard game; it did not have any form of electronic fare passes until 2008, when the TAP card was introduced as an alternative to the old-fashioned paper pass. Up until very recently, that has been the TAP card's only function: to serve as a daily, weekly, or monthly pass. This has been mind-boggling for a few reasons. First of all, for a rider that had always had a pass, the experience of using a TAP card was no different than the experience of a traditional paper pass (except that after a few months of testing, online pass purchase was made available as an option, replacing the old-fashioned automatic mail delivery option). Second of all, this single use of the TAP card missed the most important attraction the smartcard has, especially for the discretionary rider: utilized to its full potential, the electronic fare pass frees the rider from the cumbersome need to use exact change, calculate all of the day's trips, and allow the rider to use the internet to ensure that their pass stays loaded up, so that they may continue to move throughout the city without the worry of running out of transit funds. The smartcard lends a spontaneity to transit use, and has major potential to become a centerpiece of a major rebranding strategy to promote Metro's services. Even Metro recognized this; its ad campaign for the TAP card has been so well-funded and well-designed, it is astounding that Metro did not take advantage of the opportune time of its debut to take advantage of capturing the discretionary rider market in 2008, when transit ridership was peaking due to high gas prices. By neglecting to include this cash purse feature (or "stored value" option) that is characteristic of the most successful electronic fare passes throughout the country (such as Boston's or New York's), Metro shut out its biggest untapped market for almost three years: the vast market of discretionary riders looking for alternatives to their cars. It was not until January of 2011 that Metro introduced a cash purse option on its TAP card, and until late March of 2011, this was only an option at a *single ticket machine* at Union Station. At the time of writing, the stored value option has been expanded to some, but not all, Metro rail stations. The discretionary rider still

cannot load up a pass online or on a bus. In a world where technology and ease of use rule

supreme, Metro cannot afford to lag so embarrassingly behind in what are simple software

issues[xcvii]. It must promote transit as a convenient alternative to rail by actually increasing its

convenience through the widespread provision of the stored value feature, by making TAP

cards and stored value purchase available at all transit stations and online, and lastly, by

promoting the cash purse feature to discretionary riders in a focused advertisement campaign.

Even for more dedicated transit riders, issues of convenience dominate the discussion

about how Metro's system could be improved. As branding is essentially a tool used to sell,

Metro must know what people *want* in order to most successfully sell its services. As Metro

finally rolled out a stored value option on its TAP card, Metro's blog, *The Source*, conducted an

experiment in order to detect other areas in which service could be improved. *The Source*

asked, "If you could change on thing to improve your transit experience, what would it be?"[xcviii]

The top three answers were issues of convenience. Number one was frequency, an issue that

can only be solved with increased service in order to combat the convenience that an

automobile offers—after all, one never has to wait for their automobile to arrive. The importance

allotted to this issue underscores the need to hone in on the most effective and frequent routes,

like those of the Rapid system. The issue of frequency is an enormous problem to be solved,

and can only be remedied with increased service in key areas and the kind of dramatic street

redesign that designated bus lanes would offer. The next two most popular answers, however,

had more to do with technology and the information age mentality more and more transit users

seem to exhibit[xcix]: real time alerts and the TAP card. The value riders place on these things

highlights the role that speed, convenience, and easy access to information plays in our daily

decision making processes. Armed with a cell phone (and increasingly, a smart phone) and TAP

card, the discretionary rider is one step closer to considering transit when the information that

makes it easier to use is more accessible. L.A.'s rebranding strategy must embrace these tools

of the information age. The fact that Metro still has a cumbersome website, no Android

application, and no real time alert tool accessible on the web or via text messaging may seem superficial and excessive, as these tools only appeal to a certain kind of constituent. But this is a growing sector of Metro's market, not only because more yuppies ride the bus now, but because more transit-dependent people have access to this kind of technology as well. The importance and accessibility of information age technology are growing, as it becomes cheaper and more ubiquitous. These are inexpensive investments that Metro can make in order to dramatically increase its appeal to discretionary riders that can afford to put a premium on convenience.

However, Metro's survey highlighted two more serious deterrents to attracting discretionary users to transit use, the solutions to which are much more complicated than a change in software and machine installation. Following frequency, real time, and the TAP card, the fourth and fifth most popular answers were late night service and weekend service, respectively. As extensive as L.A.'s transit system is, it is not always accessible in that its schedule is very different from the city's itself. As transit's popularity increases amongst Millennials especially, late night service and weekend service becomes even more important in the untapped Millennial market it represents. In order to make transit appeal to this market, Metro can offer the kind of late night/weekend service on rail and Rapids (as a late-night pilot program for the Red Line did in 2008) and incorporate this into a brand that appeals to L.A.'s status as the entertainment capital of the world.

One of the most encouraging aspects of this survey was the list of things that were *not* of major concern to survey participants. Combating the image of transit as dangerous and inefficient, "safety and security" and "reliability" were not considered great concerns. This survey, of course, is only partially useful for creating a rebranding strategy, in that it reflects only the opinion of those that already use transit. While a large part of the mission of this rebranding strategy lies in improving and expanding access for current consumers of transit, the focus must also broaden in order to bring in the discretionary set. The discretionary set can only be convinced to use transit if it outshines the automobile in price and efficiency, and if its image

gets a major makeover, which can be achieved through both marketing and the creation of tools that make it more convenient to use transit. In order to execute a successful rebranding campaign and promote its services, transit must appeal to our preference for quickly comprehensible and accessible urban systems. It can do this visually with better shelter, signage, and its own street space, and it can do this technologically by improving tools to breach the gap between user and service through the provision of information.

The promotion of transit must be part of a multi-layered strategy to promote networks of mobility. The bus and rail systems, like the freeway system, are networks. But other modes of transportation, most notably biking, also present the opportunity to create networks. It is here the popularity of bicycles once again takes center stage as a great opportunity in L.A.'s rebranding strategy. In the creation of a citywide bike network, the city is capitalizing on the phenomenon of biking's popularity. The construction of these bike paths and pedestrian paths, especially along the river, will be immensely important to L.A.'s rebranding strategy. The construction of these paths will do for bicyclists and pedestrians what designated bus lanes will do for buses; they will visibly prioritize these modes of transportation as viable alternatives. They will lend them an air of credibility, legitimizing their importance.

The street is where all these networks converge. In the street, the experience of the public realm for pedestrians must be streamlined and made easier to use, through the redesign of the spaces created for and appropriated by them there. As we have explored, "traditional" pedestrian public spaces, such as parks and squares, are few and far between, so the street is currently our best and worst example of, and greatest opportunity for, pedestrian-oriented development in L.A. As previously mentioned, redesign efforts such as implementation of wider sidewalks (accommodated by narrower car lanes), increased trees, the elimination of setbacks and decreased parking requirements make for a more attractive streetscape that is more appealing to pedestrians. These redesign solutions will no doubt be part of a successful rebranding strategy in presenting an attractive image of using independent modes of

transportation in L.A., but unlike the power it has in crafting our networks of mobility, the public sector only has limited control over this landscape; it shares the responsibility of crafting this space with the private sector.

On the street, the public sector must confront the private sector; they must face each other, nose to nose, on sidewalks and stairways, plazas and parking lots. Private development has an enormous influence over the quality of our streets, and private development is forced to respond to two things: 1) the public sector's guidelines and standards for development, design, and construction; and 2) the market, or rather, *what people want.* It is clear people *want* to live and recreate in more pedestrian-oriented areas and developments, as the last decade's real estate trends have shown. The public sector has a responsibility here, in its standards, guidelines, and the kind of development culture it encourages through the permitting and design process. Here the public sector can encourage adventurous retrofits—e.g., the conversion of the big box store, the strip mall, the parking lot into a space built to accommodate those that wish to use alternative modes of transportation and gather in pedestrian-oriented environments. The public sector can encourage the creation of these spaces (e.g., the quantity of them), but it has little control over the nuances and effects of their design (e.g., their quality), except in the instances of a few specific kinds of districts, such as Historic Preservation Overlay Zones or Community Redevelopment Areas. But even the most specific design guidelines and standards cannot keep bad design from happening. The quality of these spaces is still very much in the hands of developers and designers. Here we must throw our faith to the wind: designers must fully take up the responsibility of ensuring that the public and private realm are seamlessly, attractively engaged with one another to create lively streetscapes by daring to challenge the conventional modes of development that dominated L.A. for the second half of the twentieth century.

As we have seen, developers and designers have stepped up to the plate, in the form of large new developments (such as the Americana, the Staples Center, the Grove) and

rehabilitation and revitalization projects (such as Third Street Promenade and Old Town

Pasadena). But there is a lingering fear that the large developments that this kind of

development culture encourages is of a contrived quality, in its capability for instantly creating

public space and attractive street frontages. Another fear is that its architectural qualities often

appear generic. But as *Retrofitting Suburbia* reminds us, the point of the creation of these

spaces isn't architectural genius, it is *urbanism[c]*. This generic quality might even be one of

instant architecture's greatest strengths in attracting people to generate the kind of urbanity

these places seek to create. Sometimes the artful repetition of successful forms—such as the

block-long rows of floor-to-ceiling windows and balconies looming over 12th Street in South

Park—comforts us. The lifestyle center is the imitation or repetition of a successful form that

takes advantage of the ideas we harbor about the democracy inherent in public spaces, just as

Disneyland mimics a mythical main street, which we associate with a shared sense of

community, however misguided the feeling may be in such a commercial environment. However

unwillingly, we are attracted to these spaces because they remind us of an urbanity at an

intimate scale that quells the feelings of isolation and fear a parking lot or freeway might inspire.

Maybe, as Alain de Botton reminds us in *The Architecture of Happiness[ci]*, we should

wholeheartedly embrace the kind of familiar, if unadventurous, instant architecture that

contributes to this safe, albeit essentially contrived, feeling of openness:

> "We require that our environments act as guardians of a calmness and direction on
>
> which we have a precarious hold. The architects who benefit us the most may be those
>
> generous enough to lay aside their claims to genius in order to devote themselves to
>
> assembling graceful but predominantly unoriginal boxes. Architecture should have the
>
> confidence and kindness to be a little boring."

Residential developers already understand the appeal of such a comfort; the designers and

developers responsible for the recent surge in dense housing development in walkable areas,

such as Hollywood, are literally "rising to the occasion" by providing the kind of verticality Los

Angeles needs to promote a pedestrian-oriented environment. These designers and developers

realize that infill is successful only when built at a human scale, and when built to accommodate

its context, and sometimes the accommodation of context may mean the construction of

somewhat familiar—but never ugly!—buildings. These buildings need not be devoid of beauty or

adornment, either; in fact, they must have both of these qualities to succeed in the creation of

peopled places. Confident, kind, and somewhat boring architecture succeeds because it

provides light, space, and peace, all qualities human beings are instinctively drawn to. This is

not belittle the fantastical architecture that Los Angeles sports so proudly, however—indeed,

Banham's "Architecture Fantastic—the sometimes kitschy, sometimes breathtakingly beautiful

appropriation of exotic forms—coexists quite peacefully with dingbats and lofts alike. But

"Architecture Fantastic," no matter how distinctive, must also treat us kindly in order to

contribute to a thriving public realm. Contrast the gauche garishness of L.A. Live with the

honest, if hokey, thematic aesthetic of Japanese Village Plaza. L.A. Live's flashy concrete

exoskeleton does not create the intimacy that the imitation pagodas do at Japanese Village

Plaza. L.A. Live is a peopled place only because it is a place people must pass through in order

to access the entertainment facilities the L.A. Live/Staples Center complex provides. But

Japanese Village Plaza, though also a commercial development, does not have as many

ulterior motives; while its ultimate goal is to contribute to Little Tokyo's commerce, one may

experience the development without actually having to purchase anything.

  Through this project's discussion, we have explored the areas that have been able to

execute the creation of "peopled places" most successfully thus far, especially around transit.

Transit-oriented, humanely scaled, and intimate developments should absolutely be a part of

L.A.'s rebranding strategy, but the responsibility here is largely the private sector's. The private

sector has been wise in its advertising efforts—it very rarely claims it wants to change the nature of the city by "densifying" it or contributing to a more walkable streetscape—it just does it, by appealing to the consumer's inherent desire for well populated, safe, and lively places.

In an increasing number of cases, this would be impossible without the transit infrastructure, which is the public sector's responsibility. But a word of caution to the public sector, in its mission to rebrand Los Angeles as a more walkable, bikable, transit-viable place—some words still might be taboo. To claim that density is a "moral duty," as the L.A. Weekly appallingly sneered this winter, or that the local government wants to "remake what L.A. looks like," as the mayor disastrously claimed[cii], will politically drive the wedge deeper between the old and the new in Los Angeles. The Korean Taco society and L.A.'s vast immigrant population may welcome typical images of density, such as tower blocks and subway stations, but older generations may need to be reminded of the homesteading dream, as an evolving component of the myth of Los Angeles. Millennials will get excited about loft developments and bike paths, while more conservative residents can successfully be sold the repackaged, new and improved homesteading dream in the form of a new single-family home, sitting just six inches from another one on a lot subdivided by an ordinance that is not yet even eight years old.

The transformation of cities is never a process that can adequately be summarized, because so many actors are involved. That is the allure of the city. While there are clearly major differences in the power dynamic of the physical transformation of cities, all the people that move through cities are stakeholders whose actions surrounding mobility and consumption impact those around them. The image of Los Angeles will change only if Los Angeles changes. And it is; from the bottom swell bikes and street festivals, and from the top roar trains and cranes.

<u>Endnotes</u>

[i] Demographia. "Urban Population and Economic Growth 1950-2000. 2001.

[ii] Joel Kotkin. *The New Geography: How The Digital Revolution Is Reshaping the American Landscape* (New York: Random House, 2001).

[iii] Alain de Botton. *The Architecture of Happiness* (New York: Vintage, 2008).

[iv] James Corner, "Terra Fluxus." *The Landscape Urbanism Reader* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006).

[v] Mike Davis. *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Vintage, 1999).

[vi] Kazys Varnelis. *The Infrastructural City: Networked Ecologies in Los Angeles* (New York: Actar, 2008).

[vii] Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream* (New York, Oxford: 1986).

[viii] Heavy Trash. "Aqua Line." 16 August 2000.

[ix] Bob Pool. "Signs Point to Westside Transit Mystery. *The Los Angeles Times,* 16 August 2000.

[x] Friends for Expo. "News Archive 200-2005." 30 November 2000

[xi] Christopher Hawthorne. "Critic's Notebook: There's a Growing Disconnect on a Better-Connected L.A. *Los Angeles Times,* 24 October 2010.

[xii] Reyner Banham. *The Architecture of Four Ecologies,* 2nd ed (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

[xiii] Demographia, 2001.

[xiv] US Census Bureau."2008 Population Estimates for Los Angeles City." 2008.

[xv] US Census Bureau. "United States by Place and (in selected states) County Subdivisions with 50,000 or More Population, and for Puerto Rico (geographies ranked by total population." American Fact Finder. 2000.

[xvi] US Census Bureau. "Los Angeles city tabulation area 2005-2009." American Community Survey 2005-2009. 2010.

[xvii] Bradford, Christopher. "Density Calculations for U.S. Urbanized Areas, Weighted by census Tract." Austin Contrarian, 24 March 2008.

[xviii] Newton, Damien. "Density, Car Ownership, and What it Means for the Future of Los Angeles. Streetsblog, 13 December 2010.

[xix] Statistics Sweden, "Swedish Population Survey as of 31 December 2010." 2010.

[xx] Banham, 2009.

[xxi] US Census Bureau, 2000.

[xxii] Walkscore. "America's Most Walkable Neighborhoods: Find the most walkable Neighborhoods in the Top 40 U.S. Cities." Walkscore.Com. 2010.

[xxiii] Eric Avila. "Angeleno, Angelino, Angeleño." 29 March 2011.

[xxiv] Banham, 2009.

[xxv] US Census Bureau, 2000.

[xxvi] Steven Leigh Morris. "Community Watchdog Cary Brazeman Fights Villaraigosa's Crusade to Allow Density Everywhere." *L.A. Weekly*, 13 January 2011.

[xxvii] US Census Bureau, 2000.

[xxviii] Boyce Thompson. "Hottest Multifamily Housing Markets for 2011." BuilderOnline.Com, 24 March 2011.

[xxix] David Kolb. *Sprawling Places* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

[xxx] Avila, 2011.

[xxxi] Newton, 2010.

[xxxii] US Census Bureau and the New York Times. "Mapping America: The 2005-2009 American Community Survey in an Interactive Map." 2010.

[xxxiii] Newton, 2010.

[xxxiv] Richardson, Eric. BlogDowntown. "L.A. County Density [map based on 2010 Census data]." 13 March 2011.

[xxxv] Leslie Berenstein Rojas. Multi-American. "Angelenos and Angeleños in the Age of the Korean Taco. 30 March 2011.

[xxxvi] Banham, 2009.

[xxxvii] Ellen Dunham Jones and June Williamson. *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for Redesigning Suburbs* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008).

[xxxviii] Hawthorne, 24 October 2010.

[xxxix] Jarrett Walker. "Los Angeles: The Next Great Transit Metropolis?" Human Transit. 31 March 2010

[xl] Jarrett Walker. "The Power and Pleasure of Grids." Human Transit. 24 February 2010.

[xli] Jarrett Walker. "Los Angeles: Some Thoughts on the Challenge for 'The Source.'" Human Transit. 25 November 2010.

[xlii] Allan Jacobs. *The Boulevard Book: History, Evolution, and Design of Multiway Boulevards* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003).

[xliii] City of West Hollywood. "Sunset Strip Beautification Project." February 2010.

[xliv] Ringo Chiu. "Upward Curve for Flats." L.A. Business Journal, 18 October 2010.

[xlv] Bingham Yen. "Updated on New Vons Shopping Center in East Pasadena." Pasadena Real Estate Blog, 18 October 2010.

[xlvi] Dakota Smith. "Excitement Over Look for East Pasadena Vons Shopping Center." Curbed LA, 10 March 2011.

[xlvii] Allen. "Reclaiming Koreatown." Data Center for Justice. 4 November 2009.

[xlviii] Banham, 2009.

[xlix] US Census Bureau, 2010.

[l] Leigh Morris, 13 January 2011.

[li] Author Unknown. "Construction Costs for Parking Stalls." Square Feet Commercial Real Estate Blog." 8 July 2008.

[lii] Avila, 2005.

[liii] Being Pedestrian. "Los Angeles, Downtown: South Park [map]." March 2011.

[liv] Neal Broverman. "Downtown: Now with More People Than Bismarck, N.D.!" Curbed LA, 10 March 2011.

[lv] Mapping America, 2010.

[lvi] Michael Several. "Little Tokyo: Historical Background." Public Art in L.A. January 1998.

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

[lvii] Aaron Kuehn. "Two Wheelin' Ambition in Los Angeles. The Architect's Newspaper, 21 March 2011.
[lviii] Varnelis, 2008.
[lix] Christopher Hawthorne. "L.A. Live Review: It Has No Place." *Los Angeles Times*, 3 December 2008.
[lx] Dunham Jones and Williamson, 2008.
[lxi] Mike Davis. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles,* 2nd ed (New York: Verso, 2006).
[lxii] Guy Debord. *Society of the Spectacle*, 1st ed, translated by Fredy Periman (Black & Red, 2000).
[lxiii] Paolo Cosulich-Schwartz. "Spatial Injustice in Los Angeles: An Evaluation of Downtown L.A.'s Privately Owned Public Open Space." Urban & Environmental Policy Institute of Occidental College, 2009.
[lxiv] Banham, 2009.
[lxv] City of Los Angeles. "City of Los Angeles Downtown Design Guide." L.A. Planning Department. 2009.
[lxvi] Sam Hall Kaplan and Julius Shulman. *L.A. Lost and Found,* 2nd ed (New York: Hennessey & Ingalls, 2000).
[lxvii] Manville, Michael and Donald Shoup. "People, Parking, and Cities." *Access* 25 Fall 2004.2-8.
[lxviii] Several, 1998.
[lxix] Donald Spivack. "The History of Skid Row Series, Paper 1." Los Angeles: Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles, 15 September 1998.
[lxx] Eric Richardson. "Plaza in Under-Construction City Parking Garage Named After Little Tokyo Pastor." BlogDowntown. 3 May 2010.
[lxxi] Community Redevelopment Agency. "Little Tokyo Redevelopment Project (Calif. A-3-5): The Redevelopment Plan." 24 February 1970.
[lxxii] US Census Bureau, 2010.
[lxxiii] Teresa Watanabe. "Little Tokyo Market, Once a Rising Sun, is Poised to Set." *The Los Angeles Times*, 23 January 2009.
[lxxiv] U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.
[lxxv] Author Unknown. "Affordable Housing Complex Being Built. *Los Angeles Times,* 19 March 1995.
[lxxvi] Ryoko Nakamura. "Metro Holds Workshop for the New Little Tokyo Station." *Rafu Shimpo*, 10 February 2011.
[lxxvii] US Census Bureau, 2010.
[lxxviii] Community Redevelopment Agency. "Little Tokyo Redevelopment Area: Implementation Plan 2010-2013." 8 February 2010.
[lxxix] Community Redevelopment Agency, 1970.
[lxxx] Several, 1998.
[lxxxi] Logan Hill. "The Fierce Sensitivity of Joseph Gordon Levitt. *New York Magazine*. 21 June 2009.
[lxxxii] Varnelis, 2008.
[lxxxiii] Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris. "Privitisation of Public Open Space: The Los Angeles Experience." *The Town Planning Review* 64.2 (April 1993): 139-167.
[lxxxiv] Cosulich-Schwartz, 2009.
[lxxxv] Prophet. "Branding Your City." CEOs for Cities. 2006.
[lxxxvi] Avila, 2005.
[lxxxvii] Davis, 2006.
[lxxxviii] Green L.A. Recycling Program.
[lxxxix] Steve Hymon. "Metro Responds to Call to Cut Rail Service by 48 percent." The Source, 13 April 2011.
[xc] Steve Hymon. "Metro Ridership Numbers Released." The Source, 13 April 2011.
[xci] Crank Mob, CicLAvia, Critical Mass.
[xcii] Jonathan Richmond. *Transport of Delight* (New York: University of Akron Press, 2005).
[xciii] Hymon, 13 April 2011.
[xciv] Bus Riders' Union, 2004.
[xcv] Ibid.
[xcvi] Walker, 25 November 2010.
[xcvii] Steve Hymon. "Ticket Machines that Dispense TAP Cards and Allow Stored Value Are Now Being Tested." The Source. 19 January 2011.
[xcviii] Ibid.
[xcix] Fred Camino. "Majority of Readers are Equipped With Smartphone." The Source. 21 September 2010.
[c] Dunham Jones and Williamson, 2008.
[ci] de Botton, 2008.
[cii] Leigh Morris, 13 January 2011.

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Formatted: Font: Arial, 8 pt

Bibliography

Author Unknown. "Construction Costs for Parking Stalls." Square Feet Commercial Real Estate Blog." 8 July 2008. Web.

Author Unknown. "Little Tokyo: Affordable Housing Complex Being Built." *Los Angeles Times*, 19 March 1995. Web.

Axelrod, Jeremiah B.C. *Inventing Autopia: Dreams and Visions of the Modern Metropolis in Jazz Age Los Angeles.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. Print.

Bacon, Edmund N. *Design of Cities: Revised Edition.* New York, Penguin, 1975.

Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles The Architecture of Four Ecologies.* 2nd. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. Print.

Bell, Bryan and Katie Wakeford. *Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism.* New York: Metropolis Books, 2008. Print.

Berenstein Rojas, Leslie. Multi-American. "Angelenos and Angeleños in the Age of the Korean Taco. 30 March 2011. Web.

Bradford, Chris. "Density Calculations for U.S. Urbanized Areas, Weighted By Census Tract." Austin Contrarian. 24 March 2008. Web.

Broverman, Neal. "Downtown: Now with More People than Bismarck, N.D.!" Curbed LA. 10 March 2011. Web.

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities.* New York: Mariner Books, 1978. Print.

Camino, Fred. "Majority of Readers are Equipped With Smartphone." The Source. 21 September 2010. Web.

Chiu, Ringo. "Upward Curve for Flats." *L.A. Business Journal.* 18 October 2010. Web.

City Mayors Statistics. "The largest cities in the world by land area, population, and density." 6 January 2007. Web.

City of Los Angeles. "City of Los Angeles Downtown Design Guide." L.A. Planning Department. 2009.

City of West Hollywood. "Sunset Strip Beautification Project." February 2010. PDF.

Community Redevelopment Agency. "Little Tokyo Redevelopment Area: Implementation Plan 2010-2013." 8 February 2010. PDF.

Community Redevelopment Agency. "Little Tokyo Redevelopment Project (Calif. A-3-5): The Redevelopment Plan." 24 February 1970. PDF.

Corner, James. "Terra Fluxus" in *The Landscape Urbanism Reader.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006. Print.

Cortright, Joseph. "The Young and Restless in a Knowledge Economy." CEOs for Cities. December 2005. PDF.

Cosulich-Schwartz, Paolo. "Spatial Injustice in Los Angeles: An Evaluation of Downtown L.A.'s Privately Owned Public Open Space." Urban & Environmental Policy Institute of Occidental College. Spring 2009. PDF.

Cox, Wendell. "The Illusion of Transit Choice." *Veritas: A Quarterly Journal of Public Policy in Texas.* March 2002. PDF File.

Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles.* 2nd ed. New York: Verso, 2006. Print.

Davis, Mike. *The Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster.* New York: Vintage, 1999. Print.

de Botton, Alain. *The Architecture of Happiness.* New York: Vintage International, 2008. Print.

Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle.* Translated by Fredy Periman. Black & Red, 2000. Print.

Demographia, "Urban Population and Economic Growth [1950-2000]." Accessed via web. PDF
        File.

Demographia. "City of Los Angeles: Population and Density by Sector [2000]." 2001. Web.

Didion, Joan. *Where I Was From.* New York: Vintage, 2004. Print.

Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Jeff Speck. *Suburban Nation.* 10th ed. San
        Francisco: North Point Press, 2010. Print.

Dunham-Jones, Ellen and June Williamson. *Retrofitting Suburbia: Urban Design Solutions for
        Redesigning Suburbs.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008.

Egan, Timothy. "L.A. Consequential." *The New York Times.* 3 March 2010. Accessed 9 October
        2009. Web.

Ellin, Nan. *Postmodern Urbanism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999. Print.

Eric Avila. "Angeleno, Angelino, Angeleño." 29 March 2011.

Estrada, William David. *The Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space.* Austin, TX:
        University of Texas Press, 2008. Print.

Farr, Douglas. *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature.* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2007.
        Print.

Ferrell, David. "Koreatown: Glitter Babies vs. Thugs." *L.A. Weekly.* 8 November 2007. Web.

Frey, Julia. "LA Plays Itself in the Movies: (500) Days of Summer." *blogging.LA.* 8 April 2010.
        Web.

Fulton, William. *The Reluctant Metropolis: The Politics of Urban Growth in Los Angeles.*
        Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. Print.

Gebhard, David and Winter, Robert. *An Architectural Guidebook to Los Angeles. Revised
        Edition.* Gibbs Smith: 2003.Print.

Gumprecht, Blake. *The Los Angeles River: Its Life, Death, and Possible Rebirth.* Baltimore, MD:
        Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. Print.

Hall Kaplan, Sam and Shulman, Julius. *L.A. Lost and Found,* 2nd ed (New York: Hennessey &
        Ingalls, 2000).

Hanson, Susan. *The Geography of Urban Transportation.* 3rd ed. New York: Guilford Press,
        2004.

Hawthorne, Christopher. "Critic's Notebook: There's a Growing Disconnect About a Better
        Connected L.A." *The Los Angeles Times.* 24 October 2010. Web.

Hawthorne, Christopher. "L.A. as filtered by love." *The Los Angeles Times.* 31 July 2009.
        Accessed 9 October 2009. Web.

Hawthorne, Christopher. "There's a Growing Disconnect on a Better Connected L.A." *Los
        Angeles Times.* 24 October 2010. Web.

Heavy Trash. "Aqua Line." Heavy Trash. 16 August 2000. Web.

Hill, Logan. "The Fierce Sensitivity of Joseph Gordon-Levitt." *New York Magazine.* 21 June
        2009. Web.

Hise, Greg and William Deverell. *Eden by Design: The 1930 Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan for the
        Los Angeles Region.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000. Print.

Hise, Greg. *Magnetic Los Angeles: Planning the Twentieth Century Metropolis.* Baltimore, MD:
        Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. Print.

Hymon, Steve. "About the Density in Los Angeles: New York, It Ain't." *Los Angeles Times.* 27
        August 2007. Web.

Hymon, Steve. "Metro Responds to Call to Cut Rail Service by 48 percent." The Source, 13 April
        2011. Web.

Hymon, Steve. "Metro Ridership Numbers Released." The Source, 13 April 2011. Web.

Hymon, Steve. "Ticket Machines that Dispense TAP Cards and Allow Stored Value Are Now
        Being Tested." The Source. 19 January 2011. Web.

Jacobs, Allan. *The Boulevard Book: History, Evolution, and Design of Multiway Boulevards.* Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2003. Print.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York: The Modern Library, 1993. Print.

"Jason" (email unknown). "Series 11 of Entourage..." in "Los Angeles: the Next Great Transit Metropolis?" Human Transit. 31 March 2010. Web.

Kolb, David. *Sprawling Places.* Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2008. Print.

Kostof, Spiro. *The City Shaped: Urban Meanings Through History.* New York: Bullfinch, 1993. Print.

Kotkin, Joel. *The New Geography: How the Digital Revolution is Reshaping the American Landscape.* New York: Random House, 2001. Print.

Lang, Jon. *Urban Design: A Typology of Procedures and Products, Illustrated with Over 50 Case Studies.* London: Architectural Press, 2005. Print.

Leigh Morris, Steven. "Community Watchdog Cary Brazeman Fights Villaraigosa's Crusade to Allow Development Everwhere: L.A.'s postwar zoning code on the shopping block." *L.A. Weekly.* 13 January 2011. Web. [NOTE: original title unverified, but something along the lines of "Crowded City as a Moral Obligation"]

Loukaitou-Sideris, Anastasia. "Privitisation of Public Open Space: The Los Angeles Experience." *The Town Planning Review* 64.2 (April 1993): 139-167. PDF.

Manville, Michael and Donald Shoup. "People, Parking, and Cities." *Access* 25 (Fall 2004): 2-8. PDF.

Manville, Michael and Donald Shoup. "People, Parking, and Cities." Access 25 Fall 2004 p.2-8. PDF.

Morris, Eric A. "Los Angeles Transportation Facts and Fiction Series" *New York Times* Freakonomics Blog. March 2009. Web.

Nakamura, Ryoko. "Metro Holds Workshop for the New Little Tokyo Station." *Rafu Shimpo*, 10 February 2011. Web.

Newton, Damien. "Density, Car Ownership, and What it Means for the Future of Los Angeles." Streetsblog. 13 December 2010. Web.

Polyzoides, Stefanos, et al. *Courtyard Housing in Los Angeles.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. Print.

Pool, Bob. "Signs Point to Westside Transit Mystery." *Los Angeles Times.* 16 August 2000. Web.

Prophet. "Branding Your City." CEOs for Cities. March 2006. PDF.

Richardson, Erc. "Plaza in Under-Construction City Parking Garage Named After Little Tokyo Pastor." Blog Downtown, 3 May 2010. Accessed online 13 March 2011.

Richmond, Jonathan. *Transport of Delight.* New York: University of Akron Press, 2005. Print.

Salas, Charles, and Michael Roth, eds. *Looking for Los Angeles: Architecture, Film, Photography, and the Urban Landscape.* Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001. Print.

Several, Michael. "Little Tokyo: Historical Background." Public Art in L.A. [wesbite]. January 1998. Web.

Smith, Dakota. "Excitement Over Look for East Pasadena Vons Shopping Center." Curbed LA. 10 March 2011. Web.

Spivack, Donald. "The History of Skid Row Series, Paper 1." Los Angeles: Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles,15 September 1998..Web.

Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. Print.

Thompson, Boyce. "Hottest Multifamily Housing Markets for 2011." BuilderOnline.Com. 24 March 2011. Web.

U.S. Census Bureau. "American Community Survey 2005-2009." 2009.

Ulin, David L., Kevin Starr, and Jim Heimann. *Los Angeles, Portrait of a City.* New York: Taschen, 2009. Print.

Vanderbilt, Tom. "Dude, where's your car?" Slate Magazine. 30 July 2010. Web.

Varnelis, Kazys, ed. *The Infrastructural City: Networked Ecologies in Los Angeles.* New York: Actar, 2008. Print.

Walker Jarrett. "Connection Fare Penalties: Why They Happen." Human Transit. 19 November 2010. Web.

Walker, Jarrett. "Cul-de-Sac Hell and the Radius of Demand." Human Transit. 12 May 2010. Web.

Walker, Jarrett. "Los Angeles: 'The Psychology of the Place'?" Human Transit. 1 April 2010. Web.

Walker, Jarrett. "Los Angeles: Some Thoughts on the Challenge, for 'The Source'." Human Transit. 25 November 2010. Web.

Walker, Jarrett. "Los Angeles: the Next Great Transit Metropolis?" Human Transit. 31 March 2010. Web.

Walker, Jarrett. "Los Angeles: The Next Great Transit Metropolis?" Human Transit. 31 March 2010.

Walker, Jarrett. "The Perils of Average Density." Human Transit. 27 Setember 2007. Web.

Walker, Jarrett. "The Power and Pleasure of Grids." Human Transit. 24 February 2010. Web.

Watanabe, Teresa. "Little Tokyo market, once a rising sun, is poised to set." *Los Angeles Times*, 23 January 2009. Accessed online 13 March 2010.

Yen, Brigham. "Update on New Vons Shopping Center in East Pasadena." Pasadena Real Estate Blog with Brigham Yen. 8 March 2011. Web.
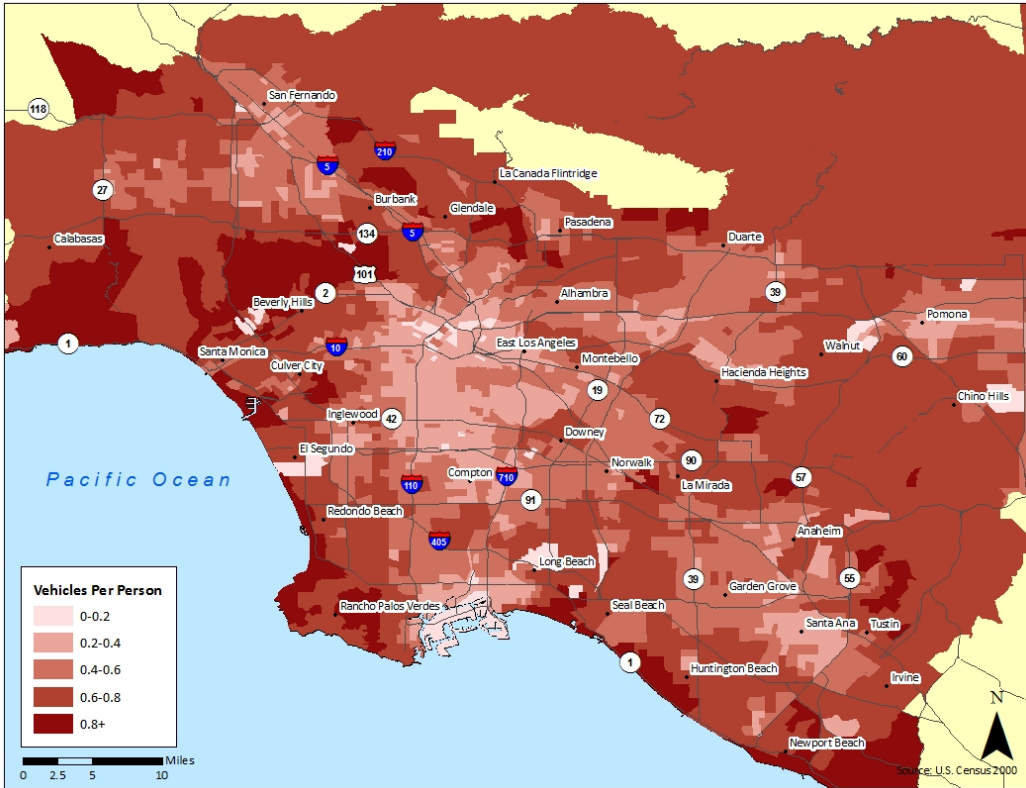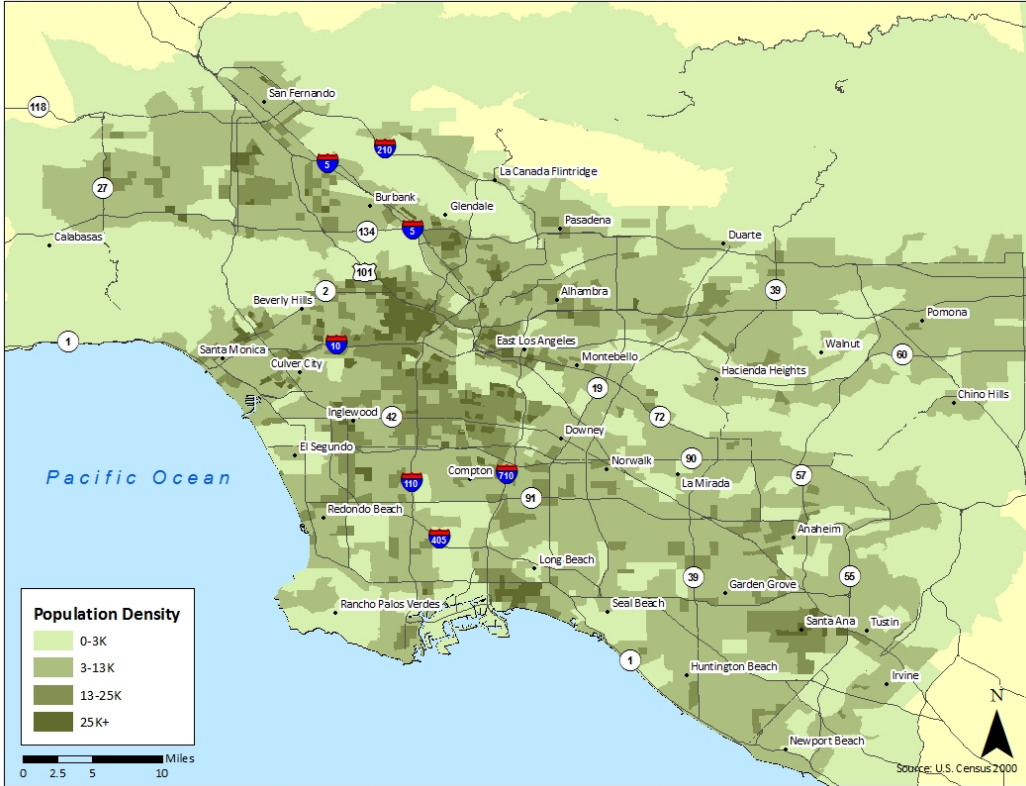
Appendix
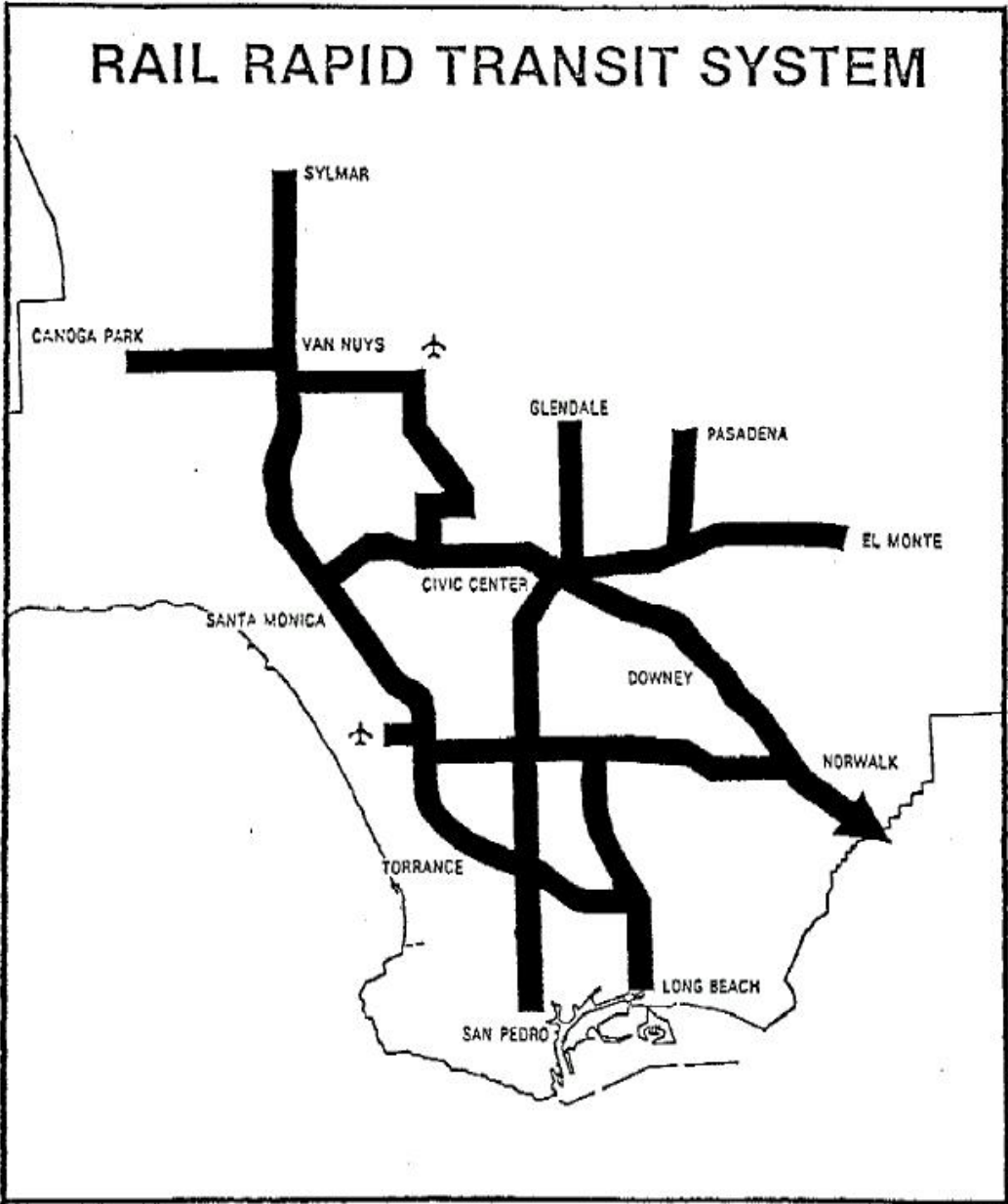
Proposition A, Proposed Rail System. Los Angeles County Transportation Commission, 1980.

30/10 Initiative, Proposed Rail System. The Transport Politic, 2010.

L.A. County Vehicle Density Based on 2000 Census Figures. Shoup and Manville, 2004.

L.A. County Population Density Based on 2000 Census Figures. Shoup and Manville, 2004.