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# Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront

District Vision Plan & Economic Development  
Implementation Strategy

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Funding provided by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities Challenge Grant

For more Information about the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront  
Collaborative, please visit [www.mylariver.org](http://www.mylariver.org)

**DRAFT**  
FEBRUARY 2014

This version of the report is a draft that will be used by the Northeast L.A. Riverfront Collaborative to elicit feedback from stakeholders to inform the final version. This draft is not final and therefore the executive summary, conclusion, and some of the appendix document will be added to the final draft.

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# CHAPTER 1: Introduction

# Purpose of the NELA Riverfront District Vision Plan and Economic Development Implementation Strategy

The Los Angeles River careens past some of the City’s most fascinating ecological, cultural and recreational terrain, presenting City residents a wonderful opportunity to connect the principles of healthy living with the goals of producing sustainable and livable communities. It is a valuable resource that threads through some of Los Angeles’ most diverse and underrepresented communities, crossing boundaries of race, class, and human and physical geography. Providing an intricate and unique landscape for civic engagement, the Los Angeles River offers Angelinos an outdoor place for respite, education, and recreation with family and friends. The River also offers communities and business owners a powerful tool for implementing strategic economic investment that will promote job growth and improve the City’s economic climate. Celebrating the values of the River not only ensures a healthier population, but also engages members of the public to think about conservation and the importance of outdoor recreational opportunities. Such spaces not only serve recreational purposes but also are focal points within our City; focal points that require civic investment, preservation, and interdisciplinary collaboration in order to be successful.

Unfortunately decades of neglect, coupled with the City’s vigorous post-industrial growth, have left the Los Angeles River draped in concrete and hidden in the shadows of our bustling City. During those years, the River’s purpose morphed from being the natural lifeline of the City to a utilitarian form of flood protection.

However, there has been an intense planning effort in years to revitalize the Los Angeles River and its surroundings. Through a concerted effort by citizens’ groups, local governments, and state agencies, the River has seen a dramatic improvement; parks and greenways have been developed along the River’s edge, wetlands and wildlife habitats have been opened up for recreational uses, and vacant lots and brownfield sites have been converted to parks for some of Los Angeles’ most underserved communities. The aim of this Vision Plan & Economic Development Implementation Strategy (Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy) is to continue this effort for revitalization by reconnecting the Northeast Los Angeles Community with the River, creating a symbiotic partnership that boasts the values of health, economic development, environmental awareness and open space.

Although the L.A. River stretches 51 miles from the confluence of Bell and Calabasas Creeks at the western end of the San Fernando Valley to the Pacific Ocean in Long Beach, this Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy focuses in on the Glendale Narrows portion of the L.A. River. The Glendale Narrows portion of the River runs approximately eight miles from Griffith Park to Chinatown, and is characterized by having a soft bottom and dense riparian vegetation in the channel that supports wildlife. This relatively lush environment not only attracts a variety of birds, ducks, frogs and fish, but people who enjoy recreational activities such as walking, jogging, horseback riding, bird watching, photography, fishing and more recently, boating.

This Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy aims to celebrate the existing Northeast Los Angeles River landscape by creating a continuous, linear, recreational experience, connecting some of Los Angeles’ most interesting ecological assets to the communities that surround them, in an effort to develop a sense of place and identity. Our goal is to provide a shared community-wide vision framework that informs elected officials along with various City, State and Federal agencies of future economic and recreational investment priorities. The framework largely addresses issues related to physical design and urban form while considering social, environmental, and economic factors. The Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy integrates a series of overarching goals to create a planning framework, while also recommending action steps to lay a preliminary implementation timeline for recommended catalytic and prototypical development projects. The Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy will serve as a basis for implementing large and small catalytic projects that will help revitalize the Northeast Los Angeles River area as well as provide a successful case study for the entire 51-mile stretch of the Los Angeles River.

The Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy contains eight primary goal statements that together help actualize the strategy of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan. The following are the eight Goal Statements:

1. Create a sense of place
2. Enliven and improve the waterfront open-space experience
3. Re-connect adjacent communities to the L.A. River - via a system of improved mobility - in an effort to create healthy and sustainable neighborhoods
4. Identify and pursue strategies to increase the River’s resilience to climate change along with connecting and restoring the ecological habitats
5. Strengthen and support employment opportunities in communities surrounding the River
6. Improve government regulation, coordination, and oversight of the River

7. Make space for social equity
8. Provide new tools and strategies to promote sustainable economic development

Successful implementation of these goal statements will help revitalize the River, green the adjacent neighborhoods, capture community opportunities, and create value within the NELA Community. Building upon each neighborhood’s unique attributes and uniting residents and stakeholders can transform the River into a sustainable and desirable place to live, work and play.

Although the Vision Plan’s purpose is to serve as a guide to make planning, policy and budgetary decisions concerning development within the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront District, it does not explicitly define a horizon period for realization of all the proposed projects due to their long-term nature. The ability to carry out and successfully implement each recommendation/project will depend heavily on multiple changing factors, such as fluctuating economic conditions, the availability of resources and the willingness of the private sector to participate. The Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy acknowledges that the decision-makers must consider these varying factors including project complexity, market conditions, financial feasibility and costs, risk assessment, timing, the ability to force public-private partnerships and cooperation, and the need for support from diverse stakeholders.

The Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy is an informational document and does not contain any legislative authority to change the zoning or acquire any private properties that may be shown within this plan. The projects and recommendations are only shown as an example for future analysis and shall not be construed as anything to the contrary.

# Vision Plan Methodology

## Community Visioning - Methodology

Community Visioning is a planning process through which a community creates a shared vision for its future and begins to make it a reality. A Vision Plan provides an overlay for other community plans, policies and decisions, as well as provides a guide to future actions in the community. The Visioning process for the Northeast Los Angeles River Collaborative included a holistic series of community engagement workshops that focused on the following key characteristics:

**Understanding the whole community** - The visioning process promotes an understanding of the whole community and the full range of issues shaping its future. It also attempts to engage the participation of the entire community and its key stakeholder groups.

**Reflecting core community values** - The visioning process seeks to identify the community's core values – those deeply held community beliefs and ideals shared by its members. Such values inform the idealistic nature of the community's vision.

**Addressing emerging trends and issues** - The visioning process explores the emerging trends driving the community's future and the strategic issues they portend. Addressing such trends promotes greater foresight, adding rigor and realism to the community's vision.

**Envisioning a preferred future** - The visioning process produces a statement articulating the community's

preferred future. The vision statement represents the community's desired "destination" – a shared image of where it would like to be in the long term.

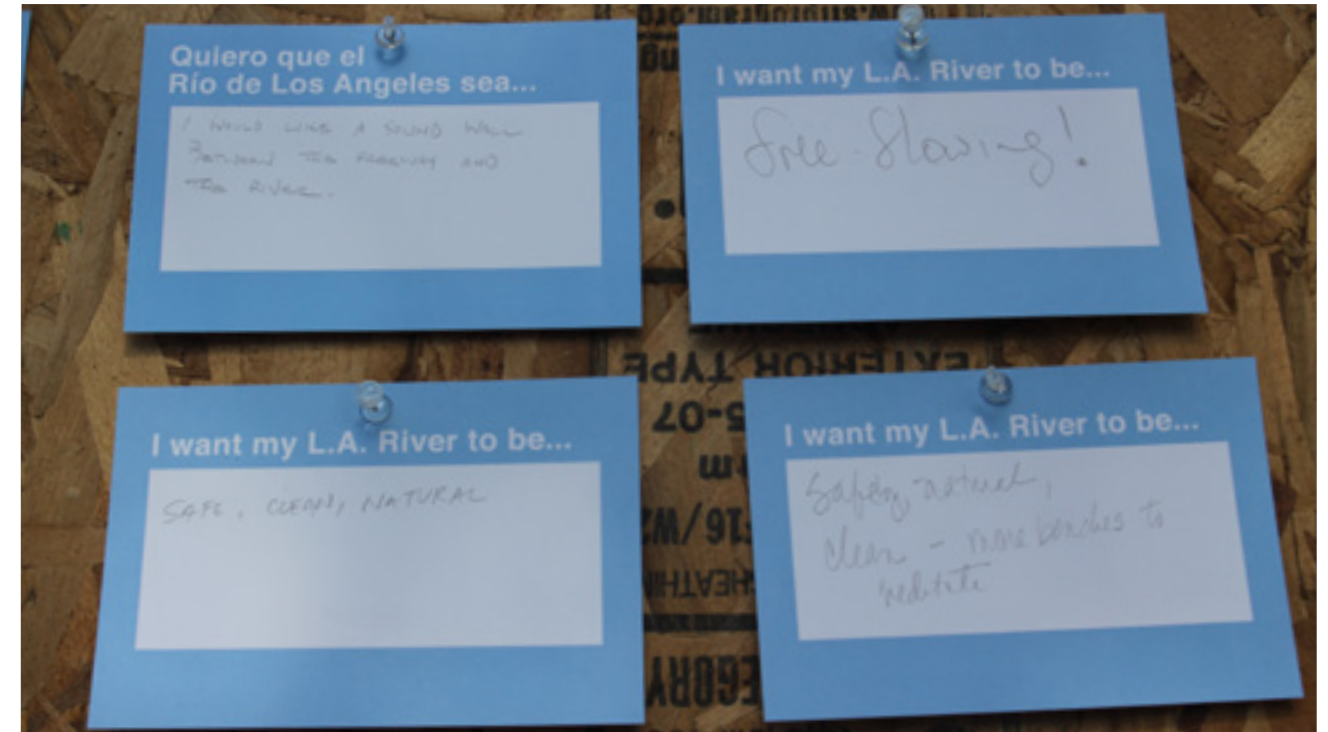
**Promoting local action** - The visioning process also produces a strategic action plan. The action plan serves as the community's "road map," moving it in the direction of its vision in the near term future.

In an effort to achieve these characteristics, the NELA Collaborative hosted a series of public workshops, conducted focus groups with field professionals, worked with the students of schools within the community, presented before Neighborhood Councils, Council Office, and held interdepartmental meetings as well as put together an advisory committee comprised of community experts to analyze and discuss our results.

The following is a list and timeline of our Community Engagement Strategy:

### NELA Summer Engagement Workshops

- **February 14, 2013**  
NELA Collaborative Press Conference
- **April 27, 2013**  
Bike-in, Walk-in Movie Spectacular, Community Fair and Outdoor Movie Screening at Marsh park to celebrate recreation by the River



Community residents describe how they want their L.A. River.

- **February-June 2013**

Elysian Valley Rio Vistas Cul-de-Sacs youth design workshops with L.A. River High School students from the Sotomayer campus

### NELA Summer Engagement Neighborhood Surveying and Workshops

The goal of the summer community engagement was two-fold. 1) To conduct door-to-door resident and small business surveys in the NELA study area to understand current neighborhood conditions and priorities for improvement. 2) Coordinate education and workshops that focused on the NELA RC policy priorities.

- **June-August 2013**

Field administer resident and small business surveys

- **July 13, 2013**

Placemaking Workshop

- **July 27, 2013**

Food Policy Workshop

- **August 10, 2013**

Workforce Development and Jobs Workshop

- **August 24, 2013**

Planning and Mobility Workshop

- **August 29, 2013**

AIA/LA Architect Focus Group

- **September 14, 2013**

Sustainable Economic Development Workshop

- **September 2013-January 2014**

Youth Voices Placemaking Projects at the L.A. River and Art Lab schools at the Sotomayer campus

- **November 5, 2013**

Atwater Village Placemaking Workshop

- **November 7, 2013**

Lincoln Heights Placemaking Workshop

- **November 9, 2013**

Cypress Park Placemaking Workshop

- **November 12, 2013**

Elysian Valley Placemaking Workshop

- **November 14, 2013**

Glassell Park Placemaking Workshop

- **December 7, 2013**

Bus Tour of the NELA Study Area

- **December 10, 2014**

Placemaking Potential Projects Workshop #1

- **December 14, 2014**

Placemaking Potential Projects Workshop #2

- **January 25, 2014**

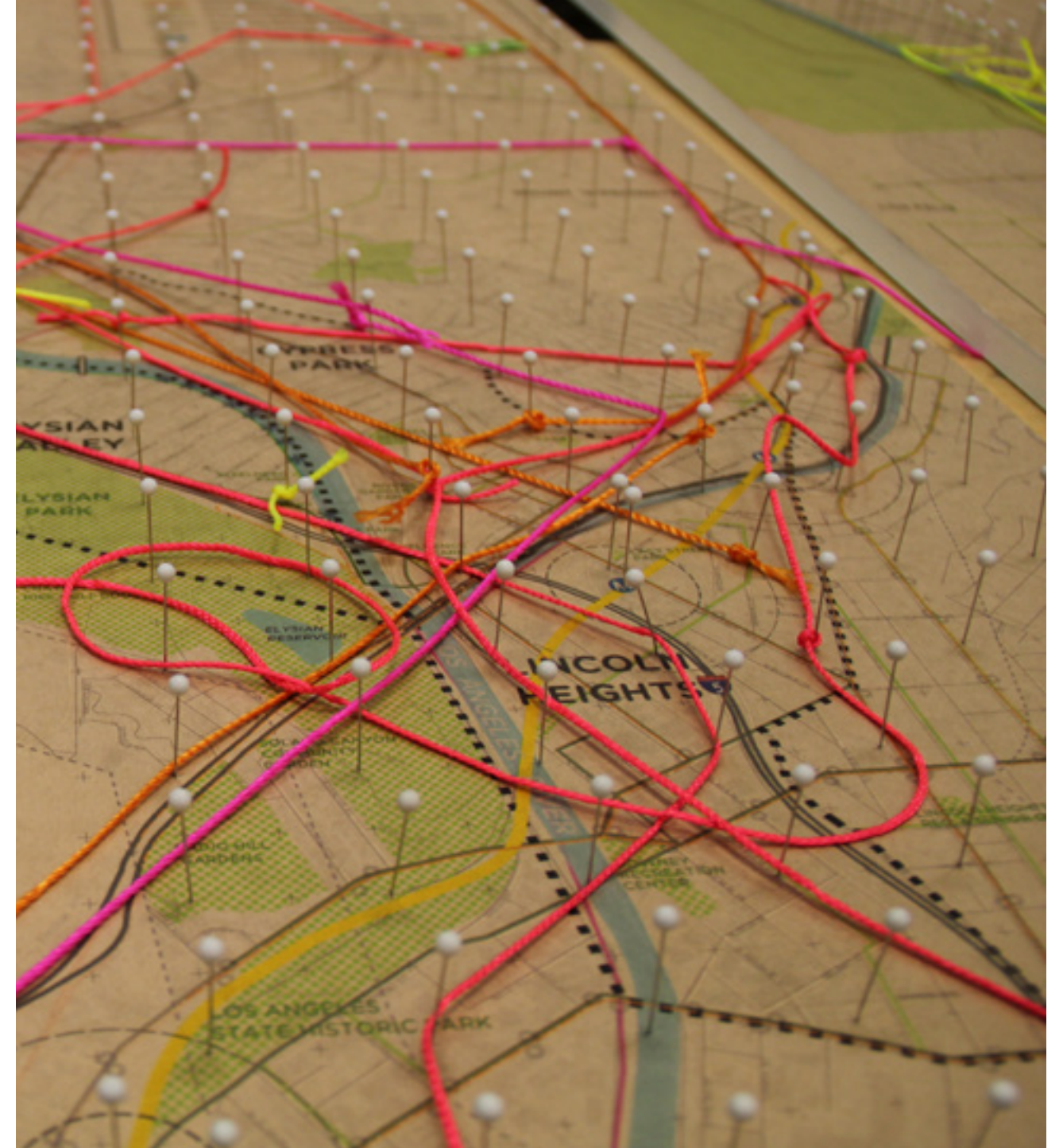
Placemaking Projects Open House

- **January 15th-February 28th**

Placemaking Design Competition

### NELA Placemaking Workshops: What's Special About Your Community?

The goal of the Fall and Winter Placemaking Series was four-fold: 1) to further explore what each of the NELA Riverfront neighborhoods valued in their community, 2) to explore placemaking projects that the community felt would reinforce their neighborhood identity, enhance the public spaces, and improve their neighborhoods, and 3) to hold a public placemaking design competition for the public to submit designs that will celebrate the identity of the NELA riverfront neighborhoods and improve the public spaces. 4) To engage youth at local schools around projects the youth can co-develop to improve their neighborhoods in NELA.



Getting Places Exercises, Community residents trace their daily route within and beyond NELA.

# User Guide

The NELA RC Vision Plan and Economic Development Implementation Strategy serves as a document for the general public. For the purposes of planning and implementation, the NELA RC focused on developing a document for the following audiences:

**Community Stakeholders** —The NELA RC project has engaged in close to two years of engagement with different stakeholders ranging from residents, businesses, community organizations, local media, amongst others. The document is a reflection of community-sourced ideas that reflect NELA’s positive assets, challenges, and visions for improvement. The document is not intended to be a final accounting of NELA and the River, but instead invites the community to carry on-going conversations about NELA and the change that is taking place in the neighborhoods and the L.A. River.

**Elected Officials** —The document provides a future vision of the Northeast Los Angeles Community and identifies priority action items and catalytic projects in order to successfully implement the vision within the five communities of the study area. Elected officials are invited to review the strategies to implement the vision plan in order to understand how future public and private investment decisions, community engagement, infrastructure improvement, land-use projects, and economic development implementation strategies align with the vision.

**City Departments** —The document has involved city department staff as part of the collaborative throughout its development. More specifically, the collaborative and document effort has aimed to provide ideas that can inform the future shaping of the Department of City Planning’s community, mobility, and community health plan updates concerned with Northeast L.A. The document has also aimed to create a set of place-based implementation and financing strategies to guide the city’s newly formed Economic Workforce Development Department in their work in NELA and other place-based efforts they will engage with in the future.

**Developer/ Investors** —The document offers developers and investors a framework, financing tools, and projects to guide their investment efforts. Many of the projects have been sourced from the community workshops and developed with the expertise of sustainable planning, design, and economic development practitioners. Developers and investors are particularly invited to read Chapter 5 in order to get a sense of implementation and financing projects that can bring the NELA RC vision to life.

**Sustainable Community Practitioners** —The NELA RC’s origins are from a Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities Community Challenge planning grant. Aligned with other national efforts, the NELA RC’s local effort has broadened sustainability to not just focus on environmental stewardship, but also consider aspects of local economic development, public health, culture,



placemaking, and social equity. The vision therefore integrates all of these aspects as part of the goals laid out within the document. Sustainable community practitioners can engage with the integrated vision goals and are invited to work on the goals within NELA, other adjacent neighborhoods along the L.A. River’s 51 miles, or other communities. As a complement to

this document, the NELA RC is also releasing a project evaluation and toolkit that documents the process and tools used during the NELA RC process. Practitioners are welcomed to access this report through the NELA RC website at [www.mylariver.org](http://www.mylariver.org).

# Project Background and Overview—NELA RC

In 2012, the Los Angeles Economic Workforce Development Department (EWDD) signed an agreement with the United States (US) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to implement a \$2.25 million Community Challenge planning grant from the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which includes HUD, US Department of Transportation (DOT), and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).<sup>1</sup> The grant funded an innovative, interdisciplinary partnership called the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront Collaborative (NELA RC), which sought to capture the energy of the Los Angeles River (River) revitalization as a catalyst for integrating planning efforts, coordinating strategic investments, and implementing a comprehensive economic development strategy that reflects sustainable development and will help the NELA communities to thrive.

The NELA RC's three objectives are to:

- Engage the community in identifying a NELA Riverfront District
- Create a comprehensive implementation strategy for community revitalization and reinvestment that links land use, economic development, and workforce strategies.
- Create a model of engagement and public media to foster civic participation in the revitalization of communities.

The study area chosen to explore the riverfront district was the approximately 10-mile river stretch in Northeast

L.A. that is also known as the Glendale Narrows section of the L.A. River. Unlike the majority of the 51 miles of the L.A. River that has been channelized with concrete, the NELA River study area is characterized by having a soft bottom reach that supports a lush habitat and wildlife. This portion of the river is adjacent to the NELA neighborhoods of Atwater Village, Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Lincoln Heights [see Fig. 1 below]. The study area has been the focus of many recent initiatives for ecosystem revitalization and recreational use. Such revitalization efforts have also brought interest in economic development, gentrification, and other neighborhood changes. Given these factors of change and interest in the physical land assets of the area, the city chose the area as the site for the place-based efforts of the NELA RC to explore a vision for a Riverfront District that connected the adjacent neighborhoods to future co-benefits of revitalization and comprehensive economic development.

To take on the task of a comprehensive planning and economic development effort, the EWDD created an interdisciplinary team of “place and people professionals” from the fields of planning, transportation, community engagement, environmental advocacy, academia, media, and community economic development. The NELA RC lead partner team is led by the EWDD, and includes the Department of City Planning, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Los Angeles County Economic

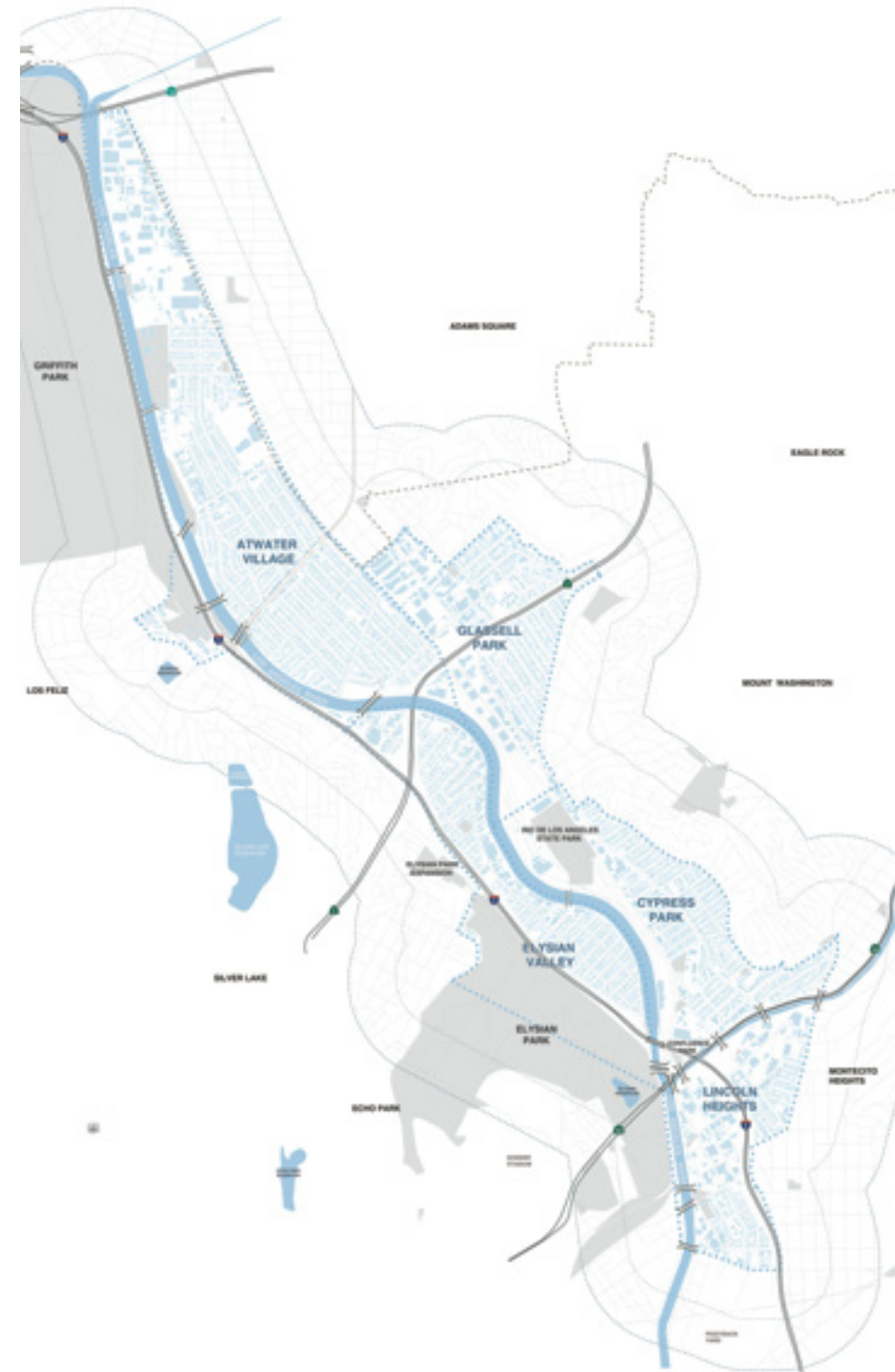


Fig. 1

1. The grant was originally awarded to the city's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) in 2010. Due to the CRA's dissolution because of state legislation, the grant was eventually reassigned to the city's Community Development Department (now EWDD) and work began the end of 2012 with a reduced timeline from 3 years to 20 months.

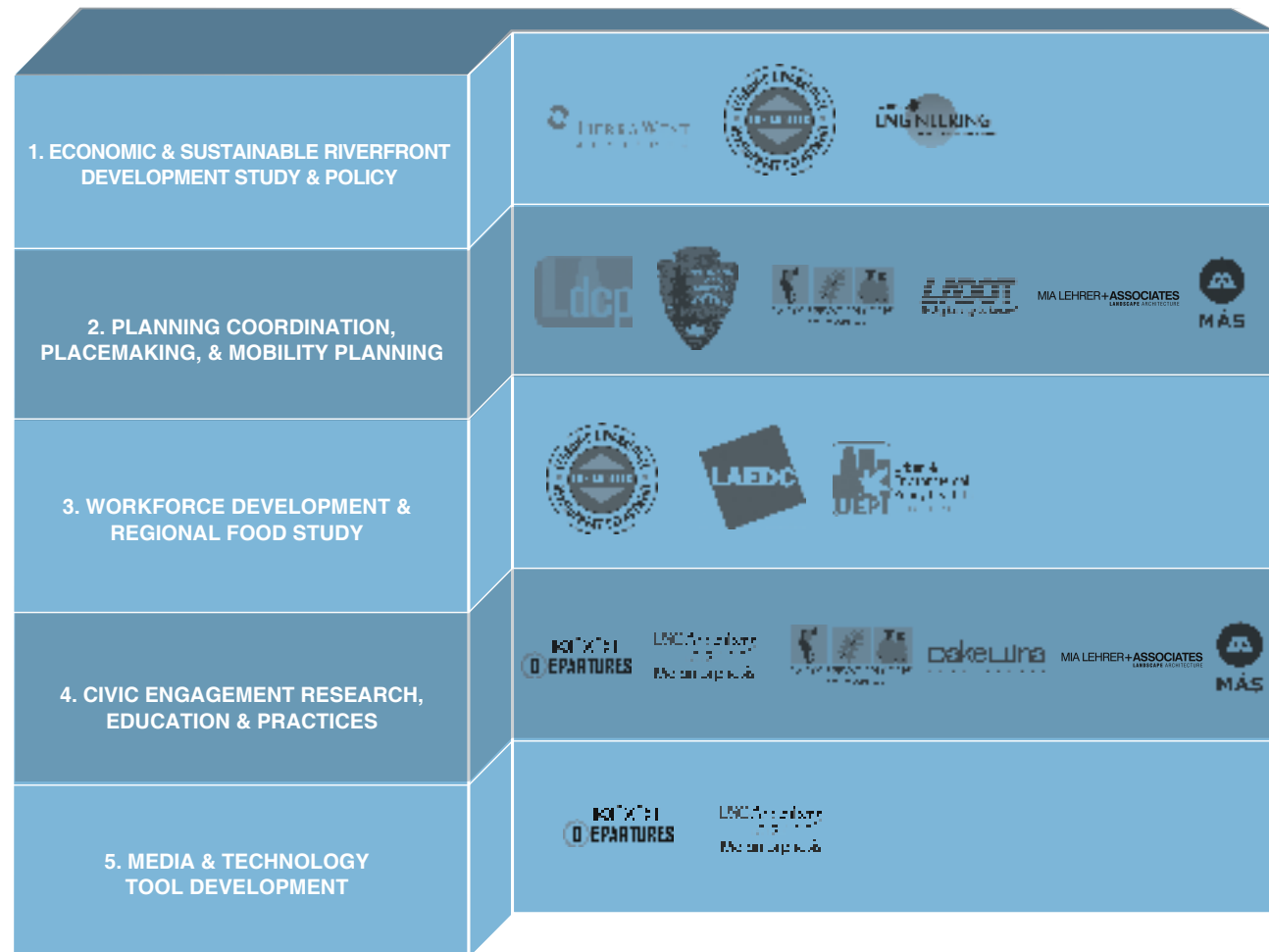


Fig. 2 Five program elements of the Northeast Los Angeles Collaborative.

Development Corporation, Workforce Investment Board, University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism's Metamorphosis Project, Occidental College's Urban Environmental Policy Institute, KCET Departures, the L.A. River Revitalization Corporation, Tierra West Advisors, and the L.A. Conservation Corps. For urban design and placemaking efforts, the collaborative teamed up with collaborators Dake + Luna Consultants, Mia Leher + Associates, LA Más, and The Robert Group. An NELA RC advisory committee of local residents and business stakeholders were also created to help inform the work of the NELA RC.

In order to develop a comprehensive planning and economic development study process and final report, the collaborative partners were assigned to 5 program elements. The program elements were not mutually exclusive as much of the work intersected, but program elements were developed to maximize each partner's strength and contribution to the NELA RC process. The five program elements and how each partner was assigned are shown in Fig. \_\_ above.

The work within each program element was eventually synthesized into one NELA RC Vision Plan and Economic Development Implementation Strategy that makes up this document.

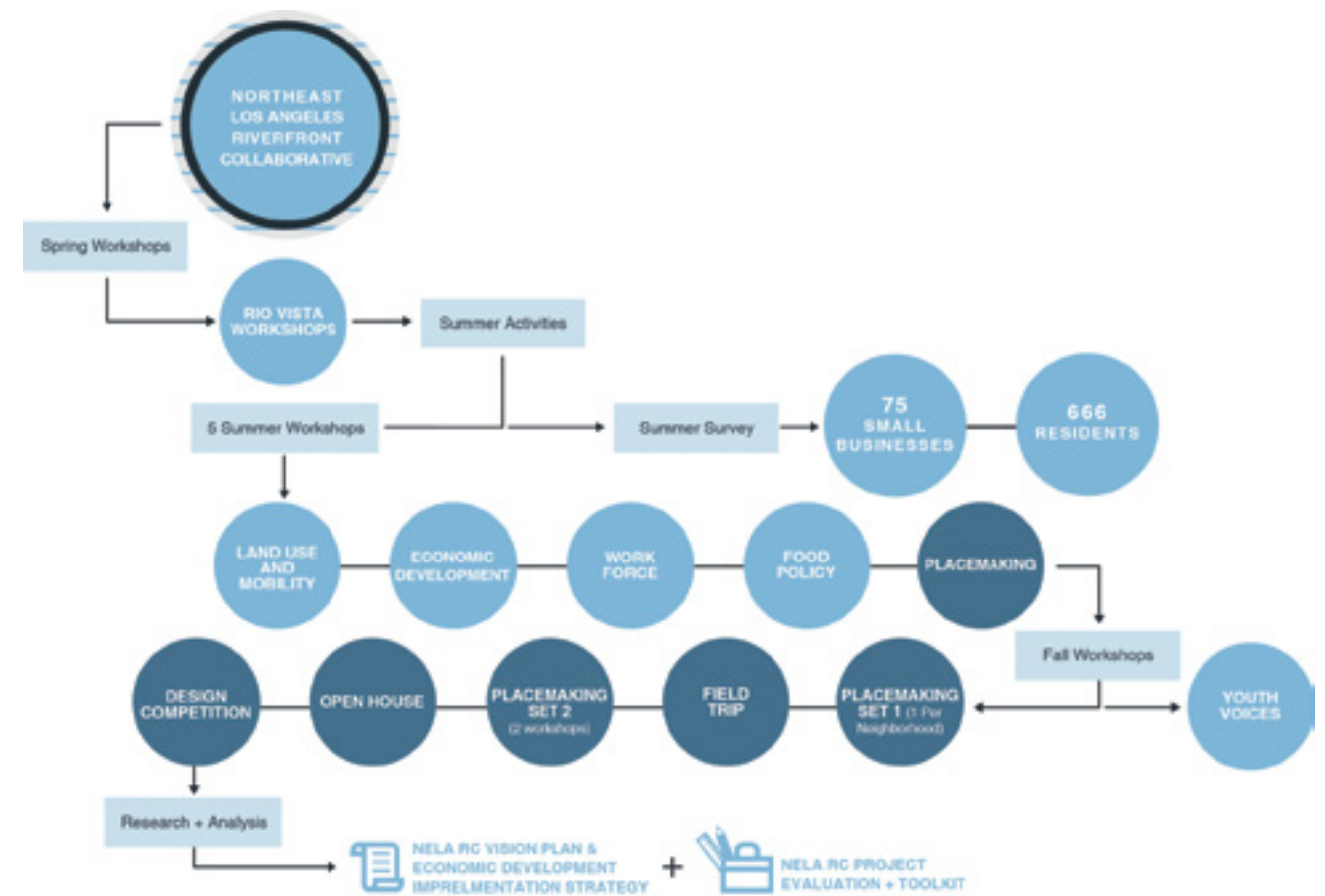


Fig 3. NELA RC's civic engagement process informed by program elements 4 and 5.

The first three program elements were created with the aim of exploring standard policy goals considered by city departments. This planning and economic development work within program elements 1-3 included the following baseline studies: parcel valuation surveys, land-use studies, financing mechanisms studies, city plan review and coordination, a workforce market study, a food hub feasibility study, ecosystem studies, tree vacancy reports, and river access assessments.

To inform the vision plan goals and economic development implementation strategies and to create civic innovation within policy goals of the first three program

elements, the NELA RC process was heavily informed and shaped by program elements 4 and 5 that focused on the engagement of the community within the study area. The engagement process informed the policy goals through community policy education, placemaking, and design workshops, participatory mapping, resident and business door-to-door surveys, installation kiosks for community input, youth engagement programs, placemaking tours, and an interactive website. The engagement process is mapped out in Fig \_\_ above.

# NELA Riverfront Collaborative Partners, Collaborators, and Advisory Committee Members

## NELA Riverfront Collaborative Partners

The Los Angeles **Economic Workforce Development Department (EWDD)** works to improve the lives of people within the city by offering economic, social, and employment opportunities for individuals, families and neighborhoods in need. The EWDD is the lead administrator for the Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant.

The City of Los Angeles **Workforce Investment Board (WIB)** develops policy and strategy to ensure that businesses have access to a trained workforce and workers have access to quality jobs. WIB will ensure that their programs and “WorkSource Centers” are integrated with the NELA collaborative work.

The Los Angeles **Department of City Planning** creates, implements, and enforces policies, programs, and codes that realize a vision of Los Angeles as a collection of healthy and sustainable communities and neighborhoods. Within the NELA Collaborative Project, the Department conducted a targeted analysis of the Study Area, leading to the development of a Vision Plan which considers zoning refinements and implementable strategies that will influence land use decisions, improve access and mobility, increase recreational opportunities, encourage economic development, and allow for sensitive and ecological design of the River and the surrounding communities.

The mission of the **Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC)** is to attract, retain, and grow businesses and jobs in L.A. County through business assistance programs, economic and policy analysis, and public policy leadership. The LAEDC will conduct an industry analysis/growth forecast and identify economic and workforce strategies to sustain the NELA area.

The **USC Metamorphosis Project** researches the transformation of urban community under the forces of globalization, new communication technologies, and population diversity in order to inform practice and policy. Metamorphosis will develop and coordinate civic engagement activities that incorporate community-based research, popular education, media/technology, and evaluation.

Occidental College’s **Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI)** functions as a social change-oriented academic center with strong community ties, and as a community-based organization with research and policy development capacity. UEPI will work to integrate a food hub and distribution network in NELA.

**KCET Departures** is a multimedia oral history project exploring the neighborhoods of Los Angeles through community engagement and digital literacy youth programs. KCET Departures will create an online platform to publish stories and ideas gathered through immersive activities in the NELA communities.

The **L.A. Conservation Corps (LACC)** provides at-risk youths with opportunities for success through job skills training, education, and work experience. As part of the collaborative, the L.A. Conservation Corps will be working on placemaking initiatives and signage amenities along the L.A. River in NELA.

The **L.A. River Revitalization Corporation (LARRC)** is a non-profit organization that works to catalyze sustainable land use development along the L.A. River. The LARRC will establish an educational and community-based campaign that engages residents and business leaders in the creation of a thriving riverfront district.

**Tierra West Advisors Inc.** is an economic and real estate advisory firm. As part of the collaborative, Tierra West will identify economic and implementation strategies to develop sustainability in the NELA river area.

**DakeLuna Consultants** are a community-based firm working on local and regional conservation and watershed issues using culture and design as tools for creating joyous places and resilient communities. Their role through the NELA RC is to develop and implement L.A. River place-based high school design and community engagement curriculum.

**Mia Lehrer + Associates (ML+A)** is a full service, international landscape architecture and urban design practice located in Los Angeles, California. ML+A is the prime consultant for the project; overseeing all

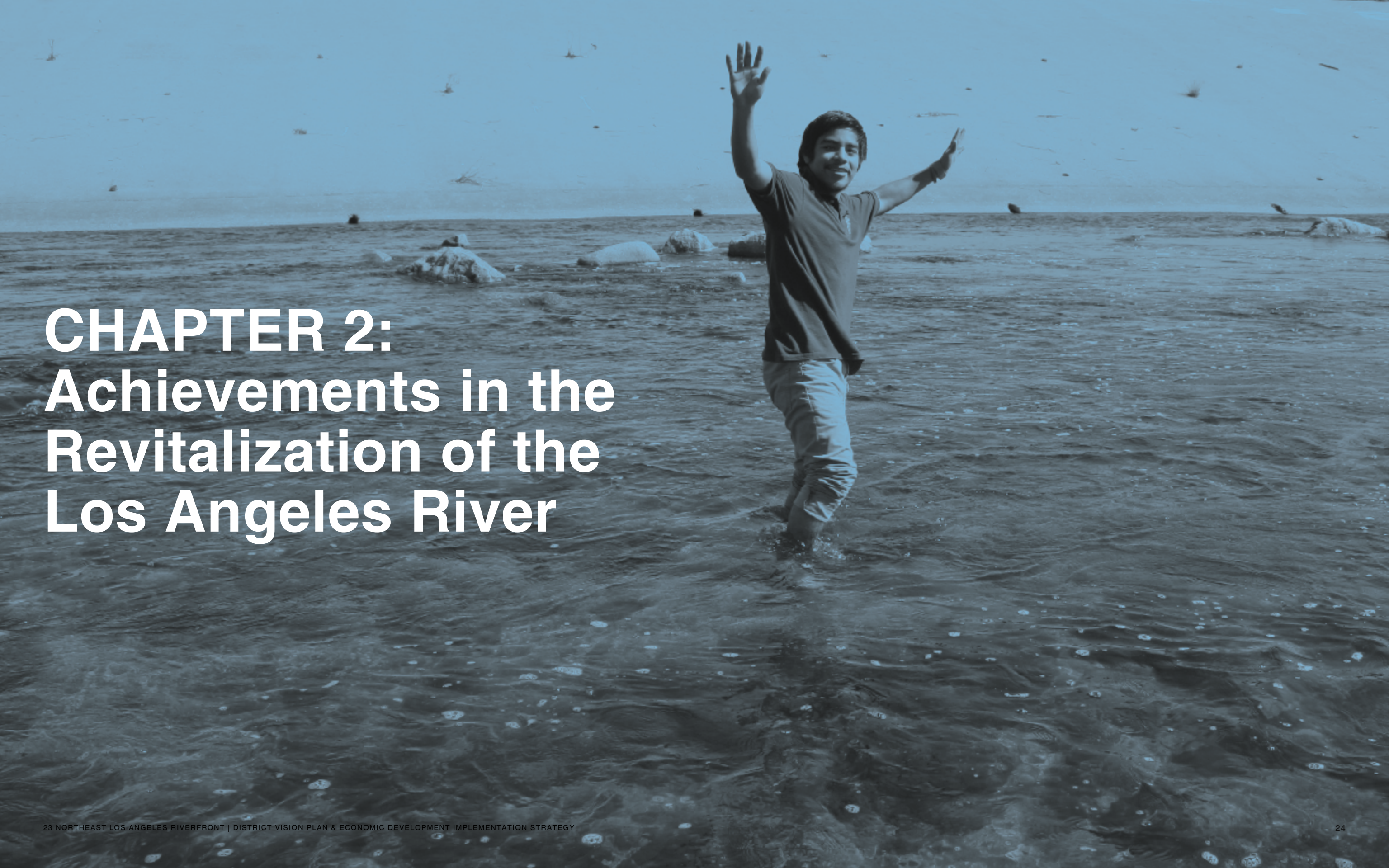
communication, interfacing with the NELA RC, LACC, LA City Planning Office and project stakeholders, to gather, organize, and analyze information, create lists, maps, and project profiles, and lead the placemaking community planning process.

**LA-Más** is a non-profit design firm that investigates the relationship between community, health, and the built environment. As part of the NELA placemaking team, they are looking at how the environment and health resources impact the community.

**The Robert Group** is a public affairs firm with special expertise in public engagement, stakeholder outreach, and strategic communications. As part of the NELA RC placemaking team, they augmented existing public outreach efforts to further cultivate community participation.

## NELA RC Advisory Committee

The NELA RC assembled a NELA RC Advisory committee made up of local residents and business stakeholders. They have advised and continue to advise us on the NELA RC process. We thank their community stewardship and continued participation: Steve Appleton, Ava Bromberg, Josef Bray-Ali, Jeff Chapman, Scott Cher, Daveed Kapoor, Helen Leung, Michael O’Connell, Elizabeth Gallardo, Chris Pena, Yancey Quinones, Elaine Rene-Weissman, Damien Robledo, Alisa Smith, and Alex Ventura.



# CHAPTER 2: Achievements in the Revitalization of the Los Angeles River

# History of the Los Angeles River

The Los Angeles River is a unique ecological and cultural feature – one unlike any other in Los Angeles’ urban landscape. Flowing 51 miles through various communities from the San Fernando Valley to the Port of Long Beach, its watershed hosts a diversity of land uses, from suburban to highly urbanized, commercial, industrial, and residential. Originally a lush and alluvial river amidst an arid landscape, the Los Angeles River morphed into one of the City’s largest infrastructural masterpieces, protecting its surrounding residents from the devastation of flooding, donned in a concrete shell designed by the Army Corp of Engineers in the early 1930’s. Understanding the River’s past and the decisions that led to its concrete shell offers insightful information into the history of the City and allows us to envision a future that offers restoration to the Los Angeles River.

In 1934, a year of severe storm events in Los Angeles, the residents demanded action from the Federal Government. Within two years, Congress passed the 1936 Flood Control Act, bequeathing control of the Los Angeles River to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. No longer a vital source of water or sustenance for the City, the L.A. River was viewed as a grave danger to civilization and growth by the Army Corps, prompting the 30-year process of channelizing to begin. By the time the channelization was complete, the natural and historic Los Angeles River, which for centuries had sustained the inhabitants on its shores, had essentially disappeared. The growing metropolis of Los Angeles could now rest safely during the winter rains.

During the decades that the Army Corp’s workers transformed the River’s channel, other infrastructure



Fig. 4 The Los Angeles River flows 51 miles through several communities starting from San Fernando Valley to the port of Long Beach.





Channelization of the L.A. River



South end of Taylor Yard

1781

*El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles is founded where Olvera Street now exists*

1800



*El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles and Zanja Madre*

1825

*A massive flood cuts a new path south of the pueblo to San Pedro Bay*

**mid 1800s**

*Development boom results in homes and businesses being built in the floodplain*

1850

*Los Angeles incorporated as a City*

1880



*From Boyle Heights*

projects altered the lands alongside it. As the population swelled in the early decades of the 20th century, so did the cargo volume in the Port of San Pedro. As the city sprawled in all directions, there was a growing need to move cargo by rail to Los Angeles and beyond. The lands next to the new concrete river offered the simplest and most accessible right-of-way for the harbor's rail lines. Multiple railroad tracks, power lines and support facilities were constructed along its banks, from the San Pedro harbor to downtown and into the area of the Glendale Narrows.

Also beginning in the early 1900's was the usage of automobiles. As City residents sprawled from downtown to regions like Burbank, Glendale, Culver City and the coastal communities, City leaders saw the need for larger and better roadways to connect the cities of Southern California. Once again, the lands next to the Los Angeles River offered the most affordable solution. The Arroyo Seco Parkway (known today as the 110 Pasadena Freeway) became the country's first freeway when it opened alongside the tributary in 1940. The Golden State Freeway (I-5) debuted in 1947 and followed the L.A. River north out of downtown.

In 1962, the Ventura Freeway paralleled the River to the west. The original plans for Griffith Park included five miles of the L.A. River, with the expectation from its benefactor, Coronel Griffith, that it would be a riverfront

park. Sadly, the freeways erased all riverside access in the city's largest public park.

Though the freeways and rail lines proved critical to the growth of the Southern California Region, they created physical barriers to the River, detracting from its beauty, and devastating its tranquility. The concrete coffin that secured the city's safety had, tragically, left the Los Angeles River unrecognizable. In a final irony, the Army Corps insisted for decades that the Los Angeles River no longer had navigable water but was, instead, merely a host to a 51-mile flood control channel.

It was not until 1980 that efforts to restore the beauty and life of the Los Angeles River surfaced and continue to this day. Notwithstanding ideas of turning the River into a freeway during the summer months in early 1990's, the River has been championed by local and federal politicians who understand that the River offers residents more than just flood protection, it offers them a place of solace and respite from the bustling metropolis that surrounds it. The revitalization effort was stimulated on the one hand by a shift in the U.S. economic base from industrial manufacturing to service, communications and technology industries, leaving many previously bustling riverbanks with increasingly derelict and often polluted areas; and on the other hand by a growing public awareness of, and interest in, the environmental issues surrounding the River.



Arroyo Seco Parkway after its completion in 1940

1884



1st street bridge flooded

1898 1900



Glassell and Cypress Park

In 1996, The County Board of supervisors released and began implementation of the Los Angeles River Master Plan. In June of 2002, under the leadership of Councilmember Ed Reyes, the Los Angeles City Council approved the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Los Angeles River to focus on the revitalization of the Los Angeles River and its tributaries. The Committee’s mission is to arrange and manage river projects that preside over the various stakeholders along the River. By 2007, the City of Los Angeles released the Los Angeles River Revitalization Masterplan (LARRMP). This plan is a 25-50 year blueprint for implementing a variety of comprehensive improvements that would make the River one of the City’s most treasured landmarks and a catalyst for economic development. The plan proposed 239 projects that are intended to renew the River and its surrounding communities. By 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency designated “the entire L.A. River as traditional navigable waters.” By 2013, the City completed the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study, a study for the Army Corps of Engineers to identify opportunity sites where ecological value can be restored to river habitat while maintaining adequate flood protection. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will manage project construction, and the project costs will be paid 65% by federal funds and 35% by municipal funds.

These revitalization efforts have brought multiple parks and recreational places along the River’s edge, created a legislative interest in restoration and ecology with the prospective River Implementation Ordinance Overlay Zone, encouraged the creation of progressive new land use policies as seen in the Cornfield Arroyo Specific Plan, and foster the excitement of surrounding. While these revitalization efforts are fiercely passionate in restoring the Los Angeles River, it still remains a hidden jewel for many Angelinos, who have minimal interaction with the Los Angeles River.

For many residents and visitors, the sole knowledge of our 51-mile river, disguised now as a channel of concrete, has been gleaned from furtive glances while crossing a downtown bridge, or while dashing down the Ventura or Golden State freeway. Yet the River today grows more diverse and interesting and more worth visiting each day. Those fleeting impressions do both the River and the viewer a disservice as they expose the years of neglect rather than the beauty that once was.

A hint of the original L.A. River still survives, however, along three large, soft-bottomed sections -- about 10% of the total channel -- where the Army Corps of Engineers avoided concrete due to a higher than average water table. In the Sepulveda Basin and along a three-mile section called the Glendale Narrows (flowing from Glendale through the Elysian Valley), visitors can find



Councilmembers Mitch O’Farrell and Gil Cedillo rally the City in support for Alternative 20 in the ARBOR Study.

a hidden ecosystem where water splashes over boulders and ponds and rush-lined eddies are home to fish and frogs. Among the groves of willows, scores of species of birds hunt, drink and rest. This living reminder of the waterway’s original charm repeats near Long Beach,

where the waters of the L.A. River finally meet the sea. It is the hope that one day the Los Angeles River will be improved in such a way as to be returned to its original, natural state while still providing the critical flood control that the City needs.



# Efforts in Revitalization by the City of Los Angeles

The City of Los Angeles has taken substantial efforts and a multi-disciplinary approach into the revitalization of the Los Angeles River. From zoning to wildlife restoration to multi-modal transportation, the City has partnered with agencies across the board to ensure that every aspect of river revitalization is taken into consideration and approached in a holistic manner. Listed below are the past, present and future policy proposals and projects meant to not only restore the Los Angeles River to its former beauty but to ensure exponential growth of the River as a biological, cultural, and recreational hub of the City.

## Interdepartmental

### Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan

In May of 2007, the Los Angeles City Council adopted the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, written by a large team of “riverly” planners, architects, engineers, governmental agencies and residents, led by Pasadena-

based Tetra Tech. The Master Plan was intended to be a 20-year blueprint for development and management of the Los Angeles River. Their creation, the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, is an important and visionary document that is being implemented daily by all City entities and managed primarily by the Bureau of Engineering and Department of City Planning.

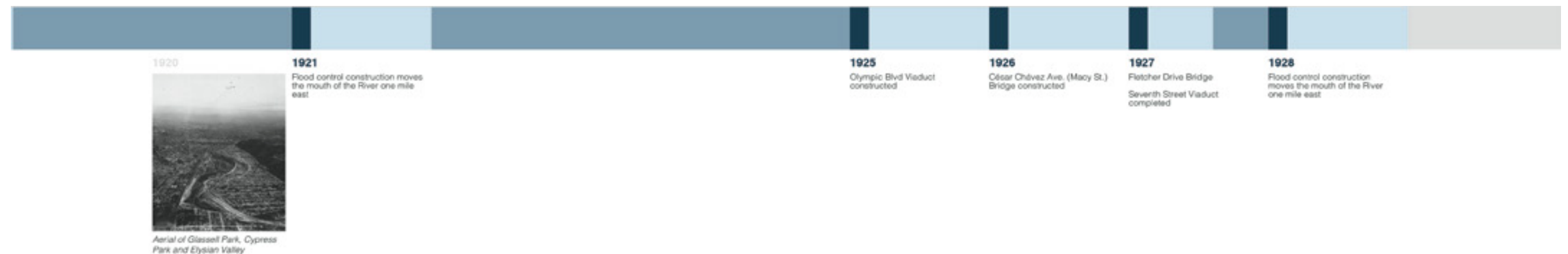
## LA KRETZ BRIDGE AND THE LOS ANGELES RIVER REVITALIZATION CORP

The La Kretz Bridge is a \$6 million suspension bridge that will link equestrians and bicyclists in Atwater Village to 56 miles of horse trails in Griffith Park and the Los Angeles River Bikeway. Once built, the bridge would provide a path for equestrians, pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the Los Angeles River, connecting the Atwater Village community and equestrian stables to a bike path and major parks like Griffith and other parks within the Atwater community. The project is part of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan approved in 2007, and was championed by the Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation., a nonprofit group set up in 2009 by the City to fundraise for this project as well as other projects along the Los Angeles River.

The project recently received a \$5 million commitment from Mort La Kretz, for whom the bridge is being named, who

also donated money to the 3.2-acre La Kretz Innovation Campus in the Downtown Arts District. The remainder of the funds came from AB 1290 discretionary funds from Councilman Tom LaBonge’s Fourth District and the 13th Council District.

“People riding horseback now cross the river bank to make it across, so the bridge would provide a safer passage,” said 13th District Councilman Mitch O’Farrell. “It would also connect the newly expanded North Atwater Park, which included the revitalization of a creek, to Griffith Park and the 6,000-mile Los Angeles Bikeway,” O’Farrell said. This project amongst the many other projects that will evolve from fundraising efforts for the Los Angeles River prove the importance of public-private partnership and their role in helping define the recreational landscape of the City.





Clockwise: Community residents learn about sustainable water management during an L.A. River tour. Ford donates \$50,000 in support for the Greenway 2020 campaign. . In collaboration with Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the City of L.A., and community residents, the River’s section in Elysian Valley allows kayaking for all.

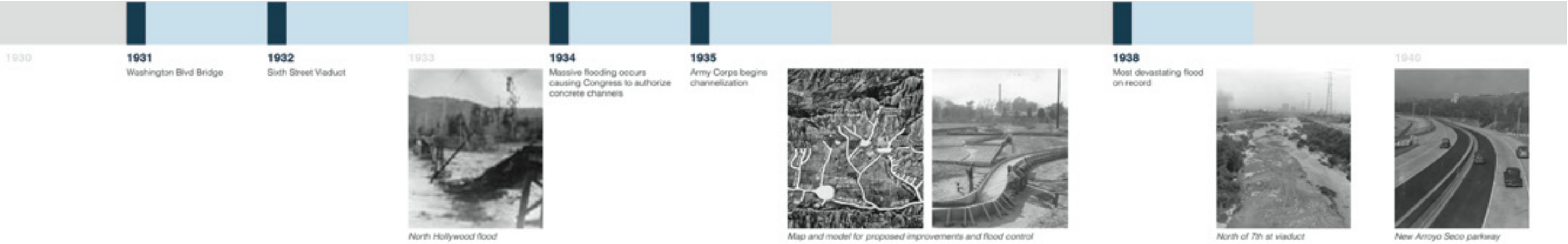
The long-term vision for the River within the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan involves restoring a continuous, functioning riparian ecosystem along the River Corridor. This would involve restoring riparian vegetation to support birds and mammals, and ideally, developing fish passages, fish ladders, and riffle pools to allow for restoration of steelhead trout habitat.

In the short-term, channel walls can be modified to provide green landscaped terraces for wildlife habitat, water quality treatment, and increased public enjoyment. A system of pathways and overlooks can provide safe public access. Accomplishing long-term improvements would involve expansion of channel capacity and reduction in flow velocity. These can be achieved through a combination of flood storage outside the channel, underground flow diversions, and, over the long-term, land acquisition, including purchase of private property to allow for channel widening.

A major element of reconnecting neighborhoods to the Los Angeles River is the transformation of the River Corridor into a continuous River Greenway that functions as the “green spine” of the City. Safe, pedestrian-friendly connections to the Greenway can be provided via a system of arterial and local “green streets” that are bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly, and paseos with wide sidewalks and shady tree canopies. To improve habitat connectivity, specific recommendations are presented to aid in the restoration and creation of habitat linkages throughout the River Corridor.

As this system develops, signature elements—gateways, bridges, paseos, plazas, and other landmarks—can be added to reinforce the River’s identity. Building on past efforts, public art can be a major component of this system. Within neighborhoods, underused or vacant space, as well as existing public spaces such as schoolyards, can be refurbished and made a part of the emerging green network and enhanced cultural landscape.

Making the River green and accessible is expected to transform an undervalued asset into a valued amenity. Revitalization offers the opportunity for communities to engage in development that leads to an improved natural environment, while also attracting investment that leads to new jobs, increased property values, more livable streets, and sustainable growth. To assess the potential benefits of revitalization and to illustrate possible design ideas, different land use possibilities were explored for some of the document’s Opportunity Areas and developed into hypothetical designs and three-dimensional models. Each of these models retains existing significant buildings, and proposes building typologies and massing that are realistic in the prevailing market. The Taylor Yard Opportunity Area’s analysis was devoted primarily to natural and open space considerations. This Area presents great promise as an early example of concrete removal that can result in significant water quality, habitat and recreation benefits. Additionally, the Area’s close proximity to a planned



high school makes it an ideal location to create outdoor classrooms and other environmental education features.

Estimates of economic benefits accruing to the proposed revitalization concepts for the selected Opportunity Areas (combined, at full build-out) range from \$2.7 to \$5.4 billion in new development, 11,000 to 18,000 new jobs, and a long-term tax revenue increase ranging from \$47 to \$81 million, annually.

The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan proposed a three tiered structure for managing the revitalization of the Los Angeles River. Because of the multiple public entities with jurisdiction over various aspects of the River, the management structure was designed to be comprehensive, flexible enough to allow these entities to work in collaboration, and comprehensive enough to proceed independently when necessary.

The Plan’s proposed River management structure includes three elements:

- **Governmental:** The Los Angeles River Authority, a joint powers authority (JPA) that includes the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, and through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The JPA would serve as the principal entity with authority and responsibility for River reconstruction, right-of-

way management and maintenance, assuming responsibilities for public liability, permitting, and land development.

- **Entrepreneurial:** The Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation would be a not-for-profit entity charged with directing public and private financing for River-related and neighborhood revitalization projects.
- **Philanthropic:** The Los Angeles River Foundation would be a not-for-profit body established by private individuals to support the Plan’s revitalization goals.

This proposed management structure would enable the City and its partners to maintain a long-term focus on river revitalization in order to ensure that the River remains a priority for future generations.

City Planning Department

Cornfield Arroyo Specific Plan

After years of work and input from local community groups, environmentalists, affordable housing advocates, transportation advocates, and the business community, the Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan (the “CASP”) cleared its final hurdle on June 28, 2013 when the Los Angeles City Council voted to approve it. The CASP aims to revitalize a more than 650-acre stretch of mostly industrial

LOS ANGELES RIVER  
REVITALIZATION CORP

The Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation (LARRC) is a non-profit corporation charged with catalyzing responsible real estate and related economic development along the L.A. River. Formed in December 2009 as an outgrowth of the recommendation from the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, their mission is to transform the River to improve people’s lives by carrying out sustainable land use projects, advocacy for river friendly policy, and programs for community benefit.

LARRC’s objective is to make the transformation of the River a reality by breaking ground on signature projects. The L.A. River Corp focuses its efforts on: connecting a continuous 51-mile Greenway; enhancing the La Kretz Crossing area at North Atwater; and aligning with the Cornfields Arroyo Seco Specific Plan (CASP) in Lincoln Heights to improve the design and understanding of implementable urban agriculture in the CASP area.

One of their most ambitious projects was announced on July 23, 2013 as Greenway 2020. The project will create a continuous 51-mile corridor that will run along a restored

L.A. River and offer one of the longest recreational arteries in the country. By the year 2020, the project aims to connect the existing 26 miles of bike path to key remaining sections. Some of the project’s successes include La Kretz Crossing, a bridge that will link Griffith Park to Atwater Village, and a donation of \$13 million from NBC Universal and Universal Studios Hollywood to extend the existing 7-mile River path from Griffith Park Zoo to Lankershim Boulevard by 2016. They are currently advocating for the selection and implementation of Alternative 20 of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study which plans for a full restoration of 11 miles of the River between Union Station and Griffith Park.

L.A. River Corps is a vital component in spurring river revitalization. They are building a broad-based coalition across multiple sectors, working cooperatively and transparently to carry out their mission. And, through continued efforts, they are miles closer to realizing one of the country’s longest urban riverfronts.

1941

Sepulveda Dam is completed



land along the Los Angeles River. The CASP includes several innovative strategies that aim to transform an area zoned and built according to development and land use patterns left over from the 1940's. The goal is a mixed-use neighborhood that concentrates higher densities around transit, preserves and develops affordable housing, and fosters economic growth and new technology, while providing sorely needed certainty to developers and investors interested in investing in the CASP area.

Some of the CASP's innovative provisions include:

- Affordable Housing:** The CASP provides for a Density Bonus Program that allows for increased Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") above the base FAR for projects that agree to include an affordable housing component. The CASP also includes "on- and off-menu" incentives for projects that participate in the Density Bonus Program. The on-menu incentives include increases in the amount of residential FAR permitted in a project and an increase in the maximum height. The off-menu incentives permit an applicant to request a waiver from development standards set forth in the CASP or the Los Angeles Municipal Code.
- Transfer of Floor Area:** The CASP allows unused FAR to be transferred between properties within the CASP area. Both residential and non-residential projects can purchase unused FAR from other eligible properties to maximize FAR.
- Streamlined Project Approval:** Projects complying with CASP standards are eligible for an "Administrative Clearance" approval procedure. The environmental impact report prepared for the CASP fully assessed environmental impacts for projects that comply with the CASP's standards, allowing projects approved via the Administrative Clearance to avoid additional CEQA review.
- New Zones:** The CASP contains four new zones: a Greenway Zone, Urban Village Zone, Urban Center Zone and an Urban Innovation Zone. The Greenway Zone provides for open space along the Los Angeles River. The Urban Village, Urban Center and Urban Innovation Zones all allow for mixed-use developments and are intended to promote a robust mix of light industrial, residential and commercial uses.
- Parking:** Because the CASP area is well served by public transit, there are no minimum parking requirements. This is a first of its kind strategy for the City of Los Angeles.
- Reduced Lot Area:** The number of dwelling units permitted in residential developments is not limited by the minimum unit size provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. With an eye toward increasing the supply of affordable housing, the CASP allows projects to build smaller residential units that can be rented at lower rates.



Fig 5. Cornfield Arroyo Specific Plan Site Area Map



- The ordinance enacting the CASP (Ordinance No. 182,617) became effective on August 14, 2013. Whether the CASP’s innovative strategies will be successful in enticing new economic development and the range of housing choices envisioned remains to be seen, but the CASP has created a new blueprint offering real opportunities to achieve these goals.

### Cypress Park and Glassell Park Community Design Overlay District

The Cypress Park & Glassell Park Community Design Overlay District (CDO) Plan provides guidelines and standards for public and private development projects within the District. The intent of the CDO is to provide guidance and direction in the design of new buildings and the exterior remodeling and restoration of existing homes, buildings and storefronts that contribute to the area’s revival as an attractive and vital business district and a walkable and desirable residential neighborhood. In addition it is the intent of the CDO to protect the culturally and historically significant architecture of the area.

The Design Guidelines found within the Cypress Park & Glassell Park CDO exist as a framework to guide future projects within the District. The subsequent Development Standards set forth requirements that bring about compliance with portions of the Design Guidelines.

These Guidelines and Standards bring about an overall pedestrian orientation and neighborhood beautification for the Cypress Park & Glassell Park District.

### River Improvement Overlay

The River Improvement Overlay (RIO) is a proposed district that would require projects to adhere to three design categories including watershed, urban design and mobility. The plan also includes standards for “complete streets” that take into account not just the needs of motorists but also pedestrians, cyclists and transit rides when major projects or street improvements are planned. The District would better coordinate land use development along the 32-mile corridor of the Los Angeles River within the City’s boundaries. The RIO includes neighborhoods within the City of Los Angeles that are adjacent within one-half mile of either side of the River. Its boundaries extend just west of the headwaters at Topanga Canyon Boulevard eastwards towards Griffith Park and bends south to the point that the River flows out of the City at 26<sup>th</sup> Street. The District encompasses the Glendale Narrows Area and includes the neighborhoods of Atwater Village and Elysian Valley and portions of Cypress Park and Lincoln Heights.

The RIO has its origins in the urban design goals established in the LARRMP and intends to support the vision of

the L.A. River and its Greenway as a livable, walkable, sustainable community. The RIO will help implement the LARRMP by including guidelines for both private property and public rights of way and establish a unique distinct environment in the surrounding neighborhoods. The RIO does not change or restrict existing zoning, land use or intensity of land use. It also does not grant new rights to land not zoned for development. However if a new project is being developed or a substantial portion of an existing structure is being rebuilt, design guidelines established in the RIO must be adhered to.

### Parks and Rec

#### Building Parks along river

The parks of the River provide much needed open space in many of the Northeast communities. Common themes in the parks along the River include native riparian plants, community artwork, Brett Goldstone iron gates and sculptures, and accommodations for storm water runoff. Northeast Trees and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy collaborated on many of the parks listed below.

**Sunnynook Park** – Nestled between the 5 freeway and the River, the park provides a turnout for bicyclists and pedestrians along the path and showcases native flora to capture storm water runoff. Sunnynook also incorporates many education opportunities along the decomposed

granite walking paths. A pedestrian bridge links the east and west banks.

**Red Car River Park** – This area of open space commemorates the era of streetcars in Los Angeles and provides access to the east side of the River in Atwater Village.

**Rattlesnake Park** – Heron gates by Brett Goldstone punctuate the entrance to Rattlesnake Park from Fletcher Drive. The park is a peaceful nook to sit and enjoy the shade. It features ample seating, a bike rack, and drinking fountain.

**Duck Park** – As the name suggests, this section of the River lends itself to the birds of the River. This peaceful enclave in Elysian Valley is truly an urban oasis, and many use the park for bird watching as it is a convenient observation spot.

**Steelhead Park** – The namesake of this park are the steelhead trout that made the River their home until it was paved. The iron gates in Elysian Valley feature the iconic fish, and educational signs describe the history of Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.

**Oso Park** – Wildlife sculptures welcome visitors to the pocket park. The park is bordered by Riverside Drive, and serves as a reminder to the motorists of the important link between Elysian Valley and the River.





Entrance to Sunnynook River Park near Atwater Village



Counterclockwise from top to bottom: Red Car River Park Mural, Great Heron Gates at Rattlesnake Park, Amphitheater at Steelhead Park.



**Egret Park** – Egret Park marks the end of the bike path (though preparations are in place to continue the trail). It is the southernmost access point in Elysian Valley to the River. The peaceful spot is shaded by native trees.

**Crystal Street Bike Park**– Provides community access to the River Bike Path with special accommodations for bicyclists like a bike staging area and maps displaying bike routes.

**Marsh Park** – Marsh Park provides year round services for the people along the River as it features a unique depression. In the warmer months, the park serves as an amphitheater for rallies, talks, and movies. As the weather gets cooler and rain starts to fall, the Marsh serves an important ecological service to store water as it percolates into the ground where it will be cleaned and purified in aquifers before it reaches the river and wildlife there. There are plans in place to expand the park. Up the street from Marsh Park, a skate park welcomes the neighborhood's youth and skateboarders.

**Water with Rocks Park**– Notable because of the boulders and, not surprisingly, rocks, this pocket park provides access to the east bank of the river from Atwater Village.

**Rio de Los Angeles State Park**– A piece of Taylor Yard, adjacent to the River in Cypress Park, allotted to build a playground, ample sports accommodations, a children's water park and shaded walking trails. In January 2013,

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority approved spending to design a bicycle and pedestrian bridge connecting Elysian Valley and Taylor Yard in Cypress Park.

**North Atwater Park** – One of the lead projects as part of the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, the park and green space plays a large part in the overall plan of the river in Northeast Los Angeles. The park features of small natural tributary of the River, Atwater Creek. The refurbishment of this area improves water downstream.

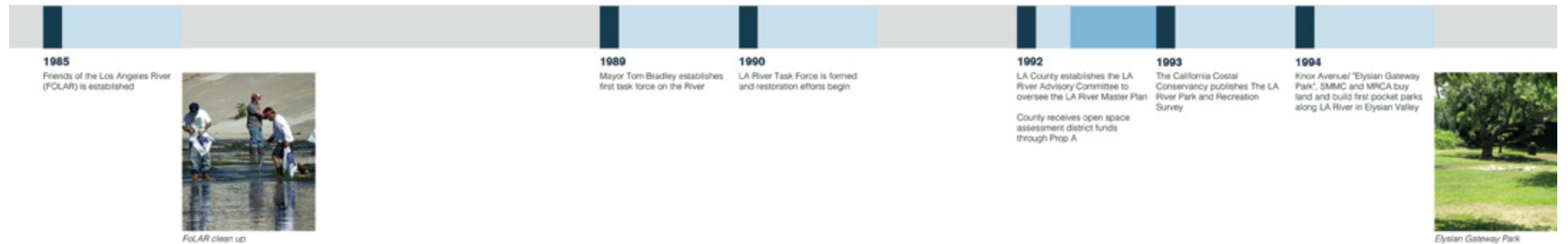
**Elysian Valley Gateway Park** – This park was among the first in creating the river greenway. The grassy area is a great picnicking spot with shady trees at the end of Knox Avenue in Elysian Valley.

**Los Angeles River Center and Gardens** – While not directly adjacent to the river, the River Center in Cypress plays a large part in the river's future as it is home to many non-profits fighting for the River including Friends of the Los Angeles River and the Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation, as well as Northeast Trees and Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy. The location includes green space and native landscape on the site of the old Lawry's.

**Los Angeles State Historic Park** – Popularly referred to as the Cornfields, this 32-acre park has had a



Counterclockwise from top to bottom: Oso Park, Water park at Rio de Los Angeles State Park, Bicycle Park at Crystal Street, Duck Park in Elysian Valley



colorful and rich history starting at the birth of city. Currently, there are a few trees and walking trails, and many large events use the space throughout the year. Beginning in 2014 though, the park will close and undergo major renovations to include an amphitheater, permanent restrooms, and space for a farmers market and large events. The space is adjacent to the river but currently there is not free access between the River and park.

**Albion Park Project (Planned)** – The Albion Dairy site is a proposed site for another riverfront park. The City officially held possession of the Ross Swiss Dairy site next to Downey Recreation Center in January 2011. Funding is limited, so the plans for the Lincoln Heights park have not made much progress. Green space is especially valuable here though as the river is no longer soft bottomed by this point near the Broadway Bridge.

**Confluence Park (Under Construction)** – This highly anticipated park will transform a section of the River into a public park and education area. The location marks the point where the Arroyo Seco – after flowing through the foothills of La Cañada, through Pasadena and South Pasadena – meets the River in Cypress Park. The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy championed these plans and land acquisitions that will build upon the Confluence Plaza.

Public Works  
ARBOR Study

The ARBOR Study, or the “Area with Restoration Benefits and Opportunities for Revitalization”, aims to restore approximately 11 miles of the Los Angeles River from Griffith Park to downtown Los Angeles. The goal is to reestablish riparian strand, freshwater marsh, and aquatic habitat communities and reconnect the River to major tributaries, its historic floodplain, and the regional habitat zones of the Santa Monica, San Gabriel, and Verdugo Mountains while maintaining existing levels of flood risk management. A secondary purpose is to provide recreational opportunities consistent with the restored ecosystem. Out of all possible options, Alternative 13 was recently selected for funding and implementation.

“Alternative 13 is named ACE (for ARBOR Corridor Extension) as it includes all the features in Alternative 10, including restoration of the historic wash at Piggyback Yard, terracing at the Bowtie Parcel, and restoration of side channels, riparian corridors, and daylighted streams, and adds additional restoration increasing restored habitat over no action by 104 percent, including restoration of the full Taylor Yard site and restoration of the Arroyo Seco tributary. Added restoration occurs in three reaches. This includes a side channel entering upstream from the River behind Ferraro Fields and re-entering the River through a

daylighted stream and marsh area at the downstream end of reach 3. In reach 6, there is additional widening of over 300 feet in Taylor Yard with significant restoration of the floodplain and freshwater marsh in the widened channel. Major tributary restoration with nodal connections on the east side of the River to the nationally significant Arroyo Seco watershed is included at the Arroyo Seco (reach 7). This is accomplished through softening of the bed and banks with development of a riparian corridor in the tributary confluence and for one half mile upstream. This supports habitat connections through the river from the Santa Monica Mountains to the San Gabriel Mountains. Instead of the daylighted streams included this reach for Alternative 10, the banks of the River downstream from the Arroyo Seco are lined with overhanging vines and implanted vegetation through this reach. Alternative 13 delivers about 600 more HUs (an increase of 104 % over no action and 11% above Alternative 10) and 60 additional acres, increasing nodal connections for wildlife by a significant 309 percent, and meeting objectives in all reaches for approximately \$79 million more (\$453 million total).”

Green Streets Initiative

The Green Streets L.A. program was initiated by the City Board of Public Works with the idea that Los Angeles’ extensive street network offers an important opportunity to absorb, capture and filter urban runoff,

which addresses pollution and groundwater recharge issues. The Green Streets L.A. program has expanded the City’s focus to include a broader array of LID practices. A preliminary set of green streets design guidelines were developed in 2008 and other measures are being planned to institutionalize low impact development.

Thus far, the City has started a couple of Green Streets Project in Los Angeles, two of which are located within the NELA study area. These projects are located on Oros Street and Riverdale Avenue, both in Elysian Valley.

Oros Street is a residential street in the Elysian Valley section of Los Angeles. Runoff from this street drains directly to Los Angeles River. This is one of the first streets in Los Angeles to be converted into a green street. Completed in 2007 at a total cost of about \$1 million, this project provides bio-retention areas in the street parkway, additional street landscaping and a large infiltration basin underneath Steelhead Park at the end of the block. The objective was to capture and treat 100% of the dry-weather runoff and at least ¾” of rainfall during storms. This project was a collaboration between North East Trees and the City of Los Angeles, represented by the Bureau of Street Services and the Watershed Protection Division from the Bureau of Sanitation.

Riverdale Avenue is adjacent to Oros Street and was converted to a green street in 2009. The purpose of the





Street landscaping as a strategy to absorb, capture and filter urban runoff.

retrofit is to capture and infiltrate urban runoff and stormwater from a 14.6-acre drainage area by using specially designed diversion measures and infiltration planters. Existing parkways and sidewalks will be replaced by native plant species. Construction costs of this project are funded by a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy (up to \$500,000) and the City of Los Angeles will provide in-kind design services.

Low Impact Development Ordinance

Low Impact Development (LID) is a leading stormwater management strategy that seeks to mitigate the impacts of runoff and stormwater pollution as close to its source as possible. Urban runoff discharged from municipal storm drain systems is one of the principal causes of water quality impacts in most urban areas. It can contain pollutants such as trash and debris, bacteria and viruses, oil and grease, sediments, nutrients, metals, and toxic chemicals that can negatively affect the ocean, rivers, plant and animal life, and public health.

LID comprises a set of site design approaches and best management practices (or BMPs) that are designed to address runoff and pollution at the source. These LID practices can effectively remove nutrients, bacteria, and metals while reducing the volume and intensity of stormwater flows.

Los Angeles’ [LID ordinance](#) became effective in May 2012. The main purpose of this law is to ensure that development and redevelopment projects mitigate runoff in a manner that captures rainwater at its source, while utilizing natural resources. Project applicants are required to prepare and implement a stormwater mitigation plan when their projects fall into any of these categories:

- Single-family hillside residential developments
- Housing developments of 10 or more dwelling units (including single family tract developments)
- Industrial /Commercial developments with one acre or more of impervious surface area
- Automotive service facilities\*
- Retail gasoline outlets\*
- Restaurants\*
- Parking lots of 5,000 square feet or more of surface area or with 25 or more parking spaces
- Projects with 2,500 square feet or more of impervious area that are located in, adjacent to, or draining directly to designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)

\* Developments of less than 5,000 square feet in these categories are only subject to the prescriptive method described in the City of Los Angeles Best Management Practices Handbook Part B, 3rd Edition.

Project applicants will be required to incorporate stormwater mitigation measures into their design



plans and submit the plans to the City for review and approval. [Plan check appointments](#) are available at two locations - Downtown Los Angeles and the Valley District Office. Any project that cannot comply with the Low Impact Development Ordinance requirements shall be required to comply with, at a minimum, all applicable Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan requirements in order to maximize onsite compliance.

Current river revitalization movement has prompted increased attention and a need to figuratively break through the River's channels. Collaborative and proactive efforts by the City, several partnered agencies, organizations, and community involvement collectively illustrates the vast possibilities for transformational riverfront projects. Interdepartmental efforts have produced the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, providing a blueprint for a successful riverfront. Through the City Planning Department, plans such as the Cornfield Arroyo Seco Plan and the River Improvement Overlay address future development surrounding the River with specific attention to mobility, housing, and urban design. The creation of parks and recreational activity along the River allow residents and visitors to reconnect with Los Angeles' much neglected waterfront. Current studies and research on the River's existing conditions - through the ARBOR study - aims for a method of restoration that is sensitive to the River's history while considering the need for flood risk management. Other public works, such as the Green Initiative Program and the Low Impact Development Ordinance, offer strategies to renovate streets and have effective storm water management.

All in all, the tremendous positive momentum seen towards the Los Angeles River is a strong indicator that the River is ready to be reinvigorated. Not only does this momentum galvanize river revitalization, but it repositions the River as a valuable economic and strategic opportunity that can push the city into a rejuvenated political and economic posture. Most importantly, the positive momentum functions as a means to reimagine the River as a major participant in the way of life for Angelenos and as the backbone for the City as a whole.

# CHAPTER 3:

## The NELA Riverfront Study Area: A Closer Look

This chapter takes a closer look of the NELA Riverfront Study Area (Study Area). First is a discussion on the social demographic portrait of the study area.<sup>1</sup> Second we go deeper into the themes that arose from the door-to-door resident surveys administered in the Study Area over the summer of 2013.<sup>2</sup> Third, we go into an analysis of how the NELA neighborhoods and the L.A. River is discussed through online media and communication.<sup>3</sup> Lastly, we discuss the community assets, challenges, and opportunities sites that arose from our different studies that included the surveys, mapping, demographic analysis, placemaking workshops, and strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis.<sup>4</sup>

1. The demographic portrait is based on analysis from NELA RC partner Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation.

2. The survey data analysis is based on resident surveys directed by NELA RC partner USC Metamorphosis Project.

3. The analysis of online media stories on NELA neighborhoods and the L.A. River comes from 'media monitoring' research conducted by the NELA RC partner USC Metamorphosis Project.

4. The community assets, challenges, and opportunity sites analysis is based on different studies from NELA RC partners DCP, TWA, LACC, ML+A, LA Mas, and USC Metamorphosis.

# Demographic Portrait of the NELA Riverfront Study Area

## Geographic Site

The NELA Riverfront Study Area is located between the Ventura/Foothill Freeway (SR134) to the north and Main Street in Lincoln Heights to the south, with the east and west boundaries generally established by Interstate 5 and San Fernando Road. The Study Area contains either all or parts of the neighborhoods of Atwater Village, Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Lincoln Heights.

Because the residents and businesses of NELA are not likely to view the boundaries of NELA as constraints to their economic activities, the socio-economic characteristics of NELA must be viewed in the context of the larger geography. A larger region is identified to draw demographic comparisons that use the socio-economic characteristics outlined. This larger area, which we refer to as Greater NELA in the narrative that follows, is defined as residential and commercial districts within transportation corridors of NELA designed to capture the larger market. The NELA study area and Greater NELA are shown in Fig. \_\_\_ below. Additionally, the demographic portrait compares certain characteristics to L.A. County in order to give more context to NELA's relationship to the greater metropolitan area.

## Key Demographic and Income Characteristics

A selection of key demographic and income characteristics compared to the greater region can offer a window into

the social needs and economic growth potential of NELA a comparison of a selection of characteristics in NELA, the Greater NELA area, and Los Angeles County is presented in Fig. \_\_\_ below.

The population of NELA in 2012 was 45,128 in 14,084 households and accounted for approximately 0.5 percent of the population of Los Angeles County.

Median household income in NELA, estimated to be \$37,035 is approximately 28 percent lower than the average in Los Angeles County but higher than that in Greater NELA. Per capita income in NELA, estimated to be \$16,176 is 26 percent lower than Greater NELA and 34 percent lower in the county as a whole. Almost 19 percent of households in NELA lived under the poverty level. This was much higher than in the county, where 13.8 percent of households lived below the poverty level. This indicates that the many within the existing neighborhoods are working or lower middle class and can benefit from economic and community development projects within their neighborhoods.

Median home value in NELA is \$286,938, which is lower than both Greater NELA and L.A. County. However, with the recent interest in revitalizing the L.A. River in NELA, its proximity to Downtown, and the area's attractiveness to young professional and creative classes, there is a general perception that the home values are rising and that gentrification is taking place.

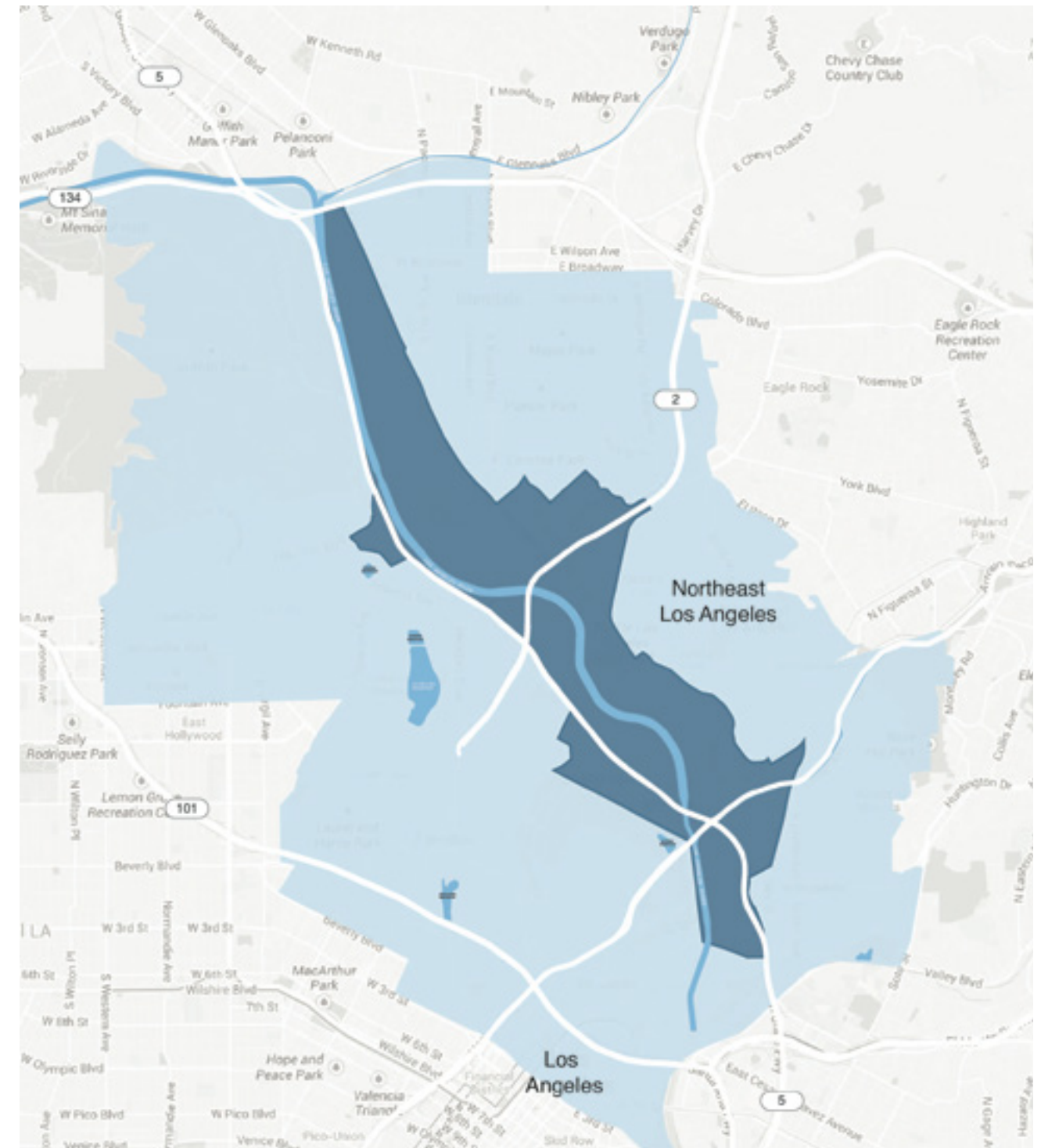
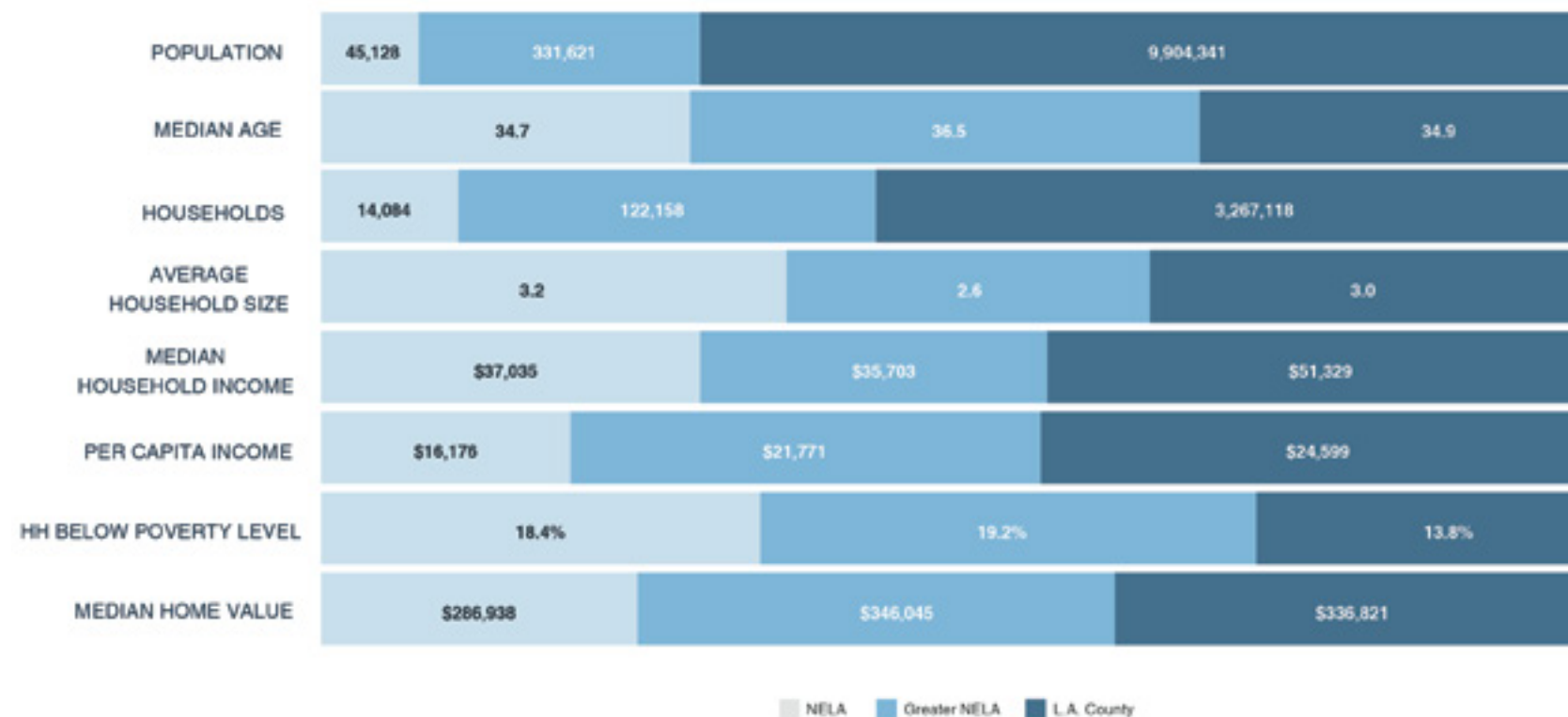


Fig. 6 The greater NELA area is highlighted in light blue with communities such as Glendale, Edendale, and Downtown L.A.

# DEMOGRAPHICS AND INCOME CHARACTERISTICS 2012



## HOUSING UNITS Occupancy and Tenure

Sources: ESRI; LAEDC

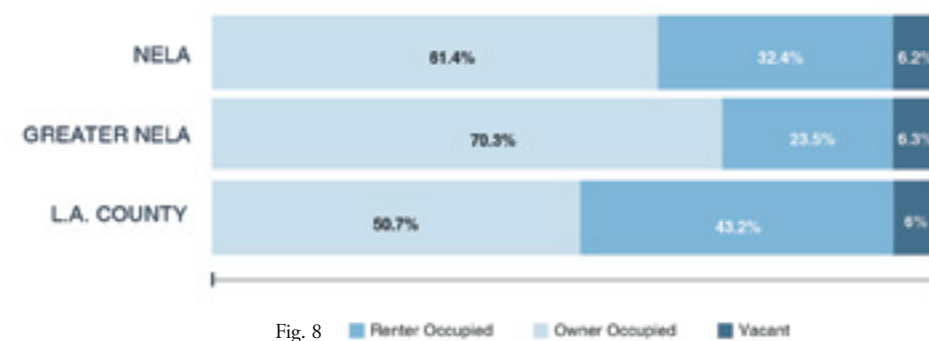


Fig. 8

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (Population 25+ Years)

Sources: ESRI; LAEDC; 2005-2009 ACS Estimate

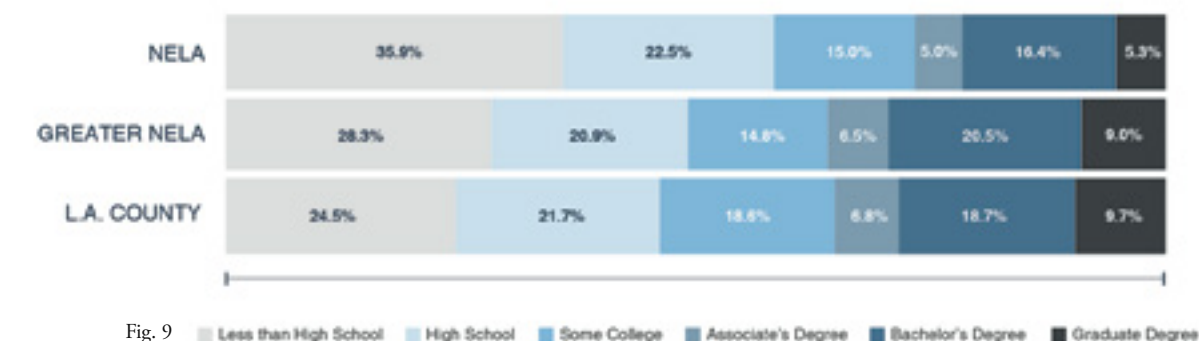


Fig. 9

Rising prices and decreased supply of housing also threatens the possible displacement of residents who rent in the area. The majority of NELA residents, 61 percent, as with the other geographies (Los Angeles County and Greater NELA) rent their housing units as shown in Fig. \_\_\_ below. The combined factors of the low-income population, their renter situation, and the low educational attainment for the population 25 years or older as indicated by Fig. \_\_\_ are social conditions to be considered in any consideration of equitable and sustainable development recommendations in the NELA area.

Race, Ethnicity, and Language Capability

The population in NELA is both ethnically and racially diverse. Race and Ethnicity in NELA is shown in Fig. \_\_\_ below. The share of the residents who reported to be of Hispanic Origin is higher than the county overall—66.8 percent is of Hispanic origin in NELA compared to 48.4 percent in Los Angeles County. The share of population in NELA reporting their race as Asian and Black (19.3 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively) is higher than in Los Angeles County (8.5 percent and 0.3 percent, respectively).

Language is an important aspect of diversity and culture within communities in Los Angeles. Fig. \_\_\_ below shows the ‘Languages Spoken at Home’ in NELA. More than three quarters of the population in NELA speaks a language other than English at home, with Spanish being the most common language, spoken by more than half of the population. Less than 25 percent of residents speak only English at home. This is an important indication of how the existing neighborhoods have different cultural values compared to mainstream English centered language city activities and how local planning and economic development can benefit from multilingual and multiethnic approaches to projects in the area.

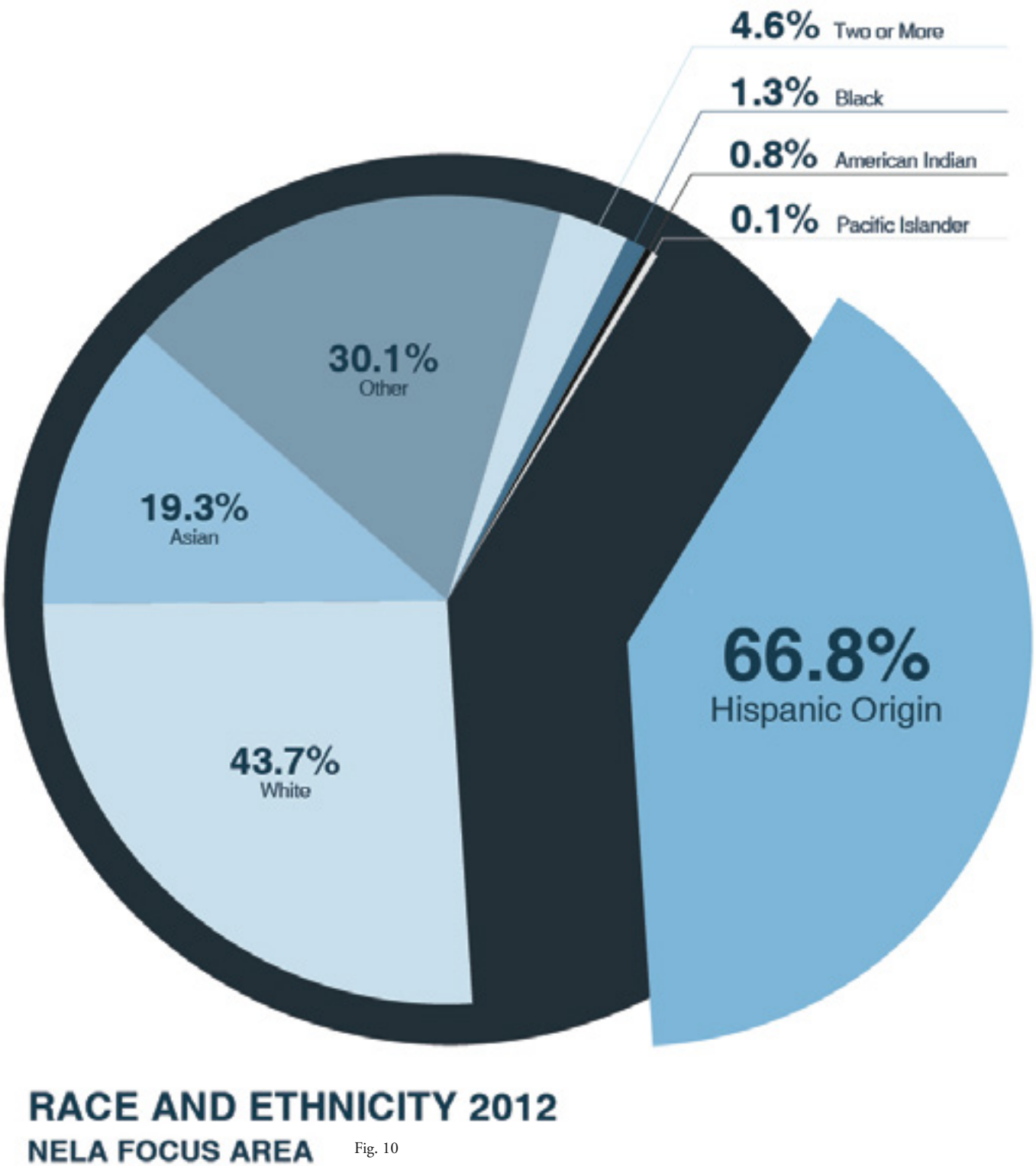


Fig. 10

# NELA Riverfront Study Area Resident Surveys

This section discusses a selection of results from the NELA Riverfront Collaborative (NELA RC) resident and small business surveys that were administered during the summer of 2013 in the study area.

As an extension of the demographic portrait above that accessed secondary data sets, the surveys provide a layer of research into the study area that formed part of the civic engagement program elements that aimed to engage residences and small businesses about the current social conditions of the neighborhood, what they valued, and what they wanted to improve. The majority of surveys were administered door-to-door when residents and small business owners or managers were available. Some resident surveys were administered at places in the neighborhoods which were pre-identified as high yielding gathering, such as parks and libraries. The survey questionnaire was developed alongside the partners and their policy objectives in order to provide input to the planning and implementation policies that the partners were developing.

Below is a selection of results that present a closer look into what the residents and small businesses think about in terms of the conditions of their neighborhoods and the river.

## Resident Survey

### Respondent Demographics <sup>1</sup>

The total sample of residents interviewed was 666 respondents. Over 100 respondents were interviewed in each of the neighborhoods; with the majority of respondents from Cypress Park (150), followed by Lincoln Heights (141), Atwater Village (137), Glassell Park (126), and Elysian Valley (104). Fig. \_\_\_ shows the respondent distribution according to the neighborhoods. The neighborhood distribution of the surveys were an important goal of the resident survey process as the NELA RC wanted to get a sense from all five neighborhoods.

The average age of the respondents was 42 years old, and the majority of respondents, over fifty percent, were female. For more of a breakdown, refer to Figs. \_\_\_ and \_\_\_.

Respondent race and ethnicity composition were comparable to the demographic portrait as the majority of respondents were of Latino/ Hispanic origins at 66 percent, followed by White/ Caucasian at 17 percent, Asian combined at 14 percent, Native

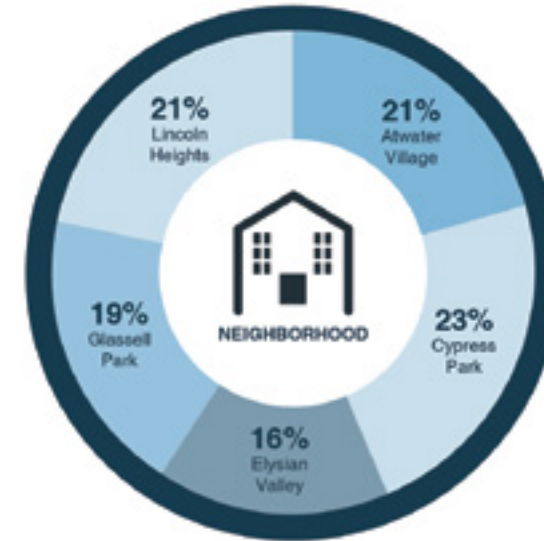


Fig. 11

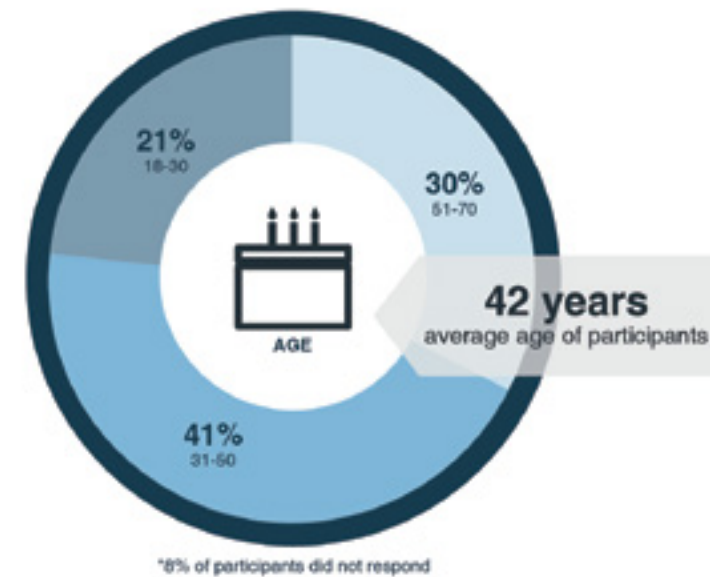


Fig. 13

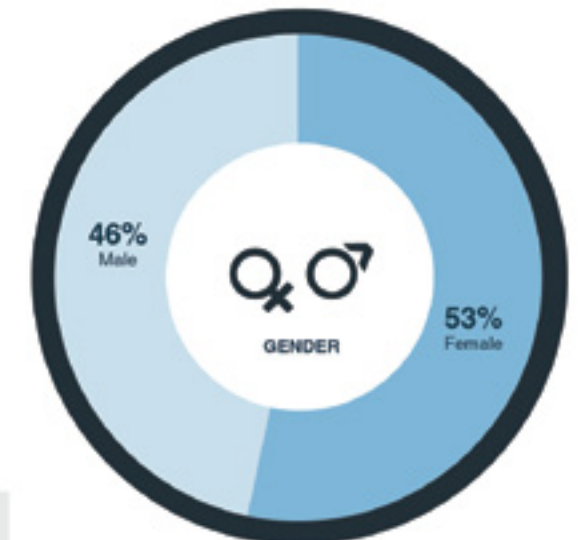


Fig. 12

1. We had 8 participants who were recruited at pop-up sites and provided zip codes to identify their neighborhood. These zip codes crossed multiple neighborhoods; therefore one neighborhood name was not assigned.
2. Respondents were required to be 18 years old or older to take the survey.

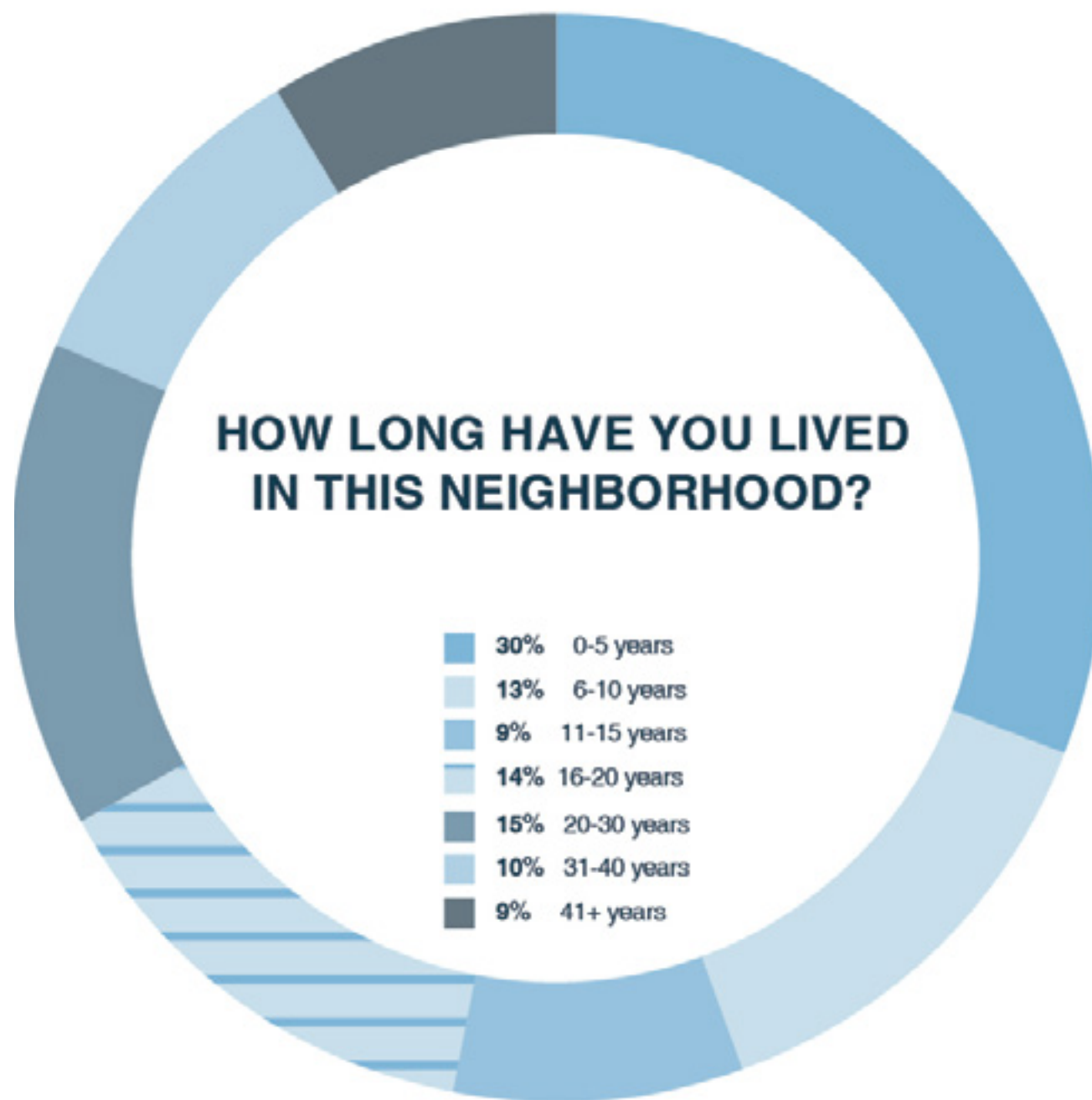


Fig. 14

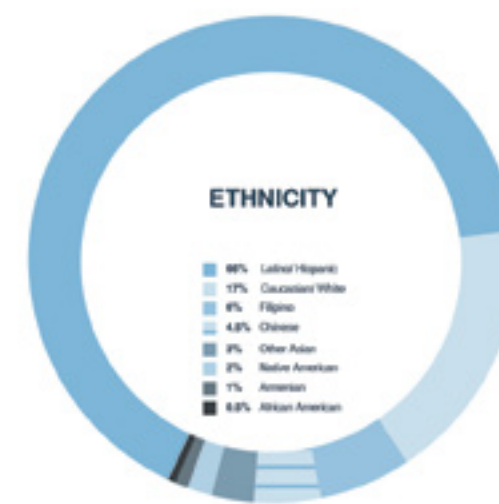


Fig. 15

American at 2 percent, African-American at 1 percent, and Armenian at 1 percent. The respondent pool represents the diversity of the neighborhoods within NELA, especially its Latino and Asian characteristics. Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Lincoln Heights are known as areas with numerous Latino families and Latino businesses. The Asian population is also known to populate NELA, with many Filipinos living in Atwater Village and Glassell Park, and Chinese in Lincoln Heights. It's important to understand that the existing neighborhoods are very diverse and it will be important to take this into consideration as increase revitalization takes place in the neighborhoods by the river. It will be important to continue to bring in the diverse populations into future discussion of development of the area.

Also comparable to the demographic portrait is that the majority of survey respondents were renters, 56 percent, as shown in Fig. \_\_. As Fig. \_\_ shows, the majority of respondents, 57 percent, have lived in the neighborhood for over 10 years, with close to 20 percent who have lived in the area 30 years or over. This shows that many residents have chosen to make the NELA neighborhoods home and can provide insight and experience when considering how the neighborhood should evolve for the better. It is also important to point out, as shown in Fig. \_\_, that while the majority of respondents have lived in the area for more than 10 years, a large percentage, 31 Percent, have lived in the area for 5 years or less. This is creating a subtle shift to the demographics of the area that is bound to continue as the NELA neighborhoods are revitalized and connect to the River. This shows that many residents have chosen to make the NELA neighborhoods home and have a lot of experience to tap into when considering how the neighborhood should evolve for the better.

# WHO SPENDS TIME BY THE LA RIVER

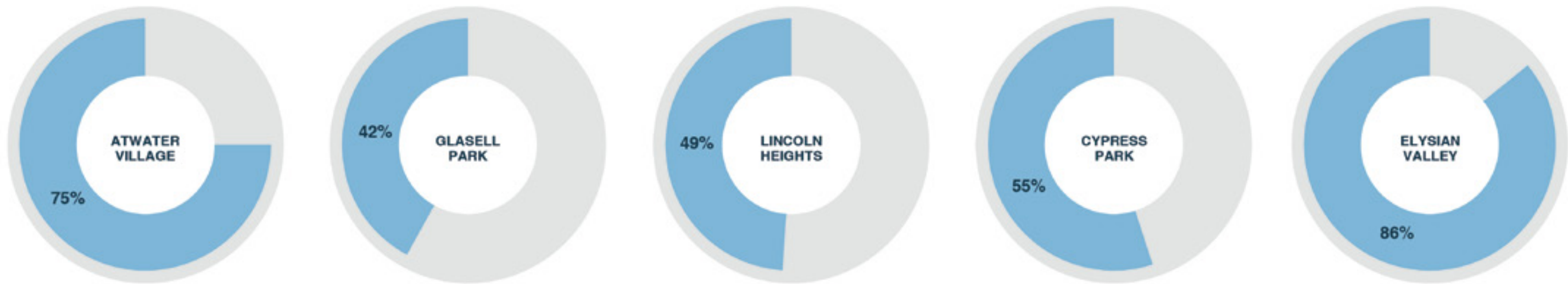


Fig. 16

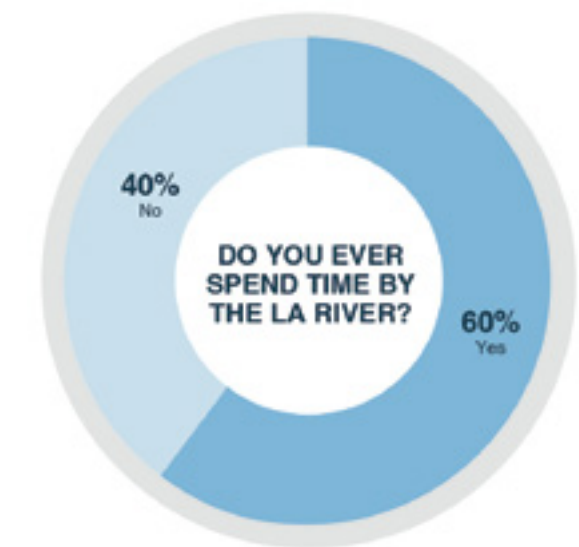


Fig. 17

## Relationship to the L.A. River

One of the important goals of the survey was to ask respondents about their relationship to the L.A. River since their neighborhoods were adjacent to it in NELA. When asked if they spent time by the L.A. River, 61 percent responded yes as showed by Fig. \_\_\_\_.

Broken out by neighborhoods in Fig. \_\_\_\_, it was found that two neighborhoods heavily accessed the L.A. River when compared to each other; Elysian Valley at 86 percent and Atwater Village at 75 percent. 55 percent of the Cypress Park respondents spent time by the

L.A. River, followed by Lincoln Heights at 49 percent, and Glassell Park at 42 percent. This follows the general physical conditions of the L.A. River, as most of the legal L.A. River access points in NELA are in Atwater Village and Elysian Valley. Fig. \_\_\_\_ shows the river access points that respondents named as points they enter the river area.

When asked how the survey respondents traveled to get to the river, the top responses were 71 percent by walking, 27 percent by bike, and 23 percent by car (Fig. \_\_\_\_). This indicates the asset that the L.A. River is as an open space that promotes healthier forms of transportation access such as walking and biking.

Further supporting the recreational uses of the L.A. River is Fig. \_\_\_\_ that shows the activities that respondents take part in. The River has become a known asset to people living by it and potentially can be increasingly used by the riverfront adjacent neighborhoods and other in the city.

All the respondents, whether they spent time by the River or not, believed improvements would make them spend more time by the River. Presented in Fig. \_\_\_\_, the majority of respondents believed making the River cleaner, 40 percent, and safer, 20 percent, would make them spend more time by the River. Other improvements included better access, shopping, more events, and pet friendly improvements.

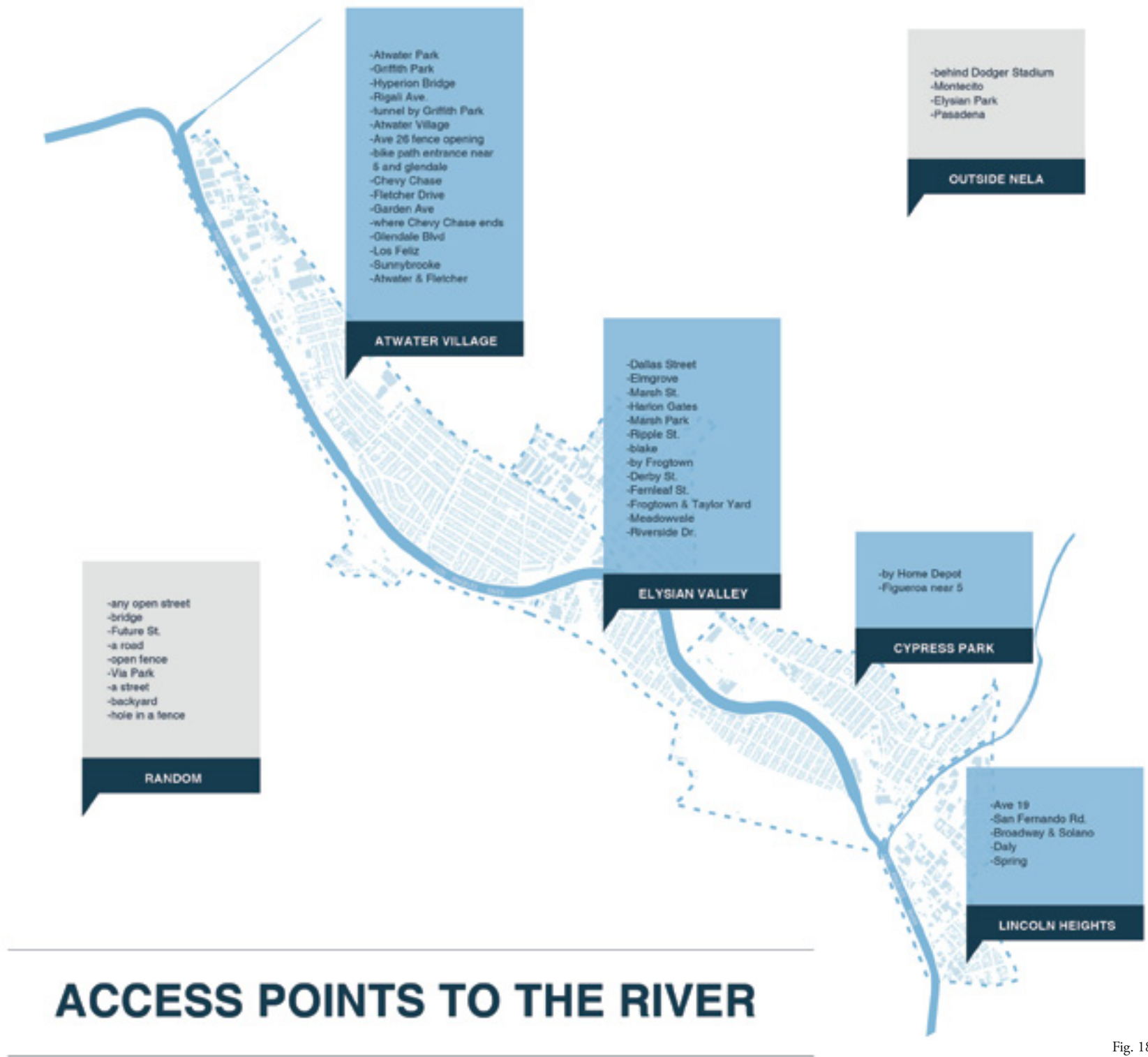
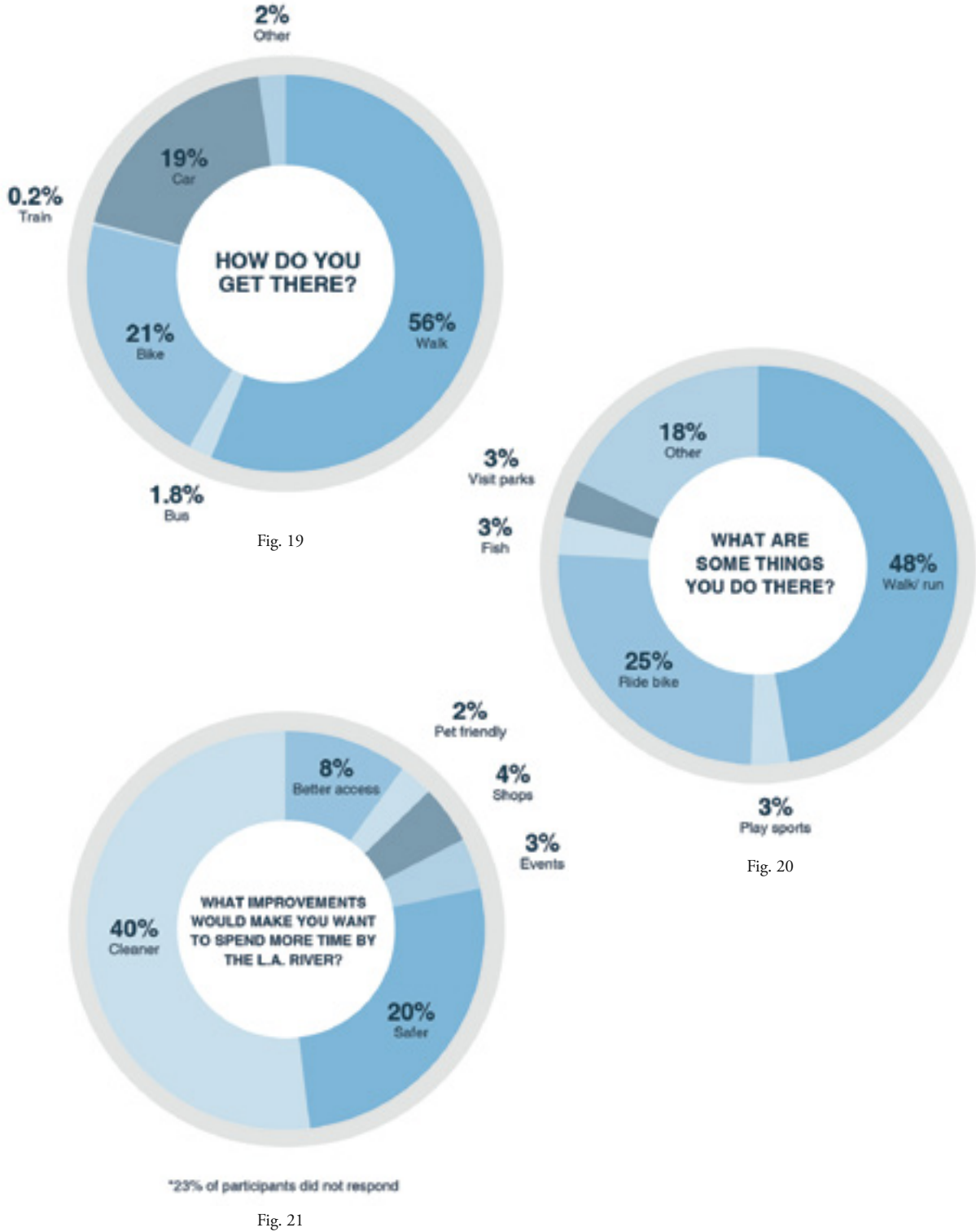


Fig. 18



Neighborhood Perceptions

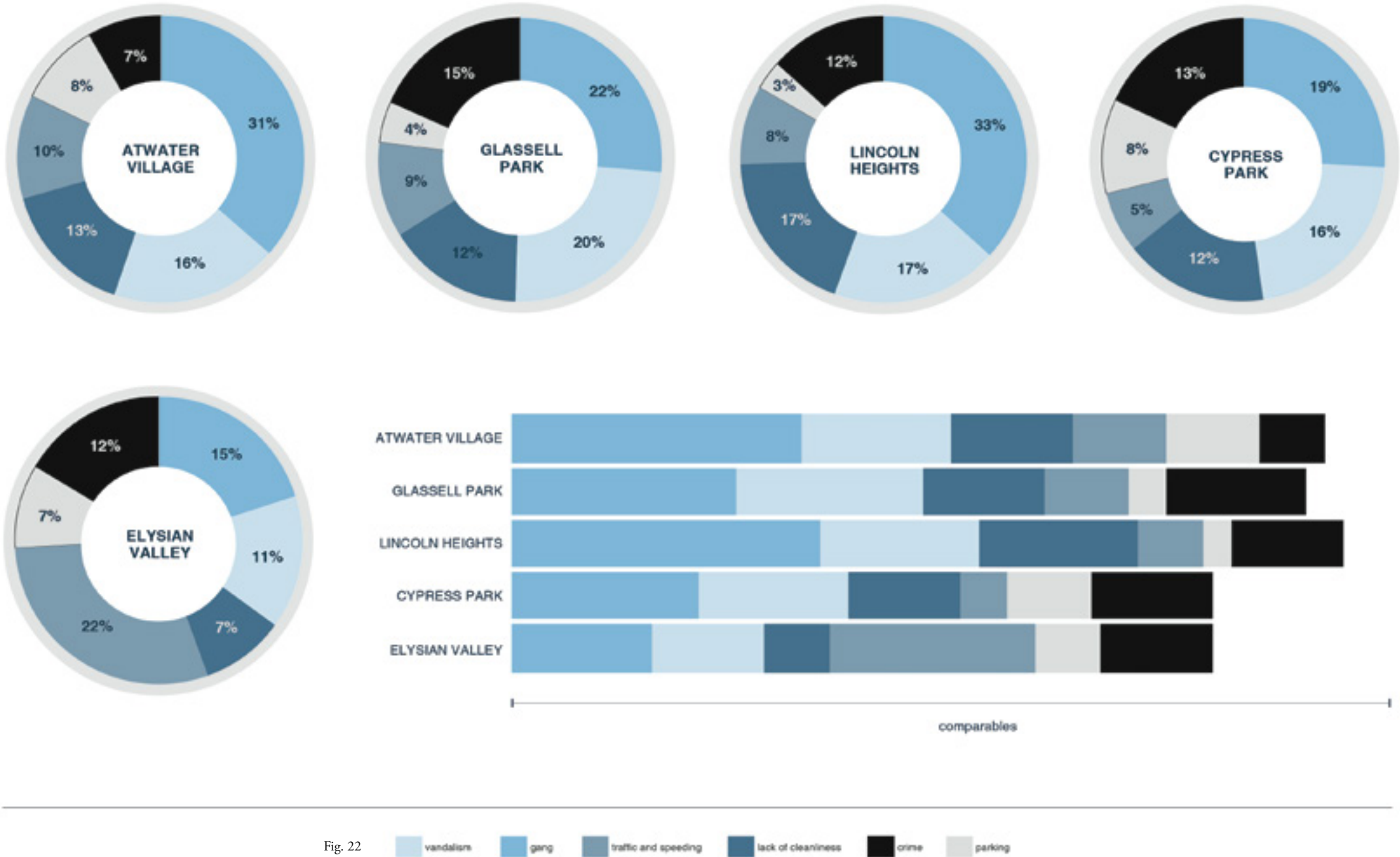
Survey respondents were also asked questions about their perceptions of certain aspects of their neighborhoods. Below is a selection of results that give some context to NELA.

When asked about the one biggest problem in their neighborhood, residents from the different neighborhoods had very similar responses, with gangs being the top response for all but one of the neighborhoods (Elysian Valley). Vandalism and a lack of cleanliness in the neighborhood were also mentioned quite often across neighborhoods. Some residents were more specific in their responses, mentioning graffiti and tagging as a major problem in their neighborhood. In regards to cleanliness, residents mentioned that unkempt yards or trash in the streets contributed to an unclean feeling in their neighborhoods. Two very specific infrastructure problems that were mentioned across all five neighborhoods but did not make it to the top six responses were the lack of street lighting and inadequate street pavement.

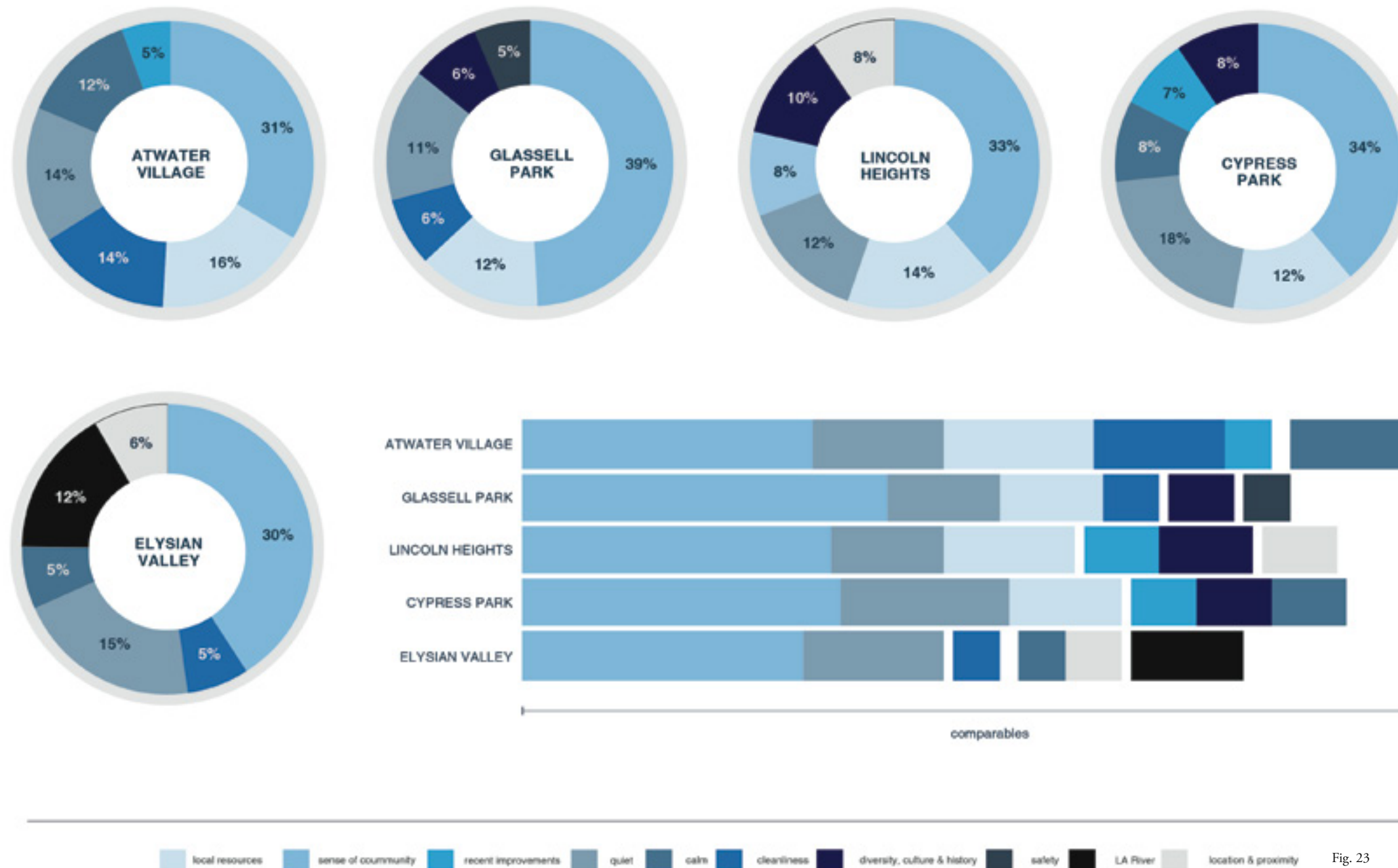
When asked about what they are most proud of about their neighborhood, residents from all five neighborhoods mentioned a sense of community as something they are most proud of. For some, a sense of community meant having friendly neighbors who looked out for each other and the neighborhood. Others expressed pride in the small-town community feel that they experienced in their neighborhood. Local resources were also mentioned as sources of pride, these included local business, schools and parks (including the L.A. River and its surroundings). In Elysian Valley in particular, 12% of the survey respondents from that neighborhood mentioned the L.A. River (including the bike path, parks, and trails) as something they are most proud of.

The food landscape for residents was generally favorable as most residents felt the quality of markets was fair or better (Fig. \_\_\_\_). The majority of residents, 54 percent, also felt they could get to a market in less than 10 minutes which indicates accessible food (Fig. \_\_\_\_).

TOP 6 BIGGEST PROBLEMS



## TOP 6 THINGS MOST RESIDENTS ARE PROUD OF



When residents were asked where they go to get most of their fresh fruits and vegetables, Super King in Glassell Park was clearly the most popular market with 19 percent of respondents who shop there compared to other outlets (Fig. \_\_). The majority of residents, 56 percent, were also familiar with farmer's markets and community gardens in the area (Fig. \_\_).

Fig. \_\_ presents the transportation uses of the respondents. Even though the majority of the sample used cars, 87 percent, many also walked (35 percent), took the bus (27 percent), biked (15 percent), and took the train (9 percent). This indicates that alternative transportation to the car are viable options for NELA residents and that improvements to pedestrian, bike, and public transportation infrastructure could benefit the community.

In terms of walking around their neighborhood, Fig. \_\_ shows that there is a general perception that walking during the day is safe with over 95 percent of respondents that feel 'somewhat' to 'completely safe'. This changes when they were asked about walking at night, as Fig. \_\_ shows 35 percent felt 'not very' or 'not at all' safe. This indicates that some safety concerns may need to be addressed in the neighborhood at night.

In regards to physical improvements in their neighborhood, we asked respondents to name two types of improvements they would like to see. Respondents' number one response was more infrastructure projects followed by trees/ plants, cleanliness, parks, and education facilities to round out the top five. (Fig. \_\_)

When asked about the different forms of getting information about what's happening in their neighborhood, Fig. \_\_ shows that 'talking with other people', 27 percent, was the top form of communication. 'Television' followed at 23 percent, the 'internet' at 21 percent and others. The important point here is that even though the internet and social media are new information technologies for communication, other legacy media such as television and interpersonal communication such as neighborly talk are still vital forms of local communication at the neighborhood level.

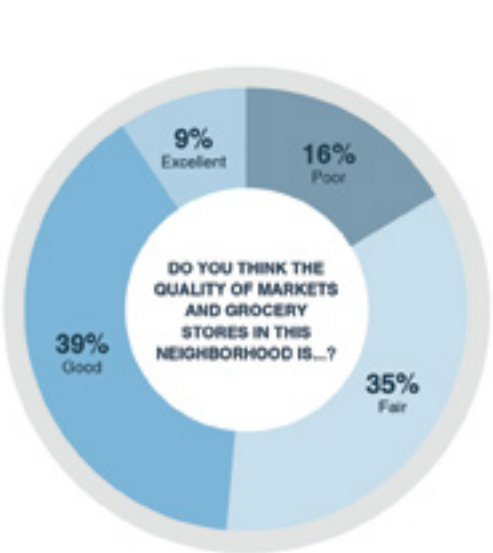


Fig. 24

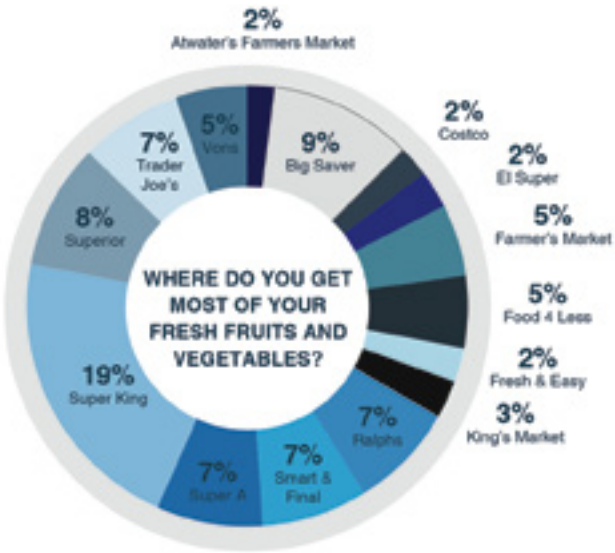


Fig. 25

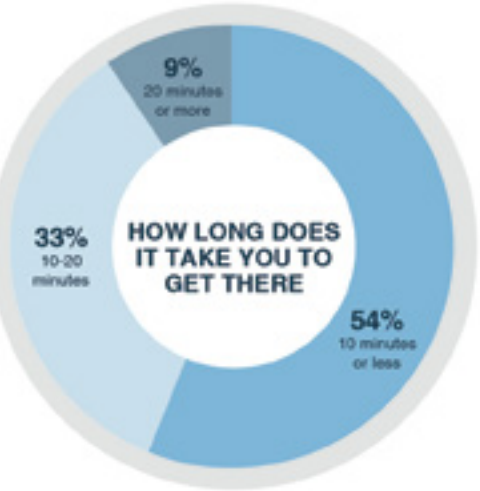


Fig. 26

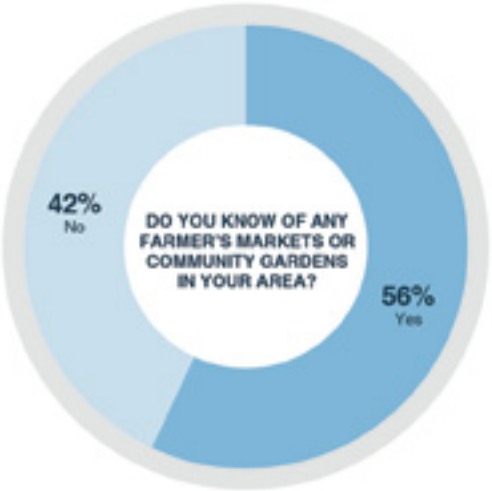


Fig. 27

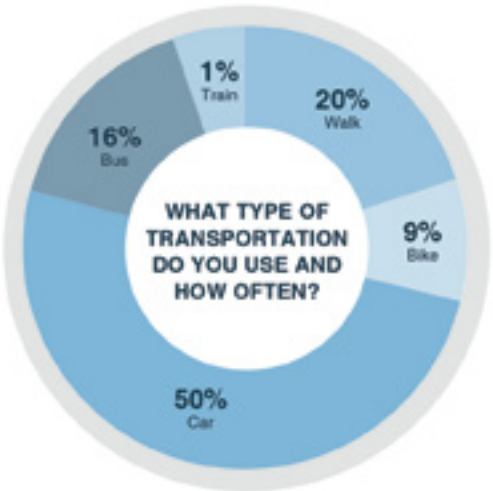


Fig. 28

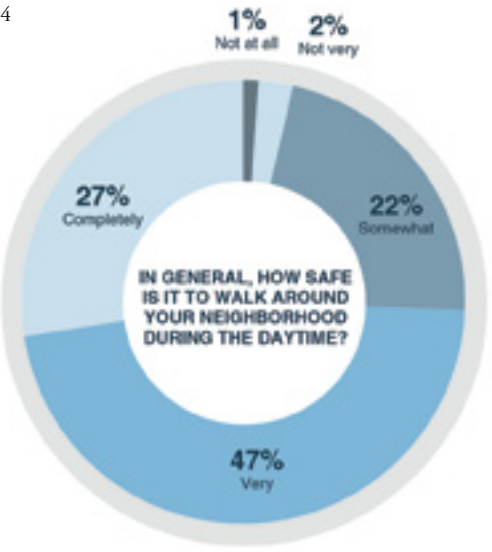


Fig. 29

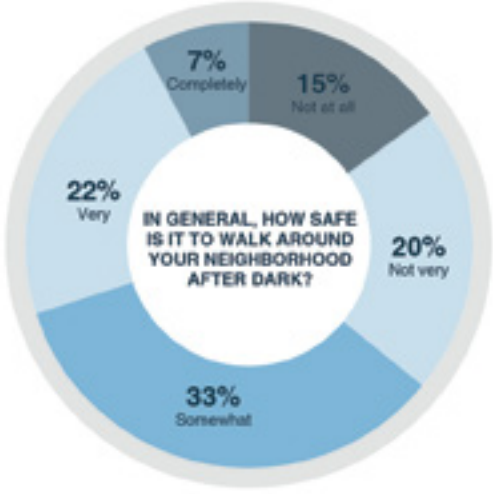


Fig. 30

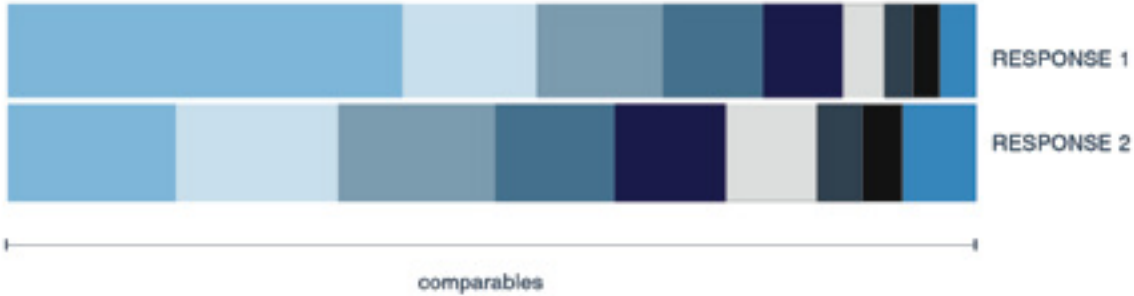
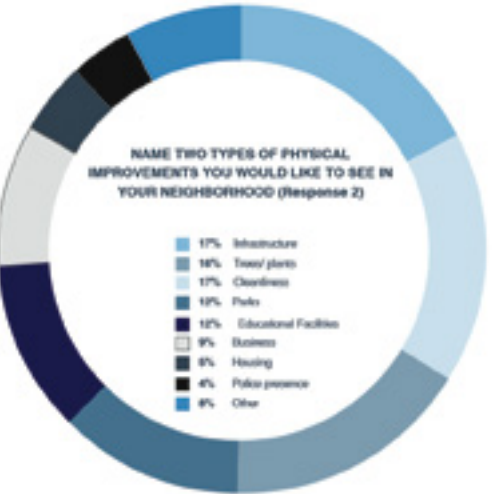
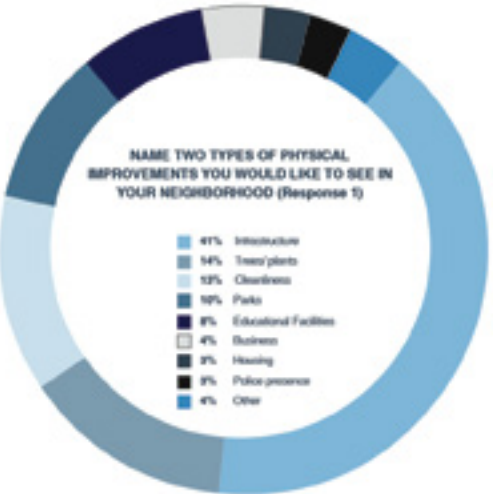


Fig. 31

When asked if they heard stories about the L.A. River in the media in the past 30 days, Fig. \_\_ shows that 67 percent said no. If the respondent did hear stories about the L.A. River, Fig. \_\_ shows that the top sources were 'television', 'internet', or 'other'. This shows a distributed storytelling of the L.A. River through multiple platforms. If they did not hear stories about the L.A.

River in the media in the past 30 days of when they were interviewed, several factors could have contributed to this situation. These factors could have ranged from respondents accessing media, not remembering, to the need for local media to do a better job reporting on the L.A. River and the revitalization efforts taking place in the NELA area.

## THINKING OF ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS OF COMMUNICATING AND GETTING INFORMATION...

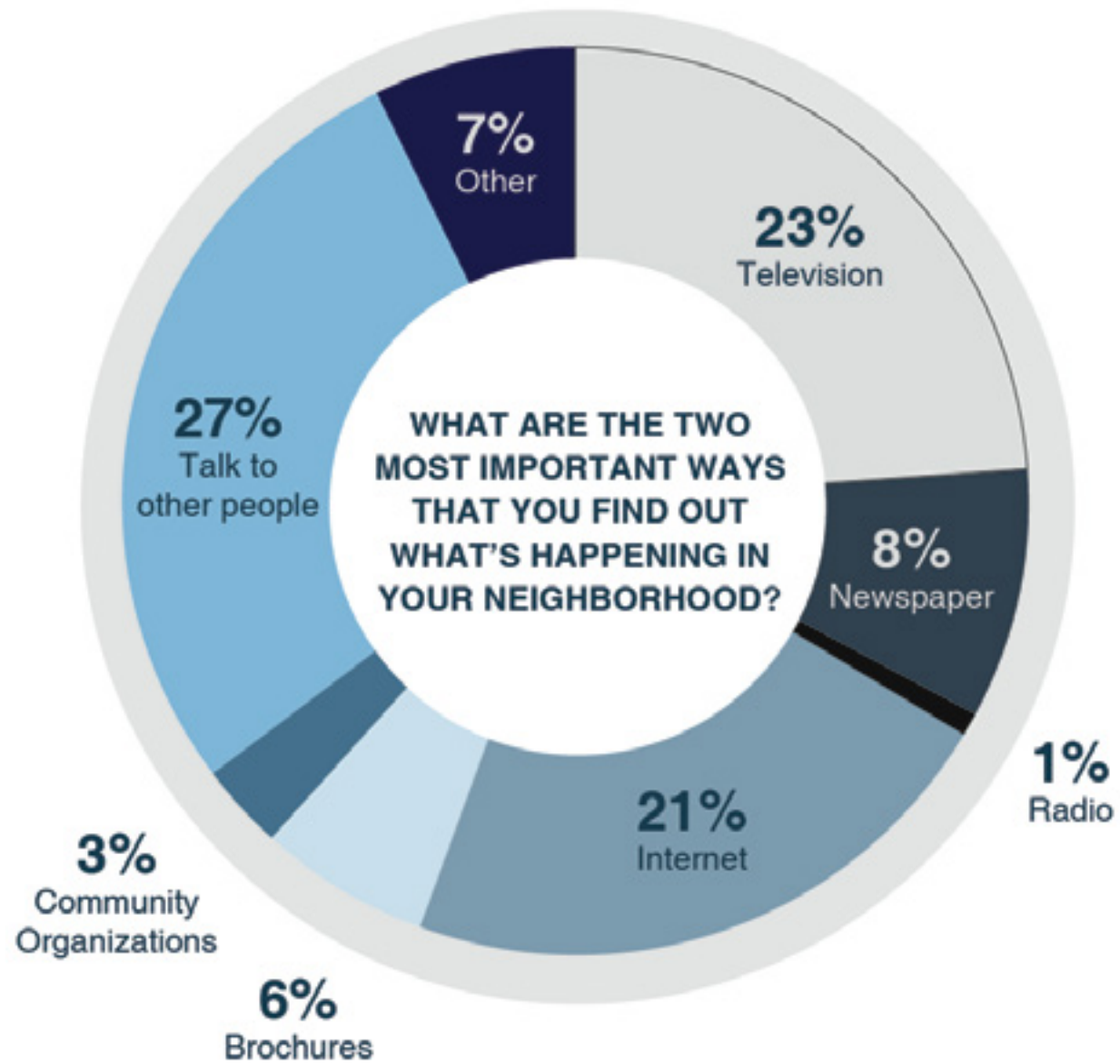
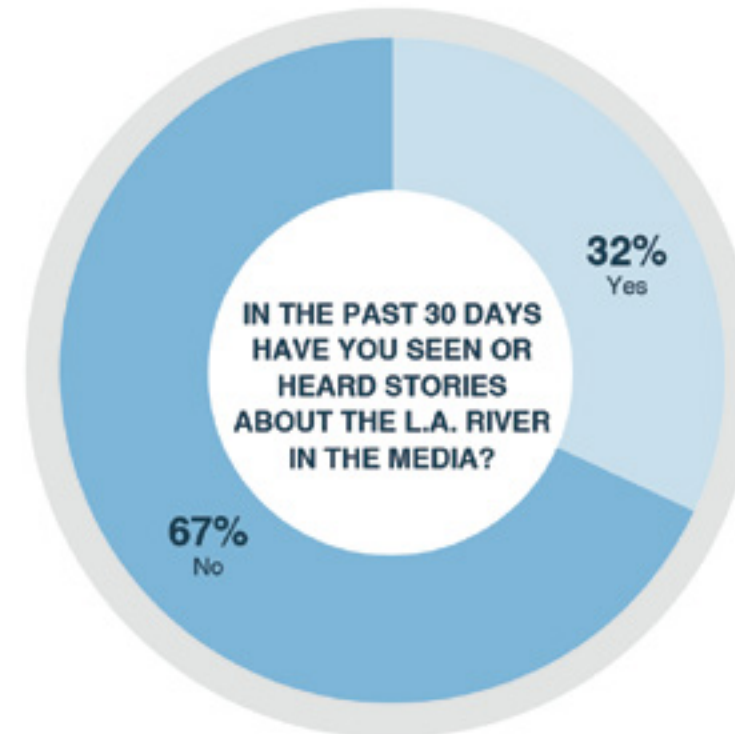
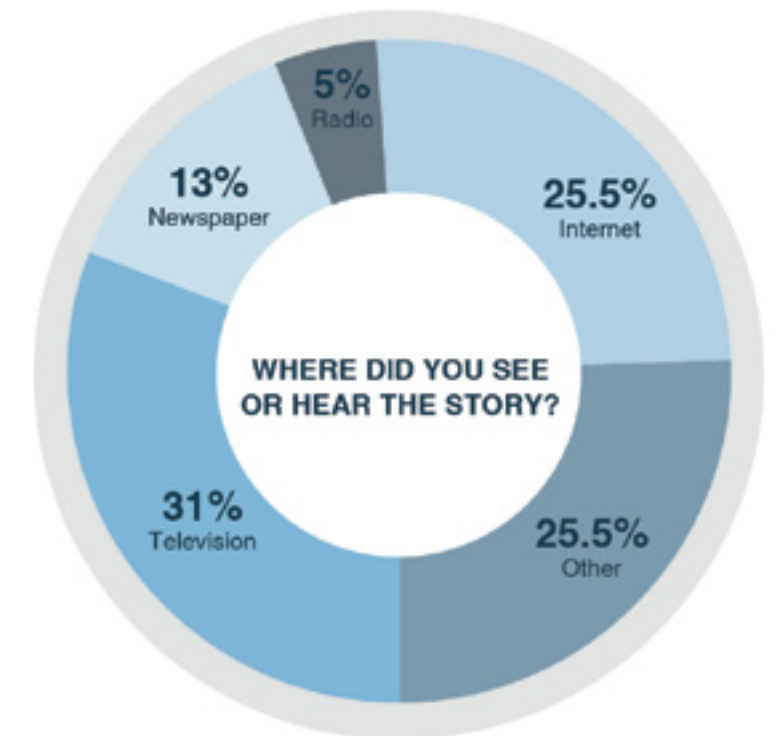


Fig. 32



\*1% of participants did not respond

Fig. 33

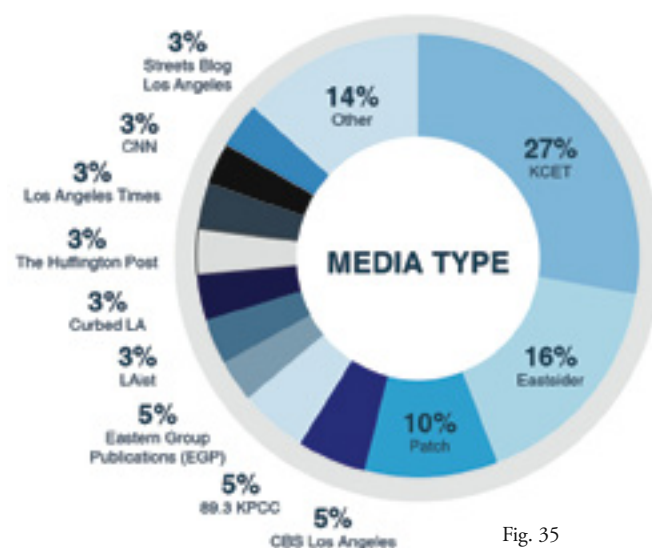


\*1% of participants did not respond

Fig. 34

One of the goals of media monitoring is identifying different issues and themes that are associated with the LA River and NELA region. Fig. \_\_\_\_\_ shows a list of the most prominent themes. Of the 63 stories, 25 percent of the stories dealt with the theme of progress in planning and development.

“Elysian Valley” appears the most frequently with 60 percent of the stories mentioning or focusing on this neighborhood. Second is “Atwater Village” with 32 percent of the stories. “Glassell Park” and “Cypress Park” were each 8 percent, and “Lincoln Heights” appeared the least amount of times with 3 percent. The name “NELA” or “Northeast Los Angeles” was mentioned or was the main focus in 21 percent of the stories.



\*Other includes: The Beverly Hills Courier ([bhccourier.com](http://bhccourier.com)), Texas Tribune ([texastribune.org](http://texastribune.org)), Trop ([tropmag.com](http://tropmag.com)), Singular Magazine ([singulacity.com](http://singulacity.com)), A Walker in LA ([awalkerinla.com](http://awalkerinla.com)), GardenBetty.com, LA Weekly, and NRDC Blog



\*Note: These theme categories are not exclusive. One story may include multiple themes.

Fig. 36

# NELA Study Area Community Assets, Challenges, and Opportunities

This section sets the stage for the next chapter on the goals of the Vision Plan and Economic Development Implementation Strategy by discussing community assets, challenges, and opportunities in the NELA study area.

## Challenges and Opportunities

As the information presented is not entirely possible to graphically represent, photos are included to portray real and perceived conditions that exist and are anticipated to occur.

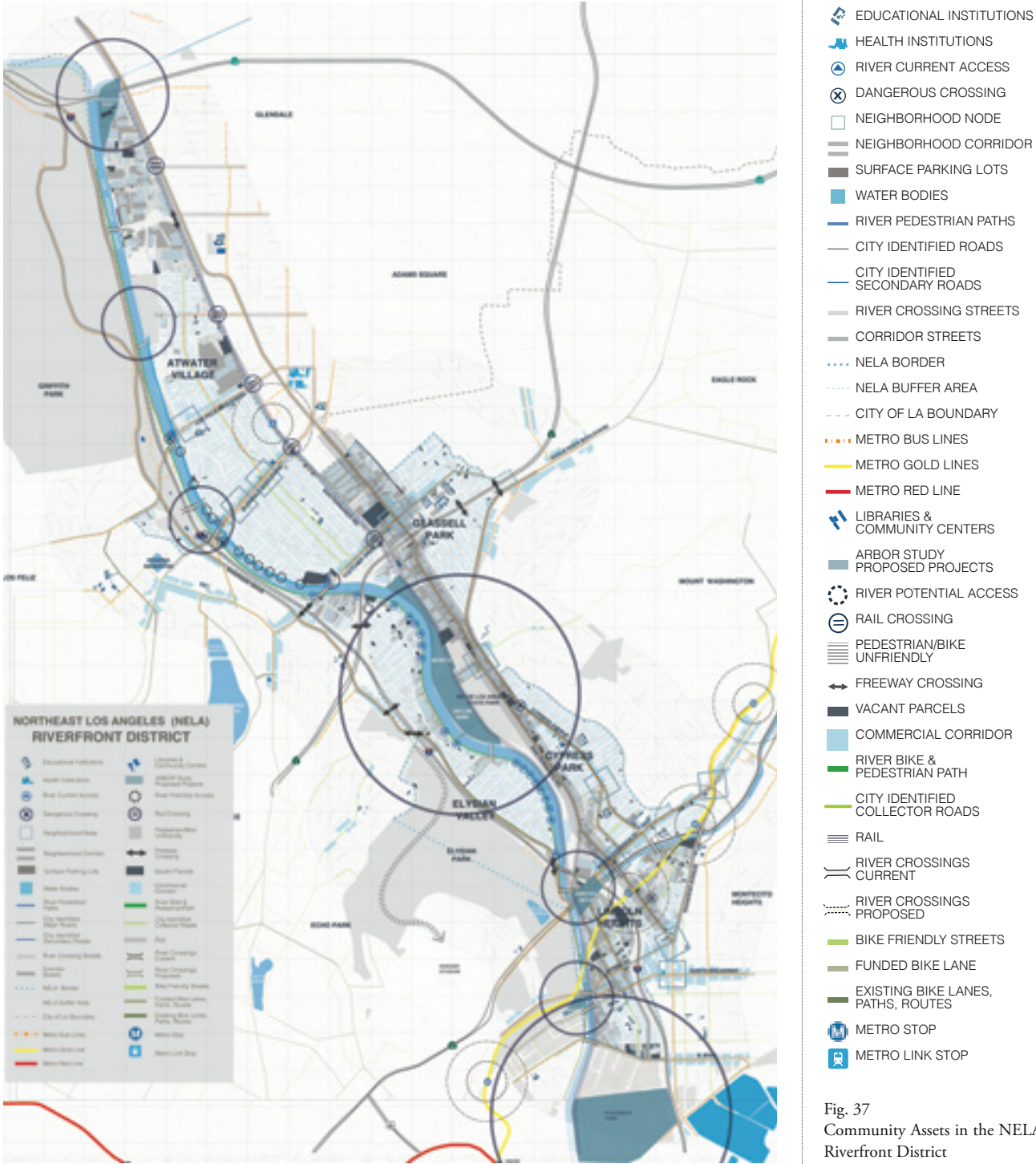
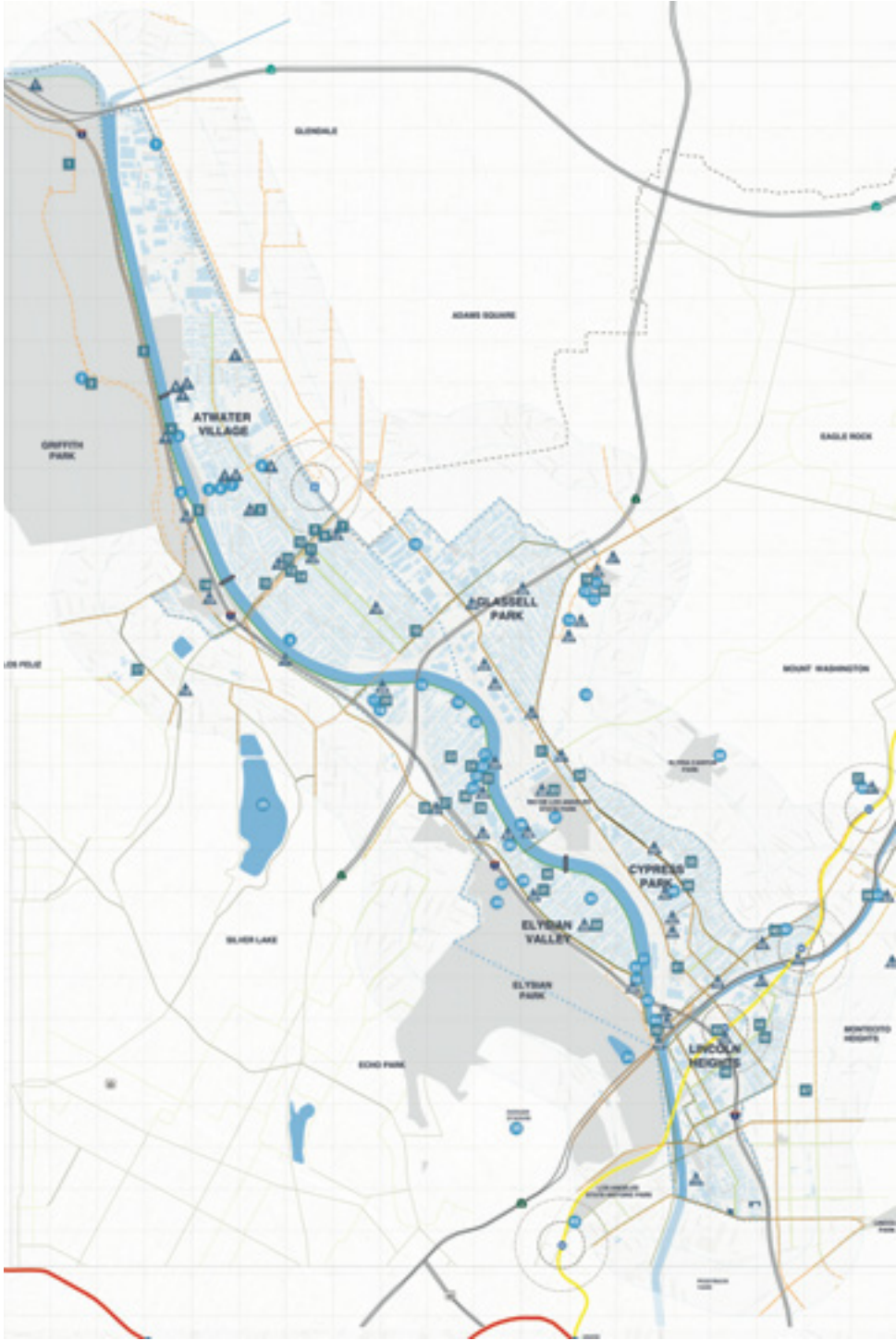


Fig. 37  
Community Assets in the NELA Riverfront District

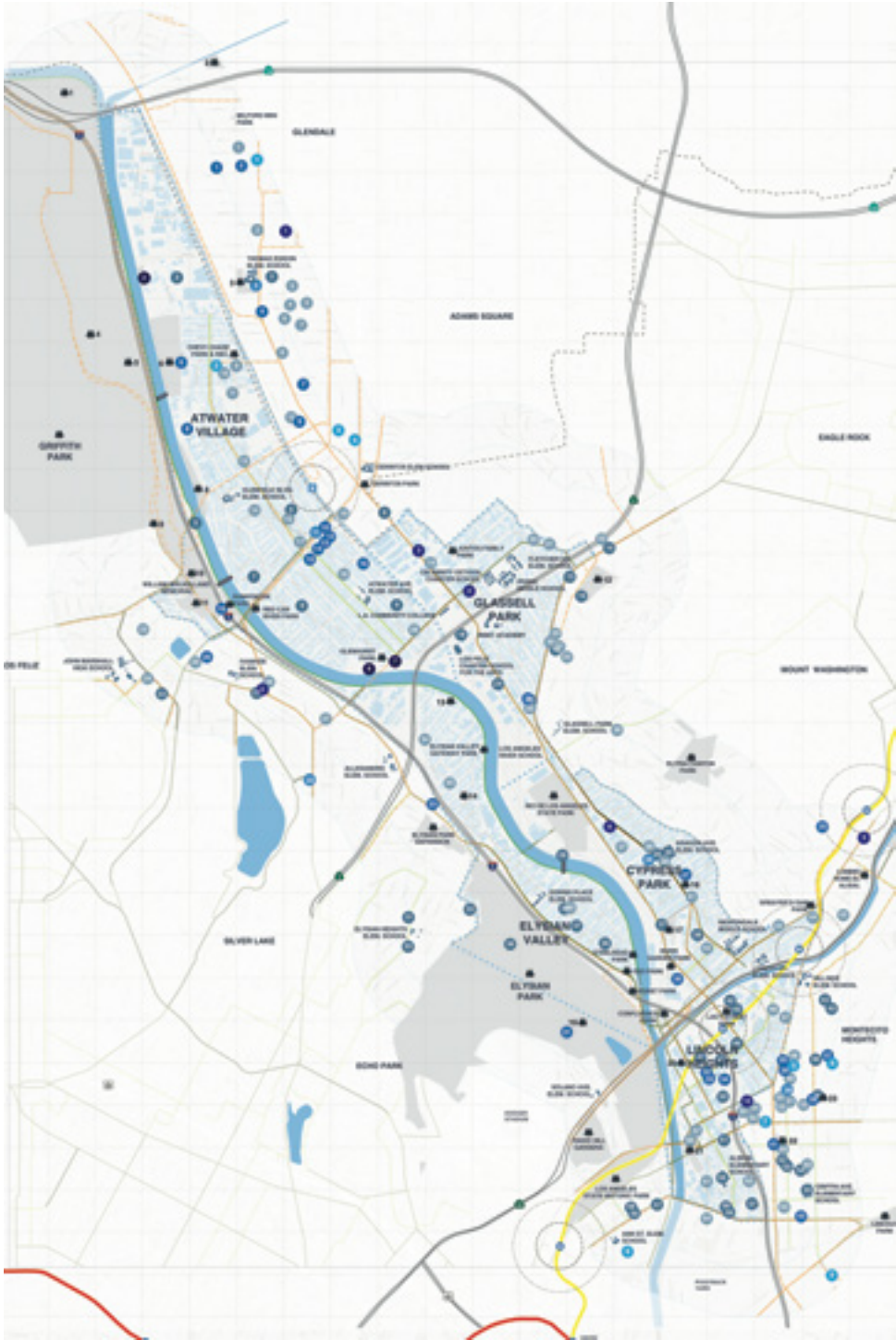
- NELA COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES
- METRO GOLD LINE
- METRO RED LINE
- METRO STOP
- METRO LINK STOP
- RIVER BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH
- WATER BODIES
- RIVER CROSSINGS CURRENT
- POINTS OF INTEREST
- ASSETS
- RESOURCES

Fig. 38  
Community Resources, Assets  
and Points of Interest



- NELA COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES
- METRO GOLD LINE
- METRO RED LINE
- METRO STOP
- METRO LINK STOP
- RIVER BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH
- WATER BODIES
- RIVER CROSSINGS CURRENT
- RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION
- EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION
- SOCIAL SERVICE
- MEDICAL FACILITIES
- PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

Fig. 39  
Community Resources



# Strengths

## Community Solidarity

Many of the communities have come together as a result of being cut off by major infrastructural projects like the I-5 Freeway, Highway 2, the Railway, and the L.A. River Channelization. Communities are organized and actively discussing how improve their community by finding solutions to problems within their community. It is unclear if each community is aware of their neighboring communities' problems whether they are common or unique. The recent interest and activity around the L.A. River has given each of these adjacent communities a common bond.

- NELA RC Resident Survey showed that residents of Lincoln Heights were significantly less likely to know about farmer markets, and residents of Elysian Valley are most likely to walk to the LA River. On the other hand, Atwater Village residents were the most active in their communities.
- Feedback received from various participants of the Public Health exercise on December 2013 revealed a consistent call for greater accountability from the City and Public Health officials while also bringing to light their capabilities and willingness to organize for the greater good of the residents, thus promoting feelings of ownership in the community.

## Historic and Cultural Significance within the City

- The Arroyo Seco Confluence at the Los Angeles River is recorded to be the birthplace of the City of Los Angeles – Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail + El Pueblo de Reina de Los Angeles.
- Griffith Park is the largest (4,310 acres) and most visited (10 Million annually) urban park in the City. The park is a historic-cultural monument of the City and offers visitors numerous activities such as camping, golf, hiking, horseback riding as well as attractions like the Griffith Observatory, L.A. Zoo, Travel town, Greek Theater, and Equestrian Center.
- The Glendale Narrows is a unique reach of the LA River approximately seven-miles long that unlike most of the River, by virtue of its geographic and hydrologic conditions, support an emerging ecology and soft-bottom course which sustains a thriving riparian habitat and wildlife. The L.A. River Revitalization Master Plan (2007) focused efforts to improve accessibility and support community change, which are reflected in the improvements that have been made, serving as catalyst for change for the remaining 51 miles.

## Variety of Open Spaces

The NELA Riverfront Study Area hosts a large variety of open spaces. These include regional parks, neighborhood parks, and recreation centers. When calculating the



The urban facade of NELA illustrates its vibrant culture and history.

proportion of open space area to resident, it is important to acknowledge the type of open space, usable space, program type, means of access, and location within the community. Programmed open spaces provide the resources for an active lifestyle, leading to better health outcomes. However it is important to consider the environmental warning raised by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regarding open spaces. “Just as in any other land uses, the way parks are managed can have good or bad environmental impacts, from pesticide runoff, siltation from overused hiking and logging trails, and destruction of habitat.”

With attention to Los Angeles River, the Glendale Narrows reach is a unique portion of the River caused by local topography, soils, and high water table that has kept the bottom of the River “Soft” or unpaved. This effect has contributed greatly to the character of the River and the abundance of wildlife that use the River as part of their habitat.

- Regional Parks – Griffith Park, Elysian Park, Rio de Los Angeles State Park, Cornfields State Historic Park
- Neighborhood Parks – Marsh Park, Glenhurst Park, North Atwater Park
- Recreation Centers – These recreation centers provide space for key athletic programs, both indoors and outdoors, as well as offer space for community serving functions and events.
- Los Angeles River – While not formerly identified as a park or open space, through the existing access points, the Los Angeles River contributes greatly to the communities of Atwater Village and Elysian Valley today as an important and unique open space element.

Accessibility to the Los Angeles River

Within this report, the term “Access” is intended in several ways: visual access, access across the River, access along its banks, access to its water, access (over barriers) to connect to streets or trails that connect to the River. As the largest green space in the area, access to the River is essential.

Trails along the embankments and seasonal water activities provide recreation opportunities that are a key component of healthy lifestyle. Overall, the NELA Riverfront Study Area has the most direct access to the river.

- LA River Bikeway + Greenway Trail support corridor access along the west bank and a portion of the east bank respectively.
- River Gates/Park projects – Within the past decade, the LA River has experienced a revival through the creation of several River Parks that announce the entrance to the river by way of a unique gateway created by local artists. These projects have allowed greater access and identity for the River as a welcoming environment to the greater community.

Industrial Use – Employment Sector

The land adjacent to the rail corridors and the Los Angeles River, have historically served as areas for industrial land uses. With increasing land values and the revitalization of the L.A. River, industrial land uses have become less dependent upon access to rail and prefer access to the River. Today, the industrial uses are predominantly of a light-industrial nature and have minimal direct impacts to the environment. These light-industrial uses also provide an economic benefit to the City by increasing the number of high-skilled jobs that are clean and environmentally sensitive to the River.

Some of industrial uses include:

- Logistics + Warehousing (FedEx, UPS, Ralph’s)
- Medical, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology (Baxter)
- Film/Entertainment Industry – Quixote, Cinnabar
- Small Business Art, Craft, and Design

Streets

The NELA Riverfront Study Area is comprised of several streets that are historically significant, providing important connections, and serve as vital commercial corridors with neighborhood serving retail, restaurants

and community serving resources. While some streets have either been renovated or experienced recent redevelopment that have in turn promoted improved walk or bike ability, other streets have suffered from lack of reinvestment and provide little to no amenity or safe environment for the pedestrian. To organize streets within the project study area, three categories have been identified to understand their role and significance to the community as well as determine how these streets may be improved in the future.

- Corridors - Streets that extend through the majority of the study area and generally follow a parallel route to the two major water courses (e.g. Los Angeles River, Arroyo Seco Stream.) Corridor Streets include San Fernando Road, Figueroa Street, Cypress Avenue, Pasadena Ave, Eagle Rock Blvd, and Riverside Drive.
- River Crossings – Streets that cross the width of study area and have a bridge connection over the Los Angeles River. River Crossings include Los Feliz Blvd, Glendale Blvd, Fletcher, Spring Street, Broadway, and Main Street.
- Green Streets – Streets that serve the interior portions of the neighborhood that are predominantly residential, lower traffic impacts, provide an alternate route for bicyclists, and directly connect to the Los Angeles River.

Green Spaces and Cardiovascular Health

Green spaces are a meaningful strategy to target health inequalities and improve adverse health outcomes such as high blood pressure and stress. The study “Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study” compared communities with similar income and health services but who lived in different types of physical environments. The study revealed that the mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases were lower on communities that had the most green areas.

- GIS mapping in combination with Park Scores revealed that Atwater Village, Glassell Park, and Elysian Valley have a high need for more green spaces.

- While there are some disparities between NELA neighborhoods in their access to quality parks, all communities could greatly benefit from both easier access to existing green spaces and the creation of new green spaces to improve cardiovascular health.

# WEAKNESSES

## Infrastructural Barriers

- Rail has been part of historic landscape of Los Angeles since the late 1900s. Many of the neighborhoods around the L.A. River also had a relationship to the rail industry, particularly around the Piggyback Yard and Taylor Yard. These rail lines, some of which are no longer active, create physical barriers to accessing the River. This is most severe in Lincoln Heights where access to the River is completely prohibited.
- The development of Freeways has also proven to create an infrastructural barrier to accessing the River. The I5 Freeway, built in the 1950s isolated Elysian Valley and Lincoln Heights from the rest of the City while it severed a portion of Griffith park, rendering it inaccessible to the River. The 2 freeway created barriers within the communities of Glassell Park and Elysian Valley, dramatically impacting the non-vehicular modes of transit within those communities, thereby affecting their mobility and access to the River.
- The criteria for *vacant properties* include cleared parcels that have remained vacated for several years as well as buildings that are shut down to operation.
- The criteria for *underutilized land* includes properties that are only partially utilizing their land, or that are primarily uninhabited and used for storage, junk collection, etc. With the adoption of the L.A. River Revitalization Master Plan, many properties have been identified as potential opportunity sites as they reflect an attitude of “hiding” messy, unsightly operations and storage facilities away from public view – essentially utilizing the Los Angeles River as a back door / back yard.
- In large part, these vacant and underutilized lands can make significant contributions by providing access, appropriate lighting, and potentially allow for temporal community use.
- Below is a list of commonly occurring instances of underutilized land:
  - Public Services – Many City owned or related facilities have historically been located along the river. These include storage and maintenance facilities for Department of Rec & Parks, Bureau of Sanitation, Bureau of Street Services and Metro.
  - Infrastructural – Along the River and rail corridor, several parcels have dedicated for public utilities that include power

## Vacant/Underutilized Land

- Consistent with the majority of lands throughout the City of Los Angeles, The NELA Riverfront Study Area has several properties that are vacant or underutilized. These areas contribute to a sense of inactivity and diminish the quality of life for neighbors and pedestrians.



Infrastructural barriers and underutilized lands can be optimized to provide access to the River and serve as potential community spaces.

substations, transformers, water and sewage based infrastructure.

- Automotive based industries/businesses – Within the NELA Riverfront Study Area’s industrially zoned lands, many parcels consist of auto serving businesses that include gas stations, car dealers, car repair and maintenance, as well as auto wrecking, recycling and impound yards. While some of these uses are adequately located and serve a community need, many of these uses are not beneficial for a vibrant community or revitalizing the L.A. River.

### Communities Disconnected from the LA River and Arroyo Seco Streamway

- In contrast to the abundance of River access throughout Elysian Valley and opportunities throughout Atwater Village to directly connect, most of the NELA Riverfront District is limited to visual access only possible by the major cross connector streets. Whether it is interference from factory infrastructure, as in Lincoln Heights, railways in Glassell and Cypress Park, or a lack of clear entry points in Atwater Village, each community faces unique challenges to access the river.
- Rail Corridor – The major barrier for the communities of Glassell Park, Cypress Park, and Lincoln Heights is the ability to traverse across, under or along the railway corridor. The railway poses an even greater problem to the community of Lincoln Heights as the railway occupies both of banks the River.
- Arroyo Seco – Within the NELA Riverfront Study Area, the Arroyo Seco streamway is largely an inaccessible space. Only visibly accessible from a few public streets that cross over it, the freeway infrastructures that include the Arroyo Seco Parkway and I-5 interchange make accessibility along the top of bank nearly impossible. In its current state, the Arroyo Seco, in combination with the Highway 110 N/ Route 66, acts as a distinctive barrier dividing the communities of Cypress Park and Lincoln Heights.

In spite of these hardships, the Arroyo Seco has the potential to serve a great purpose for accessibility described further in Opportunities.

### Challenging Conditions for Pedestrian & Cyclist

- The NELA Riverfront Study Area has several instances of poor pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and some very critical conditions that need to be addressed immediately.
- Pedestrian Infrastructure – The pedestrian infrastructure within the NELA Riverfront Study Area is generally of average to poor quality. The streets that cross under the railway, over the L.A. River, and traverse as corridor streets have typically undersized sidewalks, lack appropriate signage, and pose as significant challenges to youth, senior and physically disabled populations. Of significant concern are the existing conditions along Riverside Drive, San Fernando Boulevard, Fletcher Drive, and Figueroa Boulevard.
- Cycling Infrastructure – The bicycle infrastructure within the NELA Riverfront Study Area includes the spectrum of LADOT designated bikeways – from Class I Bicycle Paths along the LA River to Bicycle Friendly Streets within Atwater Village. However, similar to the state of pedestrian infrastructure, many of the River cross streets lack suitable designation and surfacing.

### Limited Access to Public Transit Infrastructure

- Besides the physical conditions of the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, the overall walkability and bikeability access to support first and last mile connections to and from public transit hubs, such as the Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park Metro Station in Lincoln Heights or the Metrolink station in Atwater Village, is limited.

- The presence of bus benches to support bus stops, especially in areas with the highest percentage of seniors, can be improved.

### Fragmented Riparian Condition

- The Los Angeles River and Arroyo Seco Streamway were subject to channelization by the USACE in 1938 as a reaction to the Great Flood of 1938. Since that time, both tributaries have been studied and analyzed for their potential to become restored and revitalized as part of a healthy ecology. The US Army Corps has planned to restore the ecology of the L.A. River through the Glendale Narrows. The Arroyo Seco Streamway with the exception of the confluence at the L.A. River has no formal commitment to be improved.

### Poor connections between open spaces

- Due to infrastructural and ecological barriers, the Los Angeles River is poorly connected to Griffith Park, Lincoln Heights and Glassell Park, the Arroyo Seco Confluence is isolated from Sycamore Park and the Verdugo Wash is disconnected to the Cities of Burbank and Glendale.

### Disparity in Open Space Access

- While the variety of open space in NELA is strength, the disparity of open space access within each neighborhood is a weakness. It is important to consider disparities when planning area-wide policies or projects. A neighborhood specific lens must be applied in the consideration of open space opportunities.
- Glassell Park and Lincoln Heights have the lowest access to park space per 1,000 resident while Elysian Valley has one of the highest.
- The River, the largest resource for open space in the area, has limited access in most neighborhoods.

Glassell Park, Cypress Park, and Lincoln Heights have zero access points per 1,000 residents. In contrast for Elysian Valley has 2.3 access points per 1,000 residents.

### Healthcare Resources

- The overall provisions of health services are limited within NELA. A marketing and transportation strategy to increase the use of existing healthcare resources can improve health care opportunities.
- Feedback by community members during the first placemaking workshop revealed that the majority of NELA residents access health care facilities outside of NELA, such as the USC Medical Center, Kaiser, and Glendale Memorial Hospital.
- The few primary care services within NELA are concentrated in Atwater Village.

### Affordable housing

- With only a quarter of land in NELA dedicated to residential use, there will be a growing gap between housing supply and demand as the area evolves. The quantity, quality, cost, and type of housing in a neighborhood impacts housing affordability and community stability.

### Environmental pollutants

- Exposure to environmental pollutants from transportation and industrial sources is often adjacent to local schools. In Glassell Park, schools such as Celerity Octavia Charter School, Irving Middle School, and Fletcher Drive Elementary School fall into the 300 square foot radio of pollutants produce by the Glendale Freeway and other industrial sites in the area.
- The transportation network, including highways and trucking routes, is permanent. However, the changes in existing industrial sources can be

targeted, especially the Metrolink Yard and its proximity to the new development at Taylor Yards, a transit oriented mixed use development with 25,000 square feet of retail and 450 new residential units.

### Aging Walkability

- Between 10-15% of the population in the communities of Glassell Park, Elysian Valley and Cypress Park, are considered aging populations. Walk Score, a metric system developed to help people evaluate walkability and transportation when choosing where to live, analyzes hundreds of walking routes to nearby amenities. The walk score for these communities (59%, 38% and 58% respectively) are below the Los Angeles walk score average of 64%.
- The Walk Score metrics do not take into account elements such as benches and street lighting. However, GIS mapping revealed that most public transit stops in the area did not accommodate benches, thus making it harder for aging populations to get around.



Poor pedestrian infrastructure in NELA.



Particular conditions for cyclists, environmental pollutants, and communities disconnected from the River all pose as challenges within the NELA Study Area.



# CHAPTER 4: Goals and Objectives

Build a distinct neighborhood identity and strengthen a sense of place within each local neighborhood.

Create a Sense of Place

1



Enhance the existing open spaces surrounding the River and plan for new open space opportunities while establishing sustainable riverfront linkages for a visible and functional open space network.

Enliven and improve the riverfront open-space experience

2



Improvements to NELA's public infrastructure and mobility options help support the functions of daily life as well as connect neighborhoods to the River. These connections help the River become the "green spine" of the City, promoting healthy and active lifestyle choices while increasing access and mobility options for all residents.

Re-connect NELA communities to the Los Angeles River and improve mobility

3



Natural waterfront areas are diverse and valuable assets, providing habitat for an astonishing variety of species and yielding benefits for the whole city. Wetlands are foraging and breeding grounds for shorebirds, fish, and invertebrates. They also filter the water and mitigate storm surges by absorbing the impact of severe storm events. Protecting, restoring and connecting natural areas and crafting citywide policies and programs to improve ecological systems will advance the health of the riverfront, the waterways, and all the City of Los Angeles.

Improve ecological health of the River and the community's built environment

4



Industrial and Commercial industries near the River are valuable economic assets—crucial to the economic health and prosperity of the Northeast Los Angeles Community as well as the City of Los Angeles as a whole. Approximately 48% of the total land in NELA is zoned for commercial and industrial uses, providing hundreds of jobs and millions in tax revenue. As such, it provides the City a unique opportunity to explore targeted incentives, recruitment, and coordinated regulatory policies, to help the working waterfront adapt and prosper.

Strengthen and support employment opportunities surrounding the River

5



The riverfront is dynamic, requiring constant maintenance, repair, and oversight. Today many governmental entities—each with a different purpose—have jurisdiction over the riverfront. The complex regulatory process for construction along the River makes it difficult for private and public owners of riverfront property to build and maintain necessary structures. To enhance the riverfront with the parks, housing, and commercial and recreational activity envisioned in this plan, we need clearer procedures and better coordination at all levels of government.

Improve governmental regulation, coordination, and oversight of the River

6



Embrace a Social Equity Driven Community Economic Development Approach within the NELA Riverfront District that makes space for economic, racial, ethnic, and cultural inclusion.

Make space for social equity

7



Many cities across the country have reinvested in their rivers, reaping benefits that go well beyond economic returns. These projects have invigorated tourism, created a better quality of life for residents, and helped produce healthy, vibrant economies. The NELA neighborhoods need to be empowered to exercise a common set of tools directly, or through such entities as they might create, as a part of a comprehensive local economic development strategy that is sustainable.

Provide new tools and strategies to promote economic development and build sustainable communities

8



# THE VPEDIS GOALS

The VPEDIS and its recommended policy initiatives, programs, catalytic and prototypical development projects are wholly formed on the basis of eight overarching goals and their objectives. These goals and objectives reflect the voices of community stakeholders, their concerns and aspirations, and extensive planning analysis of existing conditions, including social, economic and environmental factors.

The Goals express the intention for future improvements within the Northeast Los Angeles River Study Area. The objectives are the desired future conditions that will help realize the broad goals within the Vision Plan. The objectives are designed to be achievable, measurable, and time specific.

Together, the goals and objectives form the basis of the Vision Plan Strategy.

# 1

## Create a Sense of Place

**Build a distinct neighborhood identity and strengthen a sense of place within each local neighborhood.**

Public places set the stage for our public lives. They are the parks where celebrations are held, where seasons make subtle changes to the landscape, where festivals illuminate the summer sky, and where children cautiously learn the skills of sportsmanship. They are the streets and sidewalks that connect homes and businesses where friends run into each other and social and economic exchanges take place. In Northeast Los Angeles, it's the River, which flows to the beat of the rain, swooshing past diverse neighborhoods, businesses and public spaces, where people who live, work, and play in the community experience pride of ownership and a renewed sense of civic investment.

When cities and neighborhoods have thriving public spaces, residents have a strong sense of community. This happens through the process of placemaking. Placemaking is an inclusive and creative group process of developing a neighborhood's social, economic and cultural identity. Involving the planning, design and management of public spaces, the Placemaking process can be extraordinarily effective in making people feel attached to the places where they live. When people feel attached, they are more likely to get involved and build shared wealth within their communities. Thus it is no surprise that placemaking is the ultimate goal of this Vision Plan, the goal that strings together all the other

### HIGH LINE

In the City of New York, the revival and reuse of the High Line, an unutilized and neglected elevated freight rail line on Manhattan's West Side, has proven economically successful for the City of New York, spurring excitement and investment from the City's most elite stakeholders. The High Line was built in the 1930s, as part of a massive public-private infrastructure to lift freight traffic 30 feet in the air, removing dangerous trains from the streets of Manhattan's largest industrial district. But as the City and its needs changed, the elevated rail system became unnecessary and inoperable by 1980. In 1999, when the historic structure was under threat of demolition, the Friends of the High Line was formed and worked in partnership with the City of New York to preserve and maintain the structure as an elevated public park. This park opened in 2009.

The High Line runs a total of a 1.6 linear miles, and is home to a variety of plant species, specialty food vendors, outdoor

classroom space, open-air theatres, public art exhibitions and more. Investors have started to invest in building hotels and residential structures that easily connect patrons to the new park as well as activating the spaces below the High line with new retail space and recreational opportunities. According to the New York Times, approximately 29 developments have been –or are being– built along the High Line. Also, between 2003 and 2011, nearby residential property values grew 103%. Manhattan rents are also revving up as a result of the High Line completion. According to Douglas Elliman's report (compiled by Miller Samuel), the average monthly rent for a Manhattan apartment in February of 2013 was \$3,956, a 4.3% increase from January and a 4.9% increase from February 2012. By creating the stage for a great public space, the City of New York has seen the economic benefits of their investment into an unutilized piece of infrastructure.

goals of the Plan. However, before we discuss of the methods of placemaking within the NELA Riverfront District Area, let's discuss its benefits.

Encouraging the development of a community's identity offers its respective city immeasurable benefits by mediating the infrastructural and social demands of the existing population with sustainable growth for the future population. Three of the major benefits, which this Vision Plan will focus on, are the economic, environmental and cultural benefits of placemaking. When implemented successfully, cities with activated and friendly public places will prove to

be the most successful cities; sustainable, livable, and interesting places to live, work, and play.

As community's work together in developing a unique vision for their corridors, streets and public spaces, they are forced to assess existing gaps in their infrastructure. Examples of these infrastructural gaps may be confusing street alignment plans which lack useable commercial space, roads which lead to nowhere, unsafe/unusable public spaces, or inconsistent bikeways and pedestrian paths. As the population changes and grows, these gaps may either discourage people from living in, visiting, or investing

in these areas. However, addressing these gaps potentially makes the community more sustainable for future populations and thereby more economically prosperous.

In addition to the economic benefit of placemaking, developing great public spaces provides environmental benefits in that they give relief to urban living. Not only do public spaces reduce the need for and dependence on the automobile, but having accessible parks, interesting walking corridors, waterfront wildlife areas, and other similar types of great public spaces increase people's appreciation for and stewardship over the natural environment.

Culturally, public places offer free, open forums for people to encounter art and to participate in cultural activities with their friends, families and strangers. From seasonal festivals in public plazas to jazz music in the park, good public places enhance a city's cultural life by bringing people together to meet, discuss, play, and experience their city in a meaningful way.

### Placemaking and Northeast Los Angeles

The Northeast Los Angeles community is composed of numerous recreational spaces, retail hubs, wide commercial boulevards, industrial areas, and community facilities that offer the potential to function as centers of civic life, institutional, recreational and community-oriented commercial activity while providing a distinct neighborhood identity. The VPEDIS guides improvements to reinvigorate and revitalize these urban spaces and to reinforce a sense of place within these locations.

The inherently multi-centered nature of the Study Area presents the opportunity for each neighborhood to promote its own distinctive character through activities, programming, and enhancement of visual aesthetics and physical plan. The Study Area is composed of many multi-use hubs that serve as regional neighborhood centers and some smaller single-function Community Nodes. Without a structured pattern or hierarchy, the

randomly dispersed and varied Community Nodes, while offering a wide array of useful communal, recreational and social assets to the surrounding communities, suffer from lack of critical mass and therefore fail to create a “legible” neighborhood Center.

### Placemaking role within all the goals of the Vision Plan

A positive sense of place is an important aspect of establishing a healthy attachment, identity, community pride, and belonging to urban neighborhoods. This can include the recognition of a neighborhoods history, the valuation of community assets, to the celebration of local cultural identity through murals and festivals.

The creation of a positive sense of place can also contribute to the encouragement of the community to reclaim aspects of the physical environment seen as blight and turn it around to become an asset for the community. This more active creation of positive attachment around a place and turning it around to improve the community is placemaking. The reclamation of L.A. River as an asset for the city, especially its soft bottom stretch along NELA has been an example of placemaking that can benefit the sense of place of the communities that are adjacent of the River.

Aggregated as the NELA Riverfront District, the five adjacent neighborhoods can benefit from a regional sense of place that leverages the River as an asset that benefits the neighborhoods economically, culturally, environmentally, and recreationally.

The NELA RC was driven by this goal to create a regional sense of place that is connected to the River as an asset, but the project's foundation was and continues to the creation of a NELA Riverfront District that builds off the five adjacent neighborhood identities and visions for improvement.

Therefore, the first goal of the vision plan process was to understand and strengthen the positive sense of place of each of the five neighborhoods. The maintenance of

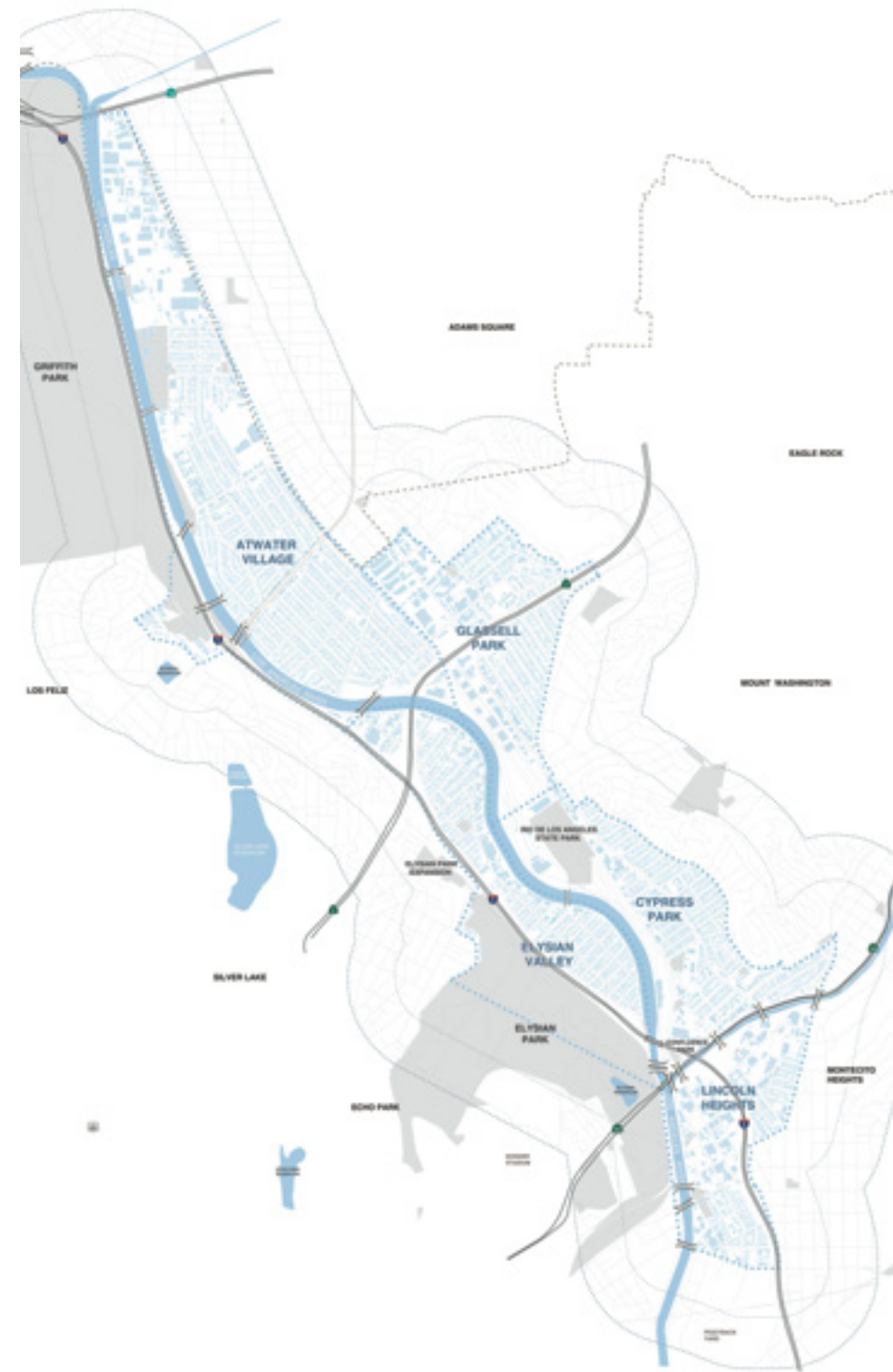


Fig. 40  
NELA Neighborhoods and  
Surrounding Context



Bicyclist along the Los Angeles River.



Residents from the five NELA communities

these positive aspects of each neighborhood presents a solid foundation for future Riverfront District development that supports the existing and evolving identity of each neighborhood.

Below is a discussion of what makes up the positive sense of place of each of the five neighborhoods. Two aspects of a ‘sense of place’ guide the discussion. One aspect revolves around the physical assets of the neighborhood such as its urban physical geography, parks, and businesses that anchor the neighborhoods. The second are the social and cultural aspects of the place that create positive neighborhood identity and belonging.

Within the NELA study area there are five distinct communities each with a unique identity, set of cultures, physical strengths, and opportunity to improve the riverfront. Taking into consideration the diversity of the communities allows for a more holistic and comprehensive placemaking strategy. The five communities are Atwater Village, Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Lincoln Heights.

# Atwater Village

The last 20 years has seen Atwater Village become one of the more desirable residential neighborhoods to move to. As the asset map (Fig \_\_) shows, the neighborhood has well-established parks, access to the L.A. River, while having the advantage of its proximity to Griffith Park that is next door. The two bustling commercial corridors of Glendale Blvd. and Los Feliz Blvd anchor the neighborhood. These two great streets make the resident, business, and recreational life vibrant, bike-friendly, and walkable. The neighborhood's location next to the City of Glendale adds to the neighborhood's advantageous physical location as residents can easily access the shopping amenities and entertainment facilities on Brand Blvd. Atwater Village also benefits from its northern section remaining industrial which allows for potentially creative commercial use that can continue to benefit the neighborhood and region.

Atwater Village's social sense of place and attachment is also very strong due to many residents who take a lot of pride in their single-family home atmosphere. The neighborhood has a strong Neighborhood Council and Home Owners Association. Atwater Village's ethnic diversity has also built a historic sense of place that has made it a neighborhood with stable Filipino and Latino middle classes in addition to the other ethnicities that live in the neighborhood. As mentioned the last 20 years has also attracted younger families and professional classes that has created positive support for the diverse businesses, restaurants, and activities that have sprouted up on the two main corridors.

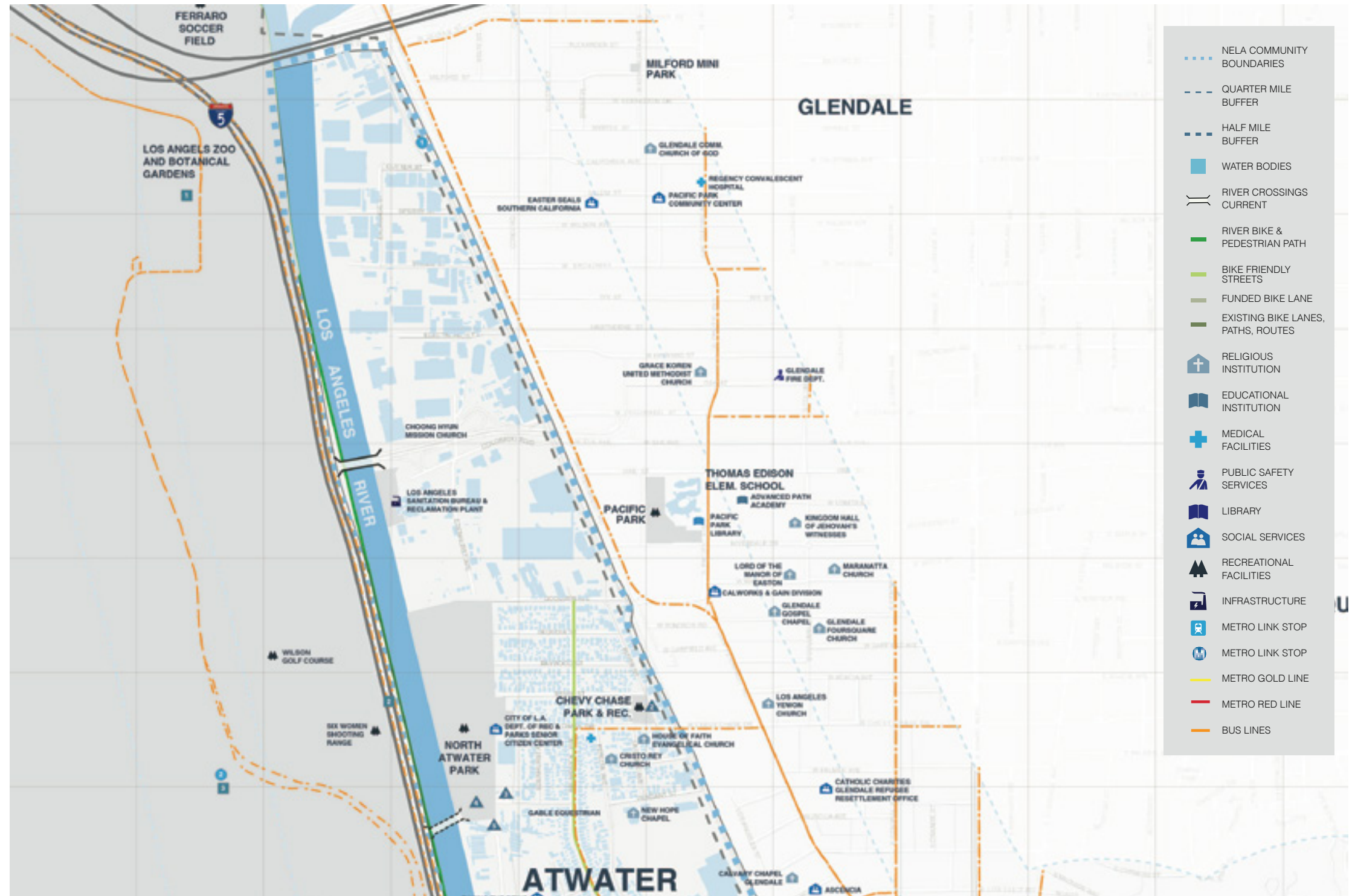


Fig. 41 Atwater Village (a): Community Assets, Resources, and Points of Interest



Fig.42  
Atwater Village (b): Community Assets, Resources, and Points of Interest

# Cypress Park

Cypress Park is one of the city's first suburbs. The neighborhood runs along the southern section of the L.A. River in NELA, where the old Union Pacific train tracks run. The neighborhood possesses the three main roads of Cypress Blvd., San Fernando Road, and Figueroa Blvd. that serve as key transportation thoroughfares for automobiles, buses, and bicycles. Rio de Los Angeles State Park provides one of the larger areas for green space and local recreation. There is also a Metro Gold Line stop within the neighborhood. The L.A. River Center and Gardens anchors the neighborhood and is a popular site for weddings and key organizations that serve the revitalization and environmental stewardship of the L.A. River.

The neighborhood is predominantly Latino and a strong sense of pride revolves around Latino culture. Many murals, small markets, restaurants, and businesses cater to a Latino population. Cypress Park has also become an area that has attracted progressive and hip small businesses such as Antigua Coffee House, Flying Pigeon, and the Bike Oven that also participate in the monthly NELA Second Saturdays Gallery night. In essence because of its diversity and attraction of the younger artistic creative class, Cypress Park is a neighborhood that is going through many changes.

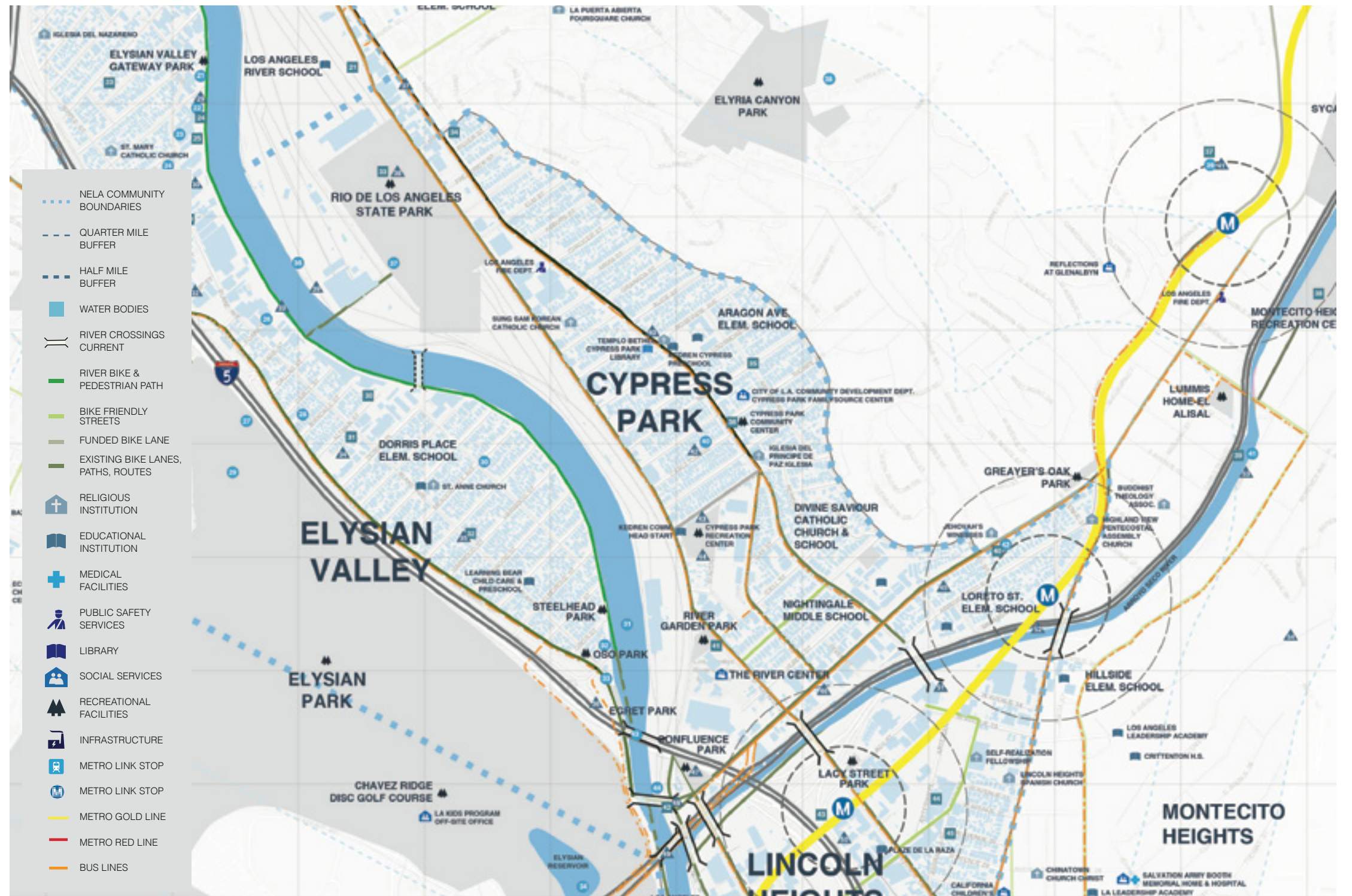
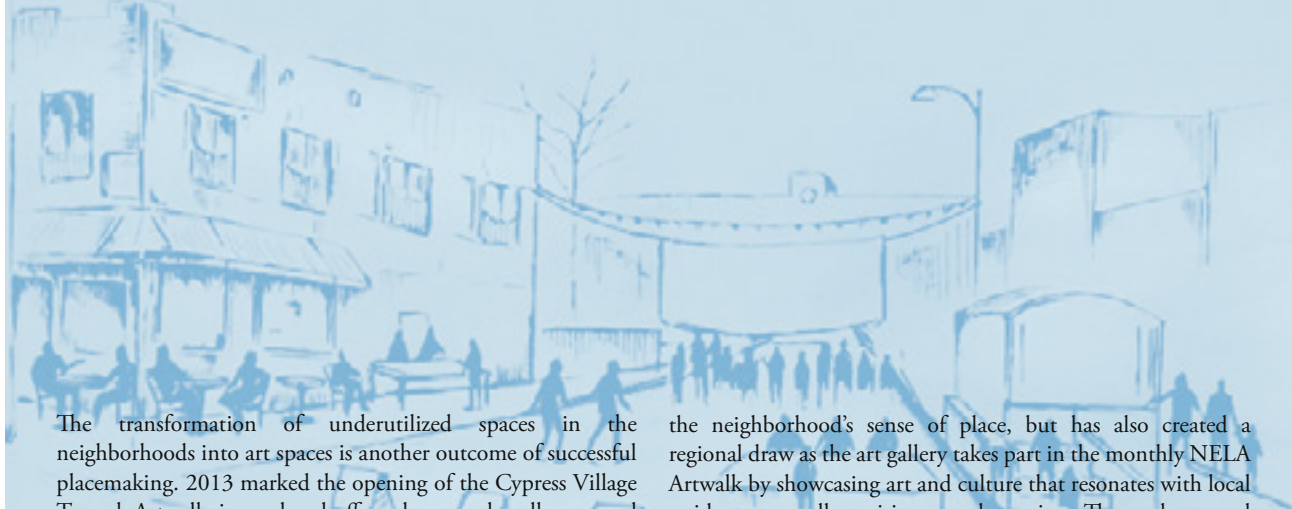


Fig. 43 Cypress Park: Community Assets, Resources, and Points of Interest

## CYPRESS PARK UNDERGROUND ART GALLERY



The transformation of underutilized spaces in the neighborhoods into art spaces is another outcome of successful placemaking. 2013 marked the opening of the Cypress Village Tunnel Artwalk in a closed-off underground walkway used to cross Figueroa Blvd. safely in the past. Longtime local resident Yancey Quiñones who is the owner of Antigua Coffee House that is right across from one of the tunnel's entrances spearheaded the effort to transform the space into an art gallery. The effort has not only created a locally led effort to enhance

the neighborhood's sense of place, but has also created a regional draw as the art gallery takes part in the monthly NELA Artwalk by showcasing art and culture that resonates with local residents, as well as visitors to the region. The underground gallery has also become a sensible extension of Antigua Coffee House's local mission to serve as not only a coffee house, but a local community resource center that celebrates Cypress Park as a neighborhood and provides local community development.

## THE RIVER WILD PROJECT IN ELYSIAN VALLEY



An innovative placemaking project that has recently taken off in Elysian Valley is the River Wild project ([www.riverwild.la](http://www.riverwild.la)). River Wild is a coalition of river advocates, local residents, small businesses, artists, and community organizations in Elysian Valley who have organized weekend pop-up markets and recreational activities along the riverfront. The pop-up market activities have included a café, coffee, healthy food, and food carts that address the lack of local amenities in the neighborhood. The recreational activities include bike tours, bird

watching, and walking tours that celebrate the neighborhood and use of the River as an asset. Such placemaking activities are not only fun, but also purposeful because of River Wild's goal to address local needs in the community. These placemaking activities should continue to be encouraged as community-based development activities in Elysian Valley and the other NELA Riverfront neighborhoods.



# Elysian Valley

Elysian Valley is physically encompassed by the L.A. River on its Western boundary and by the 5 Freeway on the Eastern boundary. The neighborhood is developed with multiple streets that end as access ways to the L.A. River and the soft bottom section. The greenway trail walking and bike path also serves as a physical asset to the riverfront neighborhood, in addition to many pocket parks that line the riverfront. Along Elysian Valley's riverfront are industrial buildings and businesses that has made the neighborhood a site for commercial activity that also includes a thriving arts, craft, and maker community.

Socially, Elysian Valley has a very strong neighborhood identity that is supported by its engaged residents, maker community, and strong civic organizations that include the Elysian Valley Neighborhood Council and Elysian Valley Neighborhood Watch. Its arts and maker community has inspired Elysian Valley's very own annual event called the Frogtown Artwalk which is in its 8<sup>th</sup> iteration. The name comes from the community's sense of its own history and place given that frogs use to populate the area when the River was naturally flowing. Elysian Valley like the rest of NELA is also ethnically diverse with a majority Latino population, as well as many Asian ethnicities. Similar to much of NELA and the artistic creativity that characterizes the neighborhoods, Elysian Valley is experiencing neighborhood change and gentrification because of its attractive physical geography and creative atmosphere.

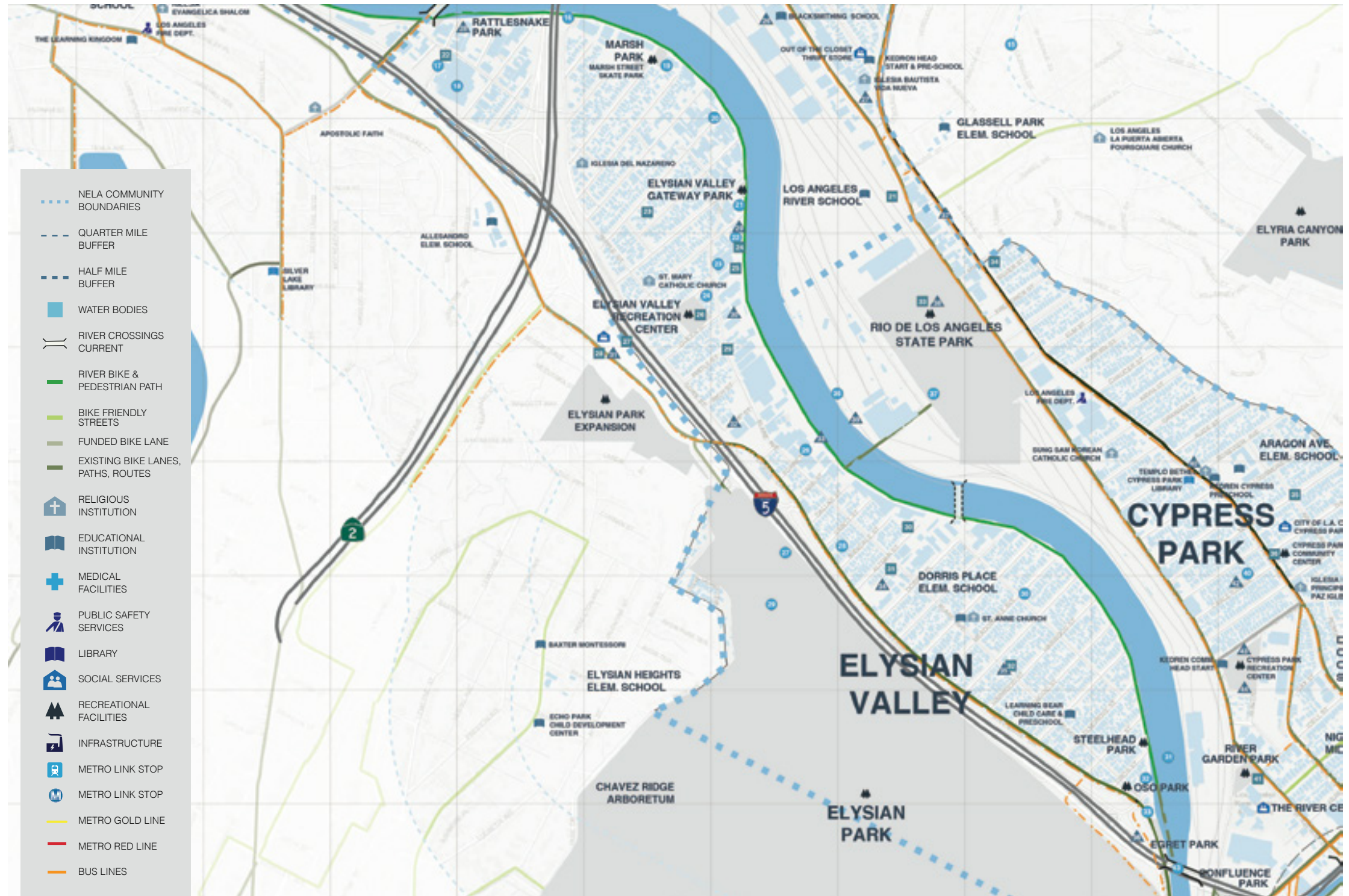


Fig. 44 Elysian Valley: Community Assets, Resources, and Points of Interest

# Glassell Park

Glassell Park is a modestly hilly neighborhood with a mix of single-family homes and apartment buildings. The NELA Study Area does not contain the whole neighborhood but the parts within the Study Area rest along the L.A. River including Sotomayer High School campus between the River and San Fernando Blvd. The Study Area portion of Glassell Park also includes the major thoroughfare of Fletcher Blvd. that serves as the street level access to Silver Lake and Hollywood for residents in the northeast region.

The neighborhood is ethnically diverse with a majority Latino population and high Asian (mainly Filipino and Chinese) population. Businesses are set up in the area to serve these ethnicities and immigrating populations. There has also been a strong sense of political activism with the local Neighborhood Council and Improvement Association. The current City Councilmember, Mitch O'Farrell, has roots within these civic associations as a resident of the neighborhood.



Fig. 45 Glassell Park: Community Assets, Resources, and Points of Interest

# Lincoln Heights

The Study Area contains a section of Lincoln Heights, a neighborhood considered one of the oldest in Los Angeles. The neighborhood possesses ideal access to Downtown and Chinatown, as it is adjacent to the two major corridors of Broadway Ave. and Main St. that lead into Chinatown and Downtown. The two corridors have potentially ideal layouts that can make business revitalization much more vibrant. Lincoln Heights because of its age also possesses beautiful housing stock that dates back to the Victorian era.

Lincoln Heights is ethnically diverse with a majority Latino population and Asian population that mainly consist of Chinese and Vietnamese residents given its proximity to Chinatown. The neighborhood is aware of its historic roots as a neighborhood and its organizations such as the Lincoln Heights Neighborhood Council supports tours of the neighborhood that explores the landmarks and key historic sites.

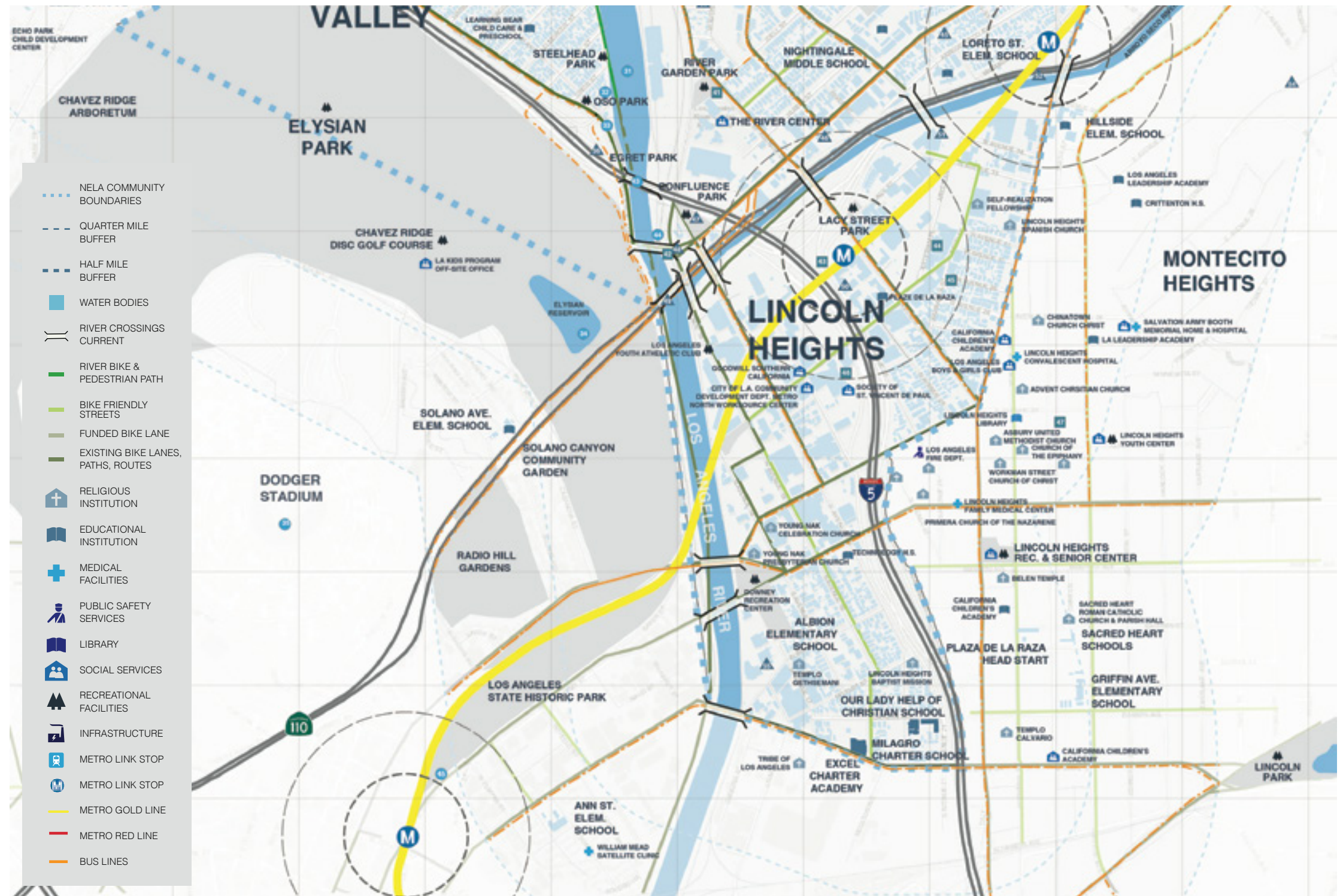


Fig. 46 Lincoln Heights: Community Assets, Resources, and Points of Interest

## Community Resonances: Resources

R	1	Zoo
R	2	Bike Path
R	3	Shane's Inspiration Park
R	4	The River
R	5	Bridge
R	6	Meeting Space
R	7	(no label)
R	8	Library
R	9	Post Office
R	10	Keg Liquor Store and Barber Shop
R	11	Farmer's Market (2 responses)
R	12	Little Knittery
R	13	Out of the Closet Thrift Store
R	14	The Tavern Restaurant
R	15	Metro Fitness
R	16	Tennis Courts
R	17	Great School
R	18	El Buen Gusto Restaurant
R	19	Rec Center
R	20	Basketball Courts
R	21	Sotomayor
R	22	Elysian Clock Shop
R	23	Tree Line Community Space
R	24	Bulletin Board
R	25	Community Center in House
R	26	Rec Center
R	27	Market
R	28	Latvian Community Center
R	29	Helen
R	30	Buddhist Center
R	31	Kadampa Meditation Center
R	32	Jardin Del Rio
R	33	Basketball Courts
R	34	La Paloma Restaurante
R	35	Ice cream Trucks
R	36	Cypress Park Family Center
R	37	Southwest Museum
R	38	Deb's Park
R	39	Arroyo Seco Bike Path
R	40	El Atacor #11 Tacos De Papa
R	41	Job!
R	42	NPS Juan Bautista Mural on River
R	43	Metro
R	44	Barrio in Action Homeboy Industries
R	45	Worksource

R	46	Behavioral Health Services
R	47	Library

## Community Resonances: Assets

A	1	Dog Park
A	2	Rec Center/After School Program
A	3	San Rafael Stable
A	4	Equestrian Arena
A	6	The River
A	7	Bliamba's
A	8	India Sweets and Spices
A	9	Tam O'Shanter Restaurant
A	10	River Walk
A	11	Meeting Space
A	12	Bliamba's
A	13	Farmer's Market (3 responses)
A	14	A Place to Create
A	15	Great Park
A	16	Trader Joe's
A	17	River Walk
A	18	Vince's Market
A	19	Tamales
A	20	Eagle Rock Brewery
A	21	Land Sign
A	22	The Park
A	23	Verdugo Bar
A	24	Lemon Poppy Kitchen
A	25	Super King
A	26	Community Woodshop
A	27	Patras Charbroiled Burgers (2 responses)
A	28	Frogtown River Path
A	29	Knox Street Park (3 responses)
A	30	Kevin's Tacos
A	31	Latvian Community Center
A	32	Community Gardens (2 responses)
A	33	Bike Path
A	34	Kadampa Meditation Center
A	35	Jardin Del Rio
A	36	Bike Path
A	37	El Pescador Good Ceviche!
A	38	Walking Path
A	39	Beautiful View of River
A	40	La Morenita Bakery (2 responses)
A	41	Southwest Museum
A	42	Flying Program

A	43	Head Start
A	44	Park Activities
A	45	Antigua Coffee (3 responses)
A	46	Footsie's
A	47	Confluence Park
A	48	NPS Juan Bautista Mural on River
A	49	Landbridge
A	50	Goldline
A	51	Dodger Stadium and Downtown View
A	52	Gold Line
A	53	Arroyo Seco Bike Path
A	54	Hiking
A	55	Albion Dairy (future)

## Community Resonances: Points of Interest

POI	1	Golden Road Brewery
POI	2	Shane's Inspiration Park
POI	3	The River
POI	4	Bike Path
POI	5	Eats
POI	6	Bigfoot Lounge
POI	7	Potted Garden
POI	8	Tam O'Shanter Restaurant
POI	9	AcreSite Gates
POI	10	Cadets
POI	11	Basketball Courts (2 responses)
POI	12	Pool
POI	13	Glassell Park View
POI	14	Verdugo Bar (2 responses)
POI	15	Cazador Street View
POI	16	Elysian Cheap Talk
POI	17	Elysian Clock Shop
POI	18	Modernica Prop Rental (Hostess)
POI	19	Marsh Park (3 responses)
POI	20	RAC Design Build
POI	21	Clean Water
POI	22	Kevin's Tacos
POI	23	Marian's Tamales (2 responses)
POI	24	Nomad
POI	25	Silverlake Reservoir
POI	26	Art Studios
POI	27	Hiking Path
POI	28	Al Kenner Garden Open House
POI	29	View of Downtown

POI	30	David Del Ature
POI	31	L.A. River
POI	32	Dog Beach
POI	33	Nice Quiet Park to Rest after Biking
POI	34	Portola Trail
POI	35	Dodger Stadium
POI	36	Unofficial East Side Bike Path
POI	37	Future Street View
POI	38	Self-Realization Center
POI	39	Southwest Museum
POI	40	Flying Program
POI	41	Arroyo Seco Bike Path
POI	42	El Atacor #11 Tacos De Papa
POI	43	Pedestrian Bridge (2 responses)
POI	44	NPS Juan Bautista Mural on River
POI	45	L.A. Original Aqueduct

# 2

## Enliven and improve the waterfront open-space experience

Enhance the existing open spaces surrounding the River and plan for new open space opportunities while establishing sustainable riverfront linkages for a visible and functional open space network.



With a growing urban population, the River can provide a fresh and modern landscape to meet the changing demands of the community.

As the population continues to grow, the City’s urban infrastructure will need to adapt to accommodate for that growth by providing people of all income levels places to live, work, shop, and play. The Los Angeles River provides a fresh and modern landscape to help meet the changing demands of a growing population by providing a range of opportunities for housing, job creation, and tax generation. But in order for it to achieve such successes, the waterfront needs to be revitalized as a functional public space, amenable to a variety of recreational opportunities, community services, and targeted programming thereby providing its diverse set of users with a unique open-space experience.

Public spaces are reflections of the community, its varied cultures, beliefs, and values, offering City residents and visitors common ground to express themselves. As such, public spaces should be designed to support and enhance the communities and assets that surround them.

Within the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront Study Area, there exist three types of communities:

- **The residential community**, which share a passion for activism, education, nature, culture and family;

- **The industrial community**, improved with utilitarian type buildings, which long for ecological and economic sustainability; and
- **The commercial community** providing a distinctive and eclectic retail experience and desire to connect close to the River’s edge.

The following are strategies and policies that are specific to the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront District areas that will help to enhance the existing open spaces and plan for new open space opportunities while establishing sustainable riverfront linkages for a visible and functional open space network.

Successful improvement of the waterfront open-space experience involves creating appropriate spaces for users from all three of the distinct Northeast Los Angeles communities in a structured format that supports diversity while fostering compatibility between these community types.

# Create More Usable Open Space

Much of the Los Angeles River waterfront is already occupied, with a significant amount of land currently zoned for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. But vacant and underutilized land remains and can be redeveloped for open space uses. While these sites may require zoning or other land use changes or even environmental remediation from contamination of past industry, it is necessary to plan open space in a way that is useful and publicly accessible. This planning also needs to enliven the waterfront experience, encouraging more residents and visitors to frequent the Los Angeles River while encouraging business owners to invest near the Los Angeles River.

## Create New Parks

Increasing open space in an urban environment provides many benefits, including fostering active and passive recreation, decreasing the urban heat island effect, and benefitting water quality by increasing permeable ground for rainwater infiltration. Thus it is no surprise that one of the main objectives of this Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy is to encourage the development of more public open spaces along the Los Angeles River riverfront. The development of new parks and improvement of existing parks will transform the NELA neighborhood, turning previously inaccessible lands into vibrant community gathering areas, fostering economic growth in the process.

Currently, places for physical activity within the City of Los Angeles are not distributed evenly among communities.

Several studies have documented inequities in access to parks and open space. Findings show that in lower income community's access to parks and other types of physical activity settings are not as readily accessible as in affluent communities. According to the Trust for Public Land, more than 2.6 million people in the Los Angeles area do not live within a quarter mile of a park. The City of Los Angeles ranks in the bottom six of high-density American cities providing parkland per capita. While the City has 6.2 park acres per 1,000 residents overall, communities that are predominately Latino have 1.6 park acres per 1,000 residents; Asian-Americans/Pacific Islanders have 1.2 park acres per 1,000 residents; and African American neighborhoods have 0.8 park acres per 1,000 residents. In contrast, predominately White neighborhoods enjoy 17.4 park acres per 1,000 residents.

The Elysian Valley community, located in the NELA Study Area, fares much worse than the statistics listed above. According to the Community Fact Finder Report, the usable park space per 1,000 residents within a 0.25-mile radius of the Project is 0.21 acres. It is therefore important to assess land opportunity as well as local need when developing new parks within the NELA study area and along the Los Angeles River. Along with opportunity, there needs to be a distinction of the types of parks that are needed within a specific community and the Study Area as a whole.

Below you will find a description of the different types of parks proposed for the Study Area followed by guidelines for the creation of such parks as well as recommendations

## GRIFFITH PARK

Griffith Park, located within the Study Area, is a regional park, as it provides a wide range of activity and recreation, while accessible to adjacent freeways that connect the site to the City of Los Angeles, Glendale, Burbank, Pasadena and more. As the second largest park in California covering approximately 4,310 acres of land, Griffith Park is home to some of Los Angeles' favorite attractions such as the Los Angeles Zoo, Griffith Observatory, Travel town Museum, Autry national Center, Greek Theatre, Los Angeles Equestrian Center and more.

for where those parks should be situated. These recommendations, along with land availability, community need, access to transportation, and funding availability inform the "Park Opportunity Sites" section located within the implementation chapter.

## Regional Park

On account of their location, purpose, and accessibility, a regional park is designed to provide access, recreation, and availability to a regional area rather than a specific community. Regional parks also offer a range of activities, attractions, and tourism

activities that can be utilized to generate tax revenue for the City. Utilizing the River as a setting, it is important for regional parks within the Study Area to highlight the River's history, natural life and future, as a means of engaging both visitors from the area or abroad to start a dialogue on the importance of revitalizing the Los Angeles River.

### Guidelines:

- Include elements such as distinctive historical elements such as furniture, lighting, vegetation, signage, paving and public art to create an emotional connection to the River.

## MARSH PARK

The City has seen some accomplishments along the placemaking front in the creation of several pocket parks along the waterfront. The creation of Marsh Park, for example, in the Elysian Valley neighborhood, is a 0.58-acre park with a skate park, playground, picnic area and a stunning view of the Verdugo Hills and L.A. River. While not particularly large, the park enlivens the adjoining residential neighborhood, offers bikers along the Greenway a visual respite from concrete and rear facades, and provides a built-in bioswale that collects and purifies rainwater prior to its entry into the River. This multi-purpose park has proven that momentous changes in a community can be garnered with small investments into the River landscape. c ontinuing investments, such as these, not only benefit the NELA Community, but also contribute to developing the very identity and character of the Los Angeles Region.



Pocket park

- Include a range of activities for varied users.
- Include extensive water quality improvements, including infiltration planters, porous paving, rain gardens and cisterns.
- Accessible to users arriving by vehicle, bicycle, mass transit, foot via a network of multi-modal connections.
- Include pedestrian and bicycle facilities where possible.
- All spaces should be ADA-Compliant to standards for grading and surface materials.

- As access to major destinations.
- On a large parcel abutting the River

### Pocket Parks

Communities can help promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging physical activity and making parks more accessible and appealing. The development of pocket parks is one way to take underutilized parcels within communities.

Throughout the public meeting process both within the Summer and Fall sessions, the community expressed desire for opportunities to spend more time outdoors.

#### Where to apply:

- Along major thoroughfares, highways, or nodes of community activity.

They also articulated concern for the lack of smaller-scale open spaces for informal gathering and recreation. Adding smaller neighborhood pocket parks and infill open space areas can greatly contribute to the overall quality of life within the Study Area.

Currently, some vacant land or parking lots already serve as de facto public spaces and the City of Los Angeles should look for these opportunities to convert into pocket parks. Vacant or underutilized parcels can also be considered for infill urban gardens, creating a productive communal open space that helps educate participants on how food is grown while fostering a

sense of ownership for ongoing individual garden upkeep and maintenance.

Since pocket parks are generally small by nature, safety remains a paramount concern. This Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy proposes that pocket parks be located adjacent to schools and community centers, where organized social function and neighborhood events help create safe environments. Pocket parks should also be placed at community nodes, adjacent to community service centers, providing a linkage between the residential and commercial domain.

Guidelines:

- Include community design elements that represents the community that surround the park.
- Include water quality improvements, such as infiltration planters, porous paving, rain gardens and cisterns.
- Accessible to pedestrian users as well as users arriving by bicycle.
- Park shall be oriented to the River.
- No parking requirements.
- Include pedestrian and bicycle facilities where possible.
- All spaces should be ADA-Compliant to standards for grading and surface materials.

Where to apply:

- Built on small, inadequately utilized vacant land.
- Locate within residential communities and adjacent to community centers, schools and other community service centers.

Plazas

Pedestrian plazas creates accessible public open space by closing a portion of street to vehicular traffic. Paint or another treatment is applied to the street surface; while large planters and other elements define the plaza perimeter. A plaza requires a commitment from a community partner that will operate the plaza, providing movable tables and chairs, public programs, and ongoing neighborhood outreach. Pedestrian plazas must also remain publicly accessible at all times.

The aim of plazas is to convert underused and redundant street space into a people-oriented place. These iconic street-to-plaza conversion projects use simple elements like movable tables, umbrellas and chairs; paint and plantings; and lively and entertaining programming to create more publicly accessible open space. Providing expanded public spaces can increase safety for people who walk, bike and take transit, encourage increased levels of walking and bicycling, and support economic vitality. New local gathering spaces can foster a greater sense of community and social cohesion. Plazas can also become centerpieces of neighborhoods, providing

venues for events and celebrations. All this activity is shown to support local businesses as more pedestrians come to and spend time in neighborhoods.

Guidelines:

- Include community design elements that represents the community that surround the park.
- Remain publicly accessible at all times..
- Allow for public gathering space for events and community celebrations.
- Plaza shall allow for visibility into and throughout the space, promoting a sense of openness and safety.
- Provide bicycle parking
- All spaces should be ADA-Compliant to standards for grading and surface materials.
- Refer to City of Los Angeles: Department of Transportation's People Street Program for design guidance and approval procedures.

Where to apply:

- Underused and redundant street space.
- On underutilized alleys.
- At or near Bike Share locations.
- On the commercial thoroughfare between buildings.
- At building entrances.

Parklets

A parklet is an expansion of the sidewalk into one or more street parking spaces to create people-oriented places. Parklets are intended as aesthetic enhancements to the streetscape, providing an economical solution to the need for increased public open space. They provide amenities like seating, planting, bike parking, and art. While parklets are funded and maintained by neighboring businesses, residents, and community organizations, they are publicly accessible and open to all.

The aim of parkletprojects is to convert small areas of street space into people space. Parklet projects introduce new elements such as creative seating options, beautiful plants, and bicycle parking into the streetscape. Providing these human-scale spaces can increase safety for people who walk, bike and take transit, encourage increased

levels of walking and bicycling, and support economic vitality. New local gathering spaces can foster a greater sense of community and social cohesion. Parklets can also become centerpieces of neighborhoods, providing a venue for friendly interactions, enjoyment of the life of the street, and small social gatherings. All this activity is shown to support local businesses as more pedestrians come to and spend time in neighborhoods.

Parklets would enhance the NELA Study area and other riverfront communities by adding beauty and whimsy to the City's streets. They reflect the diversity and creativity of the people and organizations that sponsor and design them. They also reflect the City's commitment to encouraging walking and biking, creating great streets, and strengthening our communities.

Guidelines:

- The space should be designed to encourage pedestrian activity.
- Foster public communication throughout the process of design, funding, use and maintenance of the site.
- Design should attract attention to business and provide additional seating that can be used by adjacent commercial, retail and restaurant customers and passersby.
- Provide site amenities such as seating and artwork that encourages or promotes a neighborhood identity.
- Provide boxed and removable landscaping.
- Provide bicycle parking at some locations.
- Refer to the Los Angeles County Master Plan: Landscaping Guidelines and Plan Palettes for specific planting guidance.
- All circulation and spaces will be ADA-Compliant regarding maximum grades and surfacing materials.
- Refer to City of Los Angeles: Department of Transportation's People Street Program for design guidance and approval procedures.

Where to apply:

- Select priority areas that would serve to connect existing completed segments of bike path.
- Locate priority areas where grade-separated underpasses can be built.

- Establish connections to major destinations, other bike paths, and public transportation.
- Negotiate joint uses for portions of the right-of-way that have been encroached on by other uses.
- Negotiate joint use for portions of the right-of-way that have been encroached on by other users.

Greenways

An overarching goal of the NELA Vision and Economic development Strategy is to create a continuous and functional greenway along the Los Angeles River. A greenway can be defined a s a continuous bike path and pedestrian trail that incorporates grade separated crossings for safety at all major cross streets, and provides parallel facilities where needed to minimizes user conflicts. Building greenways along the Los Angeles River would provide a dedicated bicycle path on the south and west site of the River, and a multi-use trail on then north and east side. Where feasible, both types of pathways should be provided on both sides.

The greenways could feature significant amenities such as shade trees, and showcase sustainable practices such as biofiltration swales and the use of locally available materials.

Guidelines:

- The bikeway should be designed to reduce the flow of untreated storm water runoff into the River through appropriate BMP's.
- Where separate bike and pedestrian trails occur, locate the pedestrian path next to the River and construct using permeable natural surfaces, such as decomposed granite.
- Color bike path to distinguish the route and add character.
- Provide site amenities at key locations including site furniture and water fountains.
- Provide frequent access at key locations.
- Provide wayfinding and interpretive signage along the greenway.
- Provide lighting and security.
- Refer to the Los Angeles County Master Plan:



Open space along the L.A. River



Open spaces along the L.A. River

Landscaping Guidelines and Plan Palettes for specific planting guidance.

- All circulation and spaces will be ADA-Compliant regarding maximum grades and surfacing materials.

way that have been encroached on by other uses.

- Negotiate joint use for portions of the right-of-way that have been encroached on by other users.

#### Paseos

Paseos offer intimate, non-motorized passageways through existing or new developments that are characterized by differing scale and materials. They can provide a concise and elegant route to the River within River-adjacent developments. Planted areas on both sides buffer the paseos from adjacent land uses. Paseos should also be utilized to collect storm water and improve water quality into the River.

Where to apply:

- Select priority areas that would serve to connect existing completed segments of bike path.
- Locate priority areas where grade-separated underpasses can be built.
- Establish connections to major destinations, other bike paths, and public transportation.
- Negotiate joint uses for portions of the right-of-

Guidelines:

- Include pedestrian and bicycle facilities where possible.
- Include elements such as distinctive furniture, lighting, vegetation, signage, paving and public art to create connection to the River.
- Include extensive water quality improvements, including infiltration planters, porous paving, rain gardens and cisterns.
- Incorporate multiple uses, such as a fire lane, emergency vehicle access, flood channel maintenance and other service access.
- All spaces should be ADA-Compliant to standards for grading and surface materials.

Where to apply:

- At new and existing private and public developments without public River access
- As access to major destinations.
- Where fire lanes are required.
- At vacated streets or alleys.

# Programming the Public Space

People seek out parks in urbanized settings because they provide contact with the natural environment while offering interaction with the social environment. Providing programmed activities in public parks, such as tours, exhibits, community gardens, cultural festivals, special performances, and restaurant space establishes a sense of place and connection with the natural setting through social interaction with neighbors, friends, and family. The open space surrounding the Los Angeles River would benefit from such programmed activities, as it would activate the public space while allowing for creative, new activities that promote the natural beauty of the River while highlighting the diverse values of the community.

Enlivening the public space experience includes infusing the space with vitality and life, allowing it to be layered with human experiences. Such vital public spaces are animated by the people in them, the interface that occurs in their territory, both between humans and the environment that surrounds them. Vital public spaces are sites of human possibilities, both positive and negative, amazing and banal, a zone of generative frictions. The installation of public art has been frequently utilized as an essential tool for creating vital public spaces. The Los Angeles River Master Plan supports this effort, stating:

“The identity and awareness of the River within the community at large can be enhanced by a program to encourage, support, and maintain art that enhances the

beauty and diversity of meaning and interpretations the River inspires in people. The revitalization effort will benefit if an arts program is established to coordinate how art is commissioned, funded, and managed to improve upon and to guide the eclectic artistic activities of diverse communities.”

Public art along the waterfront is a useful tool in the process of building a sense of place. Encouraging artwork that represents the history of a place or the surrounding community adds an element of humanity within a public space. This element allows those who visit that public space to develop a sense of attachment through the experience with that artwork. While having a public space is important, building a section within that space that features artwork designed to encourage civic engagement and conversation with strangers empowers citizens, thereby building social capital.

Public art has been practiced in several forms on or about the L.A. River with a variety of sculptures, poetry, murals, graffiti, mosaics, and performance art.

- **Water Street: River of Dreams** by Cherie Gaulke, 2003. A statue located in the Lincoln/Cypress Station of the Gold Line, next to the Arroyo Seco. Gaulke’s works include a life-size bronze sculpture of a Tongva woman drawing water from an imaginary river, and a 35-foot long “story fence” triptych.
- **City of Dreams/River of History** by Paul Diez, May Sun, and Richard Wyatt, 1996. This

## L.A. RIVER KAYAK SAFARI

For the first time, local river authorities succeeded in the coordination of a pilot recreational zone in the Glendale Narrows soft-bottom section of the NELA River area for Kayaks during the summer of 2013. In order to ensure that the riverfront neighborhoods had a stake in the increased recreational and economic development opportunities, local Elysian Valley residents Steven Appleton and Grove Pashley started the L.A. River Kayak Safari. The effort coordinates Kayak rentals, trainings, and local tours from resident perspectives.

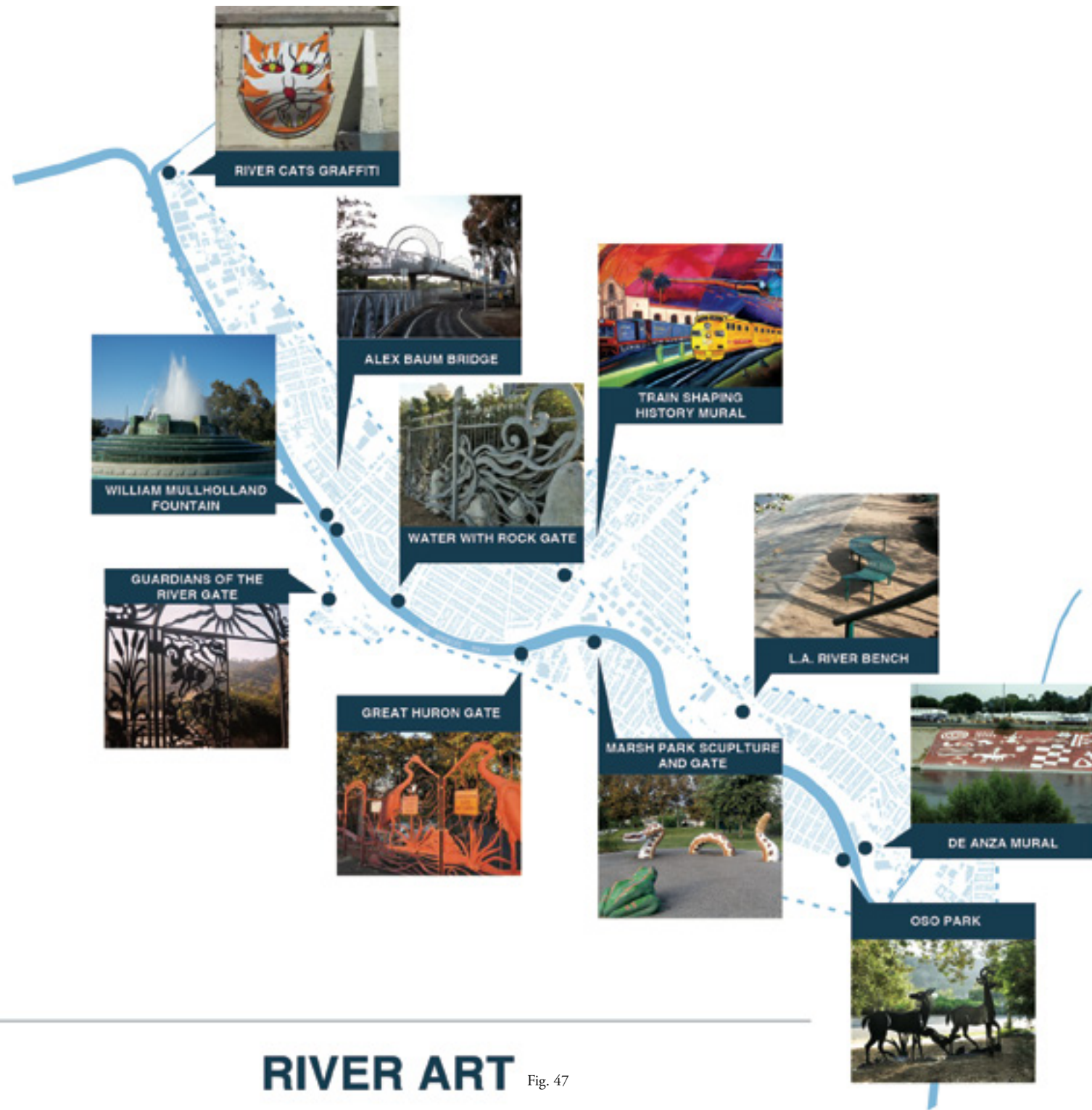
This coordinated effort provides a local form of social enterprise that not only benefits local job growth but also encourages local involvement in the recreational use of the River that abuts the Riverfront neighborhoods. This form of local recreational coordination is an important outgrowth that has the potential to make local community residents and businesses feel they are co-benefiting with the increased revitalization efforts by public agencies and organizations that are programming the recreational uses of the River as part of their work plans.

sculpture features a “river bench” clad in rocks from the L.A. River and the Tujunga Creek, and a 7,500-gallon aquarium. It’s located at MTA’s Union Station’s Gateway Plaza.

- **The four-part Gate at the Audubon Center** by Michael Amescua, 2003. A sculpture located in at the Audubon Center at Debs Park.
- **River Cats by Leo “Katz” Limon.:** Graffiti on the drainage caps have made them look like cat faces, located in the Glendale Narrows.
- **De Anza Mural** by Frank Romero, 2007. A mural in the Glendale Narrows walls.
- **Guardians of the River Gate** by Michael Amescua

1999. A sculpture located in the Glendale Narrows.

- **Great Heron Gates** by Brett Goldstone, 1999. A sculpture located in the Glendale Narrows.
- **Water with Rocks Gate** by Brett Goldstone, 2000. A sculpture located in the Glendale Narrows.
- **Metal river fence / gates** by Brett Goldstone, 2000. A sculpture located in the Glendale Narrows.
- **Life-sized metal animals** by Michael Amescua, 2000. A sculpture located in the Glendale Narrows.
- **Alex Baum Bicycle Bridge** by Paul Hobson, 2000. A decorative bridge in the Glendale Narrows.
- **River Bench** by Suzanne Siegel, 2007. A sculpture located in the Rio de Los Angeles State Park.



The Great Wall of Los Angeles

Public art and the diverse forms of art that escape the confining walls of the museum act on space and on the society of the city in many different ways that people can recognize and share. They make people ‘feel together,’ which is the beginning of sharing community.

-Manuel Castells



Graffiti on the channels of the River by the artist Saber.

- **The Longest Graffiti Mural in the Country** by graffiti artist known as SaberONE, 2007, Downtown graffiti art.
  - **The Great Wall of Los Angeles by Judith F. Baca.** A mural of the history of people of color and other ethnic groups in California from prehistoric times to the 1950's, conceived by Judith F. Baca, the founder and artistic director of SPARC (Social and Public Art Resources Center). Begun in 1974 and completed over five summers.
- This Vision and Economic Development Strategy recommends the creation of a formal Public Arts Program, allowing a broader range of artwork, both permanent and temporary, along the waterfront, in an effort to build a sense of place and enlivenment within the existing and proposed public spaces adjacent to the Los Angeles River.

## Building a Continuous Greenway

Waterfront greenways connect people to the water's edge and provide for recreation and movement along the shore. A greenway is a pathway for non-motorized transportation along natural and built linear spaces, such as rail and highway rights-of-way, parklands, esplanades, and, where necessary, city streets. Waterfront greenways provide a pleasant and safe means of accessing the waterfront for pedestrians, joggers, cyclists, in-line skaters, and others.

Currently the Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation, an organization created by the Los Angeles River Master Plan, is working on a campaign called the Greenway 2020. This campaign is designed to work with public and private partners to complete a continuous 51-mile Greenway along the L.A. River by the year 2020. The L.A. River Greenway is the key to creating a regional non-motorized transportation corridor in Los Angeles County. Passing through 13 cities and numerous jurisdictions, the Greenway will make it possible for families in the San Fernando Valley to get on their bicycles and take a leisurely ride to Griffith Park, Dodgers Stadium and Downtown along the River with amenities, such as riverfront parks, cafes and equipment rentals to enjoy along the way. It will enable daily commuters throughout the city to ditch crowded roads and buses in favor of a beautiful and healthy daily bike ride along the River. Ultimately, the L.A. River Greenway has the potential to catalyze an unprecedented transformation of the L.A. River into a one-of-a-kind civic, ecological, and recreational public realm amenity and mobility corridor for Los Angeles.

While the Greenway 2020 campaign will be working to find opportunity sites along the entire stretch of the Los Angeles River, this plan will identify opportunities for expanding the greenway within the NELA Study Area. The goal of these opportunity sites are to connect communities to the water's edge, create capital and wealth within the NELA area, develop a system of access ways to the water's edge, and expanding the amount of usable open space surrounding the River.

### IMPROVE PARK SAFETY - REAL AND PERCEIVED

Access to safe parks and other places for physical activity has an important effect on whether children meet recommendations for physical activity – and whether they get any activity at all. Fear of crime is a major deterrent to the use of parks. On a nationwide basis, 48% of Latino children and 39% of African American children in urban areas were kept inside as much as possible because of the perception that there was no safe place to play in their neighborhoods, compared to 25% of non-Hispanic white children and 24% of Asian children.

Parks and recreation programs can play an important role in reducing crime and violence and making neighborhood parks safer. The City of Los Angeles Summer Night Lights program could be a best practice example – but the City is not implementing it widely.



The program keeps select parks open from 7 pm until midnight, offering recreational activities, mentoring and counseling programs, meals, and other services, throughout the summer as an anti-gang initiative. In the neighborhoods where the program operates, there has been a 40% overall reduction in gang-related crime, including a 57% reduction in gang-related homicide. In densely populated urban areas that may lack space for creating new parks, making existing parks safer and seem safer may be one of the best ways to improve green access.

Within the NELA Study Area, residents cited safety as one of the main deterrents to accessing and enjoying the River and its adjacent parks and amenities. The safety issues raised ranged in scope and included things such as inadequate lighting within parks and trail, high bicycle traffic speeds along the bike path, inadequate or non-existent access ways into the river greenway, lack of wayfinding signage along the greenway.

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Park safety

# 3

## Re-connect NELA communities to the Los Angeles River and improve mobility

Improvements to NELA’s public infrastructure and mobility options help support the functions of daily life as well as connect neighborhoods to the River. These connections help the River become the “green spine” of the City, promoting healthy and active lifestyle choices while increasing access and mobility options for all residents.

Since the 1980’s when revitalization of the Los Angeles River started to gain momentum, several projects of varying size have been built near the River. These projects include public improvements such as new access ways, greenways, bicycle and pedestrian paths, parks and bridges as well as private development such as residential developments, commercial developments, and industrial opportunities. Unlike previously built projects, which turned their backs to the River, these new projects embraced the River as a component of their existence. Despite the obvious success of reengaging the River as a part of the community, these projects provided new publically accessible areas for recreation and relaxation along the waterfront, opening

up neighborhoods to the waterways and what could potentially be the City’s largest contiguous open space. Within the NELA Study Area, several projects like the ones described above have been built by the Los Angeles River, a new Greenway, numerous parks and open spaces, pedestrian bridges and more. Still, however, there remains a disconnect between the neighborhood, commercial boulevards, and industrial centers and these riverfront open space opportunities. As mentioned in Chapter 3, there are three types of communities within the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront

Study Area. The first is the residential community nestled, and often isolated, within pockets bound by freeways, rail lines, industrial uses and dead-end streets that culminate with undeveloped cul de sacs fronting the River. The second is the industrial community - improved with utilitarian buildings which house companies from a variety of high grossing economic sectors such as the entertainment, health and construction industries - located on crumbling and cursive public streets that lack the infrastructure necessary for growth. Finally, the third typology, the commercial community, brimming with a distinctive and eclectic retail experience but lacking any sort of connection to the River’s edge. Understanding these community typologies and the benefits that each provides the Northeast Los Angeles Area and City as a whole helps us understand the need for better connections between the communities as well as from the communities to the River. Creating a system of multi-modal transit opportunity is a necessary first step to improving the economic climate and sustainability of the area, the health and wellness of the surrounding community, and enjoyment of the River as a public space; connecting communities, rather than bisecting them.

Within this goal section of the Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy is a preliminary assessment of the challenges, needs and opportunities within the NELA Study Area. Below you will find an assessment of the different typologies of NELA communities, and strategies necessary to connect to other communities.

### Improve Transit, Transportation and Public Infrastructure

The Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront District is composed of several unique retail hubs with wide commercial boulevards, educational hubs brimming with talent and enthusiasm, industrial hubs awaiting sustainable growth, and community facilities that offer the potential to function as centers of civic life; it presents institutional and community oriented activity while providing a distinct neighborhood identity. While these hubs are located within physical proximity, they remain isolated due to

the lack of mobility connections between the hubs. The Vision Plan hopes to guide improvements in the multi-modal transportation within this district, reinvigorating and revitalizing these urban hubs, and reinforcing a sense of place in these locations through the process.

This VPEDIS proposes recommendations for designing a more robust transportation network designed to improve overall accessibility and mobility of pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists and users of public transit, enhance the quality of life for community stakeholders, and improve the NELA Riverfront District’s potential to attract future private and public sector improvements. However before this can be done, it is important to develop an approach to identify these “nodes” of active urban spaces that make up the community.

“Nodes” are defined as concentration of activity that can vary in size and scale, which supply users with an interconnected network of uses, or focal points. Within the NELA Study Area, there are four different types of nodes: neighborhood centers, community centers, employment centers and main retail streets. Identifying such spaces and recognizing their patterns can inform the development of connections, made through an efficient transit system, that encourages localized mass transit and alternative mobility modes such as walking, biking, and car sharing. Moreover, identifying key nodes can facilitate community development efforts and improve economic opportunities by pulling people, resources and certain land uses together within a close distance. When such nodes are developed, it has the power to characterize the NELA region by transforming particular streets into centers of community life. Below is an analysis of the different “nodes” within the NELA Study Area as well as potential opportunities for improving the nodal activity and connecting it to the surrounding community.

#### Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood centers are areas with a higher concentration of neighborhood-serving uses, such as retail shops, urban plazas, local banks or boutique

# WHAT IS MOBILITY?

Whether driving a car, riding a bike, taking public transit or walking, community members need to find efficient, safe and enjoyable modes of transit to reach their destinations. Mobility is the ability to comfortably travel within the City by utilizing one or several modes of transit. In order for mobility to be successful, different modes of transportation need to be interlinked into a network, providing a traveler with several options that range in feasibility and cost. This Plan aims to offers the NELA community with tools to create more environmentally friendly networks that encourage and facilitate Mobility within the distinct community.

offices, which are adjacent and easily accessible to residential communities. These existing centers are local destinations with the potential for creating a regional draw. They functions as key anchors serving daily consumer needs while being easily accessible by multiple modes of transportation. By combining or encouraging multiple uses into single developments, Neighborhood Centers will help residents make fewer and shorter trips to accomplish their day-to-day activities while encouraging them to be active and make daily necessity trips without the use of a vehicle. Through public realm improvement and enhanced architectural treatment they may also operate as important visual gateways, announcing arrival

and departure from each neighborhood. Neighborhood Centers within NELA exist along Los Feliz and Glendale Boulevards, in Atwater Village, Cypress Avenue and Figueroa Street in Cypress Park.

## Community Resources Centers

Community Resources Center areas are characterized as geographic points where recreational or social resources/activities are concentrated. Resources include educational facilities, parks, restaurants, bars and lounges, local retail stores, and access points to the River. The Study Area is characterized by a constellation of small and large community resources dispersed unevenly

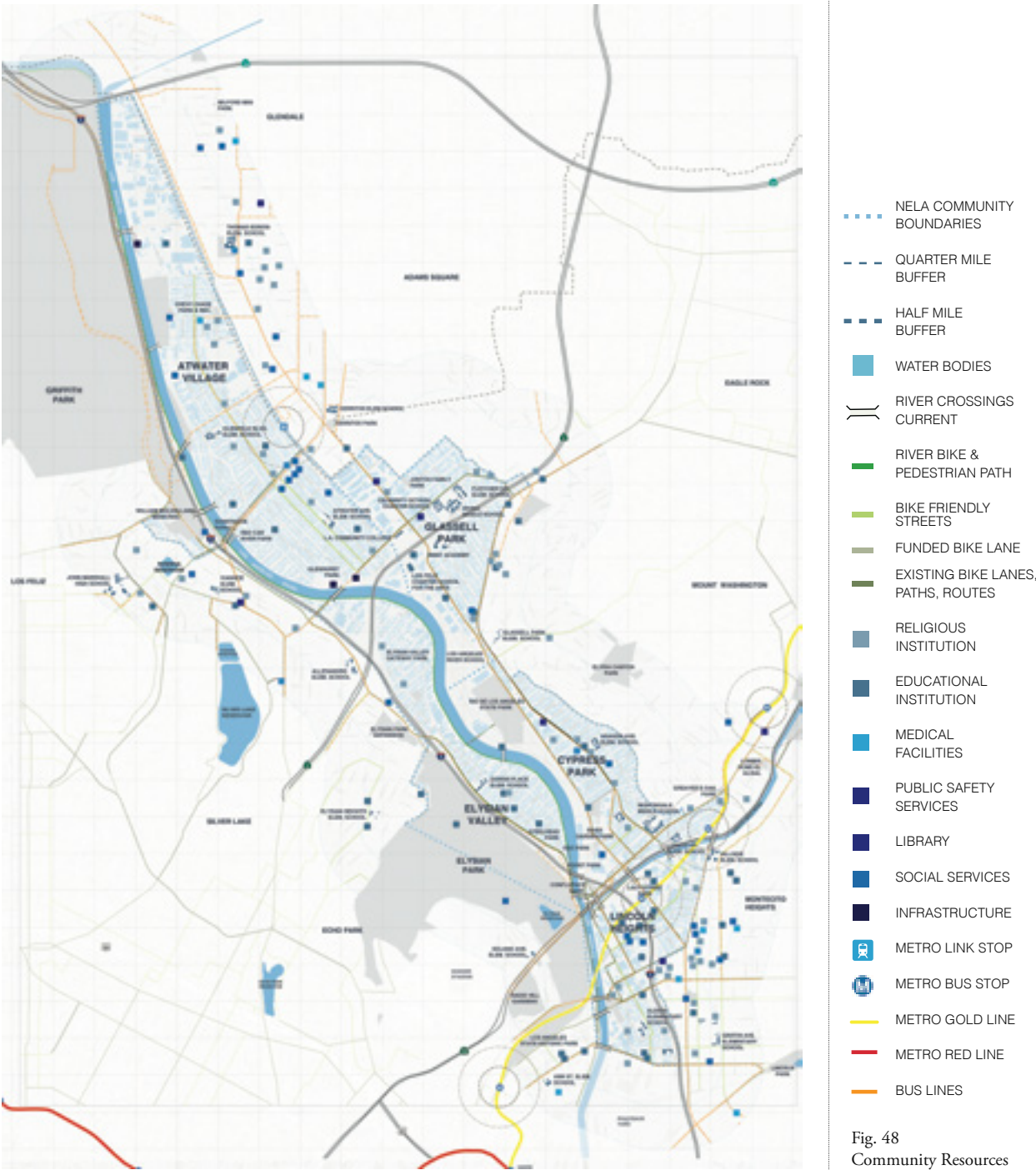


Fig. 48  
Community Resources

through the neighborhoods. The Community Centers, shown in Fig x represent existing local destinations where people in the Study Area travel for school, community resources, everyday errands or to meet for local events. Unfortunately, several of these resource centers are isolated destinations serving single purposes. It is important to improve connections between these nodes to provide for a bike- and pedestrian-friendly environment. Providing a strategic network of linkages between Community Resource Centers and other vital nodes promotes ease of access, encourages residents and users to travel to a variety of destinations without using a vehicle, and creates a sense of identity and place within the neighborhood.

### Employment Centers

Employment Centers are areas with a concentration of employment opportunities. Employment areas generally located on land zoned for industrial and commercial uses. Currently 19% of the NELA Study Area is zoned for industrial uses and 16% is zoned for commercial uses, offering more opportunity for Employment Centers relative to the rest of the City that is zoned 2.5% for industrial uses and 6.6% for commercial uses. (LAEDC Report, page 13). Within the NELA Study Area, there exists three major employment Centers: North Atwater Village, Taylor Yard area in Elysian Valley and the Cornfield Arroyo Specific Plan Area.

### North Atwater Village

North Atwater Village, at the northern tip of the Study Area, is currently comprised of many industrial facilities, such as a metal-recycling facility, numerous automobile storage yards, pharmaceutical company, entertainment company and several City of Los Angeles department facilities (BOS and RAP). While currently providing a range of high-grossing employment opportunities, the area remains underutilized and characterized by unsightly barbed-wire fencing, broken or inadequate streets, defunct infrastructure (such as a system of septic tanks

and cesspools) and contains no clear communal access points to the River. Although the North Atwater Village portion of the Study Area is strategically located at the intersection of two freeways (the I-5 and 134 freeways), and directly adjacent to Griffith Park, there is currently no connection or public benefit being gained from the River whatsoever. There exists a great opportunity to provide safe and compatible public access to this employment center as well as to the riverfront and other adjacent public amenities, in order for this site to grow and reach its full capacity as a high-grossing Employment Center.

### Taylor Yard in Elysian Valley

The Taylor Yard area in Elysian Valley is another example of an Employment Center within the NELA Study Area. Elysian Park frames the area on the west and Mount Washington on the East, extending from Fletcher Drive to the River's confluence with the Arroyo Seco. Freight, Metrolink railroad tracks, and industrial sites currently limit access to the River and the other communities in this area, while many industrial sites along North San Fernando Road physically divide the suburban communities of Glassell Park and Cypress Park from accessing the River. As a critical Employment Center, Taylor Yards could be completely reimaged by connecting itself to Rio de Los Angeles State Park and other Community Resource Centers that surround it.

### CASP

At the southern most point of the Study Area is the CASP area. Recently approved, the CASP provides flexible zoning to facilitate the clustering of industries and supporting new uses, focusing on mixed commercial/residential uses, neighborhood-oriented retail, employment opportunities, and civic and quasi-public uses around urban transit stations. Future development in this area could transform this large stretch of mostly industrial land into a mixed-use, high-density neighborhood; creating a more active street life around the River and adding bike lanes, unbundled parking and improved public transportation access.

### Main Retail Streets

Main Retail Streets often run along a one or two block stretch of major boulevards and commercial corridors that intersect with streets that connect to Neighborhood Centers, Community Resources Nodes and/or Employment Centers. Key commercial corridors within the NELA Study Area, include Los Feliz Boulevard, Glendale Boulevard, Fletcher Drive, Cypress Avenue, San Fernando Boulevard, and Figueroa Boulevard. Pinpointing the specific stretches of commercial corridor, which intersect with other nodes, are the sites where investment in developing Main Retail Streets should be made. Investments may include improvements to the public realm, which encompasses the public right-of-way, building facades, landscaping, public art, signage and other enhancements critical for identity building.

Understanding the diverse components of a functional community “node”, as well as the strengths and weaknesses within each, informs the development of useful transit connections between them. This is critical because poor public transit infrastructure makes accessibility difficult for residents and visitors of the area, which in turn stymies public, private and community investment within an area. Creating a robust transportation network designed to improve overall accessibility and mobility of pedestrians, motorists, bicyclist and users of public transit enhances the quality of life for community stakeholders and improves the Study Area's potential to attract private sector businesses. This Plan identifies major transportation corridors for increased frequency of bus service, streets to be highlighted for bike and enhanced pedestrian circulation, transit plazas at key intersections, and local DASH loops.

### Local DASH Loops or Circulator Transit Systems Serving Neighborhoods

Encompassing a Study Area of 3,831 Acres, busses and local DASH routes are the most reasonable form of public transportation because they allow for the greatest flexibility in routing along a city whose circulation

is catered towards automobiles. The Study Area can benefit greatly from local DASH loops that strategically service neighborhood centers, community centers, work source centers and main retail streets while connecting important frequently traveled destinations within the Study Area.

Historically, the NELA Study Area was serviced by a streetcar service called the “Red Car” in Atwater. This line was owned by the Pacific Electric Railway and ran down Glendale Boulevard and into Downtown Los Angeles. This system eventually was dismantled in favor of freeways and busses, but the idea of having local circulator for short trips, otherwise made by car, would benefit mobility and access within NELA. Currently, successful models of DASH systems already exist in downtown Los Angeles, sharing a reduction in the need for individual trips through the City's core. The goal is to provide environmentally friendly, affordable alternatives that better connect neighborhoods underserved by public transit systems.

A DASH system should run primarily on secondary streets with stops at transit plazas, where the secondary street intersects major transportation corridors that lead to neighborhood centers, community centers, work source centers and main retail streets. This system will allow frequent transportation of people from transit drop-off points to businesses, schools and institutions, major employment centers, medical facilities, cultural and entertainment venues, and other major destinations within the neighborhood that are not currently located along the transit corridors.

This Vision Plan recommends three specific DASH loops. The first is a transit loop for Elysian Valley, along Riverside Drive, connecting that isolated residential and industrial community with both Downtown Los Angeles as well as functional community nodes within the NELA District. The Plan also recommends a transit loop for the CASP Region that connects commuters within the Specific Plan area to other community nodal sites within the NELA area via Avenue 26 and North San Fernando Road. The third recommendation is for a DASH service

along Glendale Boulevard, reviving the historic Red Car tradition. This loop can be used for tourism purposes, taking passengers over the River on the new Glendale Hyperion Bridge, to the City of Glendale, and making stops along several commercial and cultural destinations in the process. More information regarding these recommendations can be found in the Implementation Chapter.

### Pedestrian and Bicyclist Linkages

Walking and bicycling is highly encouraged for the Study Area because it encourages awareness of our premier environmental asset, the River, while taking advantage of the pleasant year-round weather. It also promotes a healthy lifestyle as a form of exercise, while improving air quality by helping reduce daily vehicle trips. Improving the open space network (discussed within Goal 2) and identifying key green streets (discussed in the next section – Build a network of Green Streets), these linkages will encourage more people to walk for short distances. The NELA area currently provides several opportunities for easy access to bicycle/pedestrian paths along the River. However more can be done to extend these connections to key nodes within the NELA area, thereby allowing residents and other bicycle and pedestrian path users to connect to a greater variety of locations. Ease, safety, and access to valuable connections will encourage more users to travel by bike or foot rather than by car.

To facilitate a safe and pleasant space for pedestrian and bicyclists, bike lanes or bike path extensions from the River to the NELA nodes should be designated along major roads, and allow for sufficient sidewalk throughways to avoid competition with fast-moving cars. Wherever possible, dedicated areas for bike paths should be designated within the NELA Study Area.

### Transit Plazas at Key Intersections

Currently the NELA Study Area has a lack of coordination between varying transit opportunities, making transit trips

unnecessarily long and arduous for an everyday user. During one of the community meeting comment period, one physically challenged resident from Cypress Park stated that she had to take 3 busses for a total of 45 minutes to reach a destination that was only a half-mile away. This is due to lack of coordination between varying transit opportunities within the Study Area. This Plan proposes adding smaller, flexible and inexpensive transit centers where there would be a coordination of transit trips while providing a measure of safety and identity for the public transportation system in the Northeast Los Angeles Area. These transit plazas are proposed for areas near civic buildings, along the edges of unused parking lots, and close to shopping centers where small amounts of land along major boulevards and transit corridors are available.

The transit plazas are distinct and highly visible stops, located at key intersections and are aimed at providing quick and safe access to regional transit connections and alternative modes of transit, including bicycle and pedestrian linkages. The goal of transit plazas at key intersections is to increase use of alternative modes of transportation by providing seamless transfers between transit opportunities such as Metrolink trains, Metro busses, DASH shuttles, taxis and bike/pedestrian users. These plazas may also become neighborhood identity markers, providing gathering places along with informal retail uses such as newspaper stands, street vendor services, coffee shops and more. Having these common meeting areas, interspersed throughout the NELA Study area, facilitates the transition between formal and informal transportation modes that better serves the local population by providing comfortable, convenient and centralized transportation services.

### Build a Network of Green Streets

Development of Green Streets have the power to transform arterial, connector, and local streets into safe, easily identified green connections that safely and efficiently serve both motorized and non-motorized uses while providing storm water capture and remediation. Green Streets draw upon the ideas of sustainability and

livability from the Los Angeles River and implement those goals in the communities that surround it. The idea behind Green Streets is transforming impervious concrete and asphalt surfaces of portions of the existing thoroughfare into landscaped, permeable green spaces that capture storm water runoff, use plants and soil to naturally filter water, and replenish groundwater supply. A Green Street would symbolically and physically connect the communities of Northeast Los Angeles to the River and create a sense of “living, breathing streets.” Green Streets would also enhance the pedestrian experience and improve connectivity and safety within the NELA neighborhoods while increasing community and property values.

Green Streets can feature traffic calming measures to slow speeds, intersection improvements to provide safer bicycle and pedestrian crossings and facilitate pedestrian access, wider sidewalks to promote café culture, and water quality features that treat storm water runoff. While providing attractive streetscapes, Green Streets also create natural habitat and would connect schools, parks and community gardens to each other and to the River.

Restoring watershed quality and enhancing neighborhood livability Green Streets would simultaneously assist in cleaning and cooling the air and water of the City of Los Angeles thereby helping regulatory requirements for pollutant reduction and watershed resource management. When considering whether a street would be a viable candidate for transformation into a Green Street, it is important to assess the following engineering considerations to ensure adequate efficiency of the Street improvement.

### Green Street Engineering Considerations:

- **Drainage:** It is critical to analyze the slope of street, permeability of sidewalks and associated landscaping as the potential Green Street nears drainage outlets to ensure maximum storm water capture.
- **Filtration:** All storm drains located on a Green Street should include filters that will collect runoff waste oils and debris prior to entry into the watershed.

It must look at anticipated flow. Improves the environmental/biological health of the River.

- **Energy efficiency:** Green Streets should include streetlights powered with LED bulbs and/or solar powered.
- **Traffic Flow:** Green Streets should encourage a safe vehicular speed for the safety of non-motorized users. The installation of speed bumps could help reduce noise pollution and lessen road repairs, which saves city money on public neighborhood road maintenance.

Streets which connect to major nodes should be identified as potential Green Streets making safe, comfortable, non-vehicular connections to local destinations, parks, schools and other community facilities. When assessing whether or not to develop a Green Street, it is necessary to assess the balance between the right of way dedicated to transit vehicles, autos, bikes and pedestrians – assuring essential traffic flow and favoring improved transit services while encouraging increased bicycle and pedestrian use.

Key to the implementation of this network is to build on the on-going streetscape improvement projects and ongoing initiatives for a broader green street network. The Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan identified several different types of Green Street improvements within the NELA Study Area along with implementation recommendations, which will be carried through within this Plan.

### Types of Green Streets and Green Street Improvements

**Arterial Green Streets** - major connectors that incorporate safe connections for cyclists and pedestrians, water quality features, functioning habitat where appropriate, and identity elements.

Arterial Green Streets should be a prominent feature in the River Corridor. They can provide safe connections to the River for bicyclists and pedestrians. These would also include integrated stormwater management, use of



Potential green streets improvements

drought-tolerant, native streetscape plantings, themed street furniture, and public art identifying the street's connection with the River.

Because of the amount of vehicular traffic often found on Arterial Green Streets, it will be often challenging to improve access and use for cyclists and pedestrians. However, due to the critical linkages these streets can provide, and the profound effect they will have in defining the River Corridor, future-planning efforts should identify ways to improve access for non-motorized users. Unless an alternative comprehensive bike path network is created, these streets are the primary means by which non-motorized users will travel between local and regional destinations and the River. Arterial Green Streets will ensure that these trips are safe and comfortable enough to encourage daily use.

#### Guidelines:

- Include bike paths and enhanced pedestrian facilities.
- Include water quality improvements, such as porous parking strips, bulb-outs, and infiltration and biofiltration planting strips, to be studied by the City's Street Standards Committee.
- Create continuous shade along the street, with trees spaced every 20 to 25 feet.
- Consolidate existing utilities, and place powerlines underground.
- Include amenities, such as furniture, lighting, vegetation, signage, paving, and public art to connect the street to the River.
- If bikeway facilities cannot be accommodated on the Arterial Green Street, create an alternative route on nearby local streets.
- Incorporate traffic-calming measures.
- Adapt Arterial Green Street designs to the different prototypical street widths within the City.
- Create off-street parking areas to remove on-street parking and create room for non-motorized transportation facilities.
- Work within the City to redefine standard street types and sections.
- Refer to the Los Angeles County Master Plan

Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes for specific guidance.

- All spaces and circulation should be ADA-compliant to standards for grading and surfacing materials.

#### Where to apply the element:

- Every arterial street that intersects the River
- On streets that connect to major destinations and other non-motorized transportation routes
- On River Corridor arterial streets scheduled for renovation or improvements
- Connecting to existing but incomplete bikeway networks

### Potential NELA Arterial Green Streets:

**Primary Local Green Streets** - nonarterial streets that provide local access points to the River for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Primary Local Green Streets are non-arterial streets that can provide neighborhood access to the River. They often offer safer access for non-motorized users than the arterials due to reduced vehicle speed and volumes, and should be considered important River accessways. Primary Local Green Streets differ from Local Green Streets in that they are often situated between major access points, and provide important connections to local destinations, such as schools, employment centers, and nodes with efficient access to public transportation.

Because of their important role as connectors, bike paths and wider sidewalks should be accommodated as these existing streets are repaired or retrofitted. Guidelines also call for integrated stormwater management elements, native streetscape plantings, and themed street furniture.

#### Guidelines:

- Include bike lanes and enhanced pedestrian facilities.
- Include water quality improvements, such as porous parking strips, bulb-outs, and infiltration and biofiltration planting strips, to be studied by the City's Street Standards Committee.

- Create continuous shade along the street, with trees spaced every 20 to 25 feet.
- Include elements such as distinctive furniture, lighting, vegetation, signage, paving, and public art to connect the street to the River.
- Place local gateways and non-vehicular bridges where streets meet the River.
- Adapt Primary Local Green Street designs to the different prototypical street widths within the City.
- Refer to Los Angeles County Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes for detailed guidance.
- All circulation and spaces will be ADA-compliant regarding maximum grades and surfacing materials.

Where to apply the element:

- Local streets intersecting the River
- Local streets with freeway underpasses and/or exceptional access to surrounding neighborhoods
- Local streets that connect with major destinations

### Potential NELA Local Green Streets:

Dorris Place

**Secondary Local Green Streets** - streets that contribute to establishing a distinct River identity and character, but are not primary connectors.

Secondary Local Green Streets are nonarterial streets that can serve to improve the character and water quality of streets within the River Corridor, but serve only as a local connector to the River. These residential streets will serve as access points through existing neighborhoods. They are tree lined and may have some public amenities.

North East Trees has studied the systematic application of green streets in Elysian Valley. Since 80 percent of residential stormwater runoff sheets off concrete driveways, North East Trees proposes routing water into biofiltration swales located in modified existing parkways. The parkways then terminate into street-end parks that further detain and infiltrate runoff. These street-end parks then act as local gateways to the River.

A similar systematic and integrated approach to multi-objective planning can be applied to the River's many adjacent residential streets.

Guidelines:

- Include some water quality improvements, such as porous parking strips, bulbouts, and infiltration and biofiltration planting strips, to be studied by the City's Street Standards Committee.
- Route to street-end parks for detention and/or infiltration.
- Create continuous shade along streets with trees spaced every 20 to 25 feet and by placing utility lines underground.
- Refer to Los Angeles County Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes for detailed guidance.
- All spaces and circulation should be ADA-compliant to standards for grading and surfacing materials.

Where to apply the element:

- Neighborhood Streets anticipated to become River access points
- Neighborhood streets with parks
- Neighborhood streets with direct water flow into the River
- Local streets within the River Corridor

### Potential NELA Secondary Local Green Streets;

Elysian Valley neighborhood Streets.

**Industrial Green Streets** - accommodate both safe industrial uses and recreational access to the River Corridor.

Industrial Green Streets should be improved streets within the River Corridor that provide safe and comfortable bike/pedestrian access through existing and proposed industrial areas. These areas and adjacent neighborhoods can greatly benefit from improved association with the River.

Sidewalks with appropriate tree protection measures can also shade and beautify portions of these zones. In



Fig. 49



appropriate locations, tree wells and street-ends may incorporate water quality BMP’s to mitigate direct runoff and can become gateways. Signage and wayfinding systems can help greenway users to access the River through industrial tracts, with expanded sidewalks that could be designed to allow non-motorized access.

Guidelines:

- Improve streets to allow safe River access by non-motorized users.
- Add access points at River.
- Add trees and vegetation.
- Add water quality BMP’s.
- Add signage and wayfinding elements.
- All spaces and circulation should be ADA-compliant to standards for grading and surfacing materials.

Where to apply the element:

- Streets in industrial areas within the River Corridor
- Streets that connect directly to the River
- Streets that connect to major destinations, transit hubs, and schools

Potential NELA Industrial Green Streets:

Doran Street, Brazil Street

**Enhanced “green” intersections** - intersections that support safe connections to the River with traffic-calming measures, special paving, bulb-outs, and/or other features.

Enhanced Intersections offer safe and aesthetic crossing and access to the River Greenway for vehicles and non-motorized users. These Enhanced Intersections will occur within the River Corridor at arterial intersections and at bridges. Enhanced Intersections should celebrate the River as it flows through the City. The ground plane and crosswalks can have premium materials such as colored asphalt and concrete with patterns and texture. Wayfinding signage, including maps and directional markers, can introduce and guide users to the River Greenway System. Public art and environmental graphics may be installed to create new landmarks and River related spaces. Site utilities can be similarly iconic and aesthetic. For example, unique lighting and traffic signals can

announce the presence of the River Greenway Transportation authorities should consider alternative signaling systems. Smart crosswalks and scatterwalks can allow alternative crossing patterns and access to the River.

Guidelines:

- Include traffic-calming measures such as lighting, bicycle-signal systems and improved signage.
- Employ crossing refuges, enhanced crosswalks, and pedestrian signals.
- Incorporate premium and graphic surfaces at intersections.
- Include amenities such as distinctive site furniture, lighting, vegetation, signage, and paving.
- Incorporate public art.
- Provide premium utilities such as custom lighting standards.
- All spaces and circulation should be ADA-compliant to standards for grading and surfacing materials.

Where to apply the element:

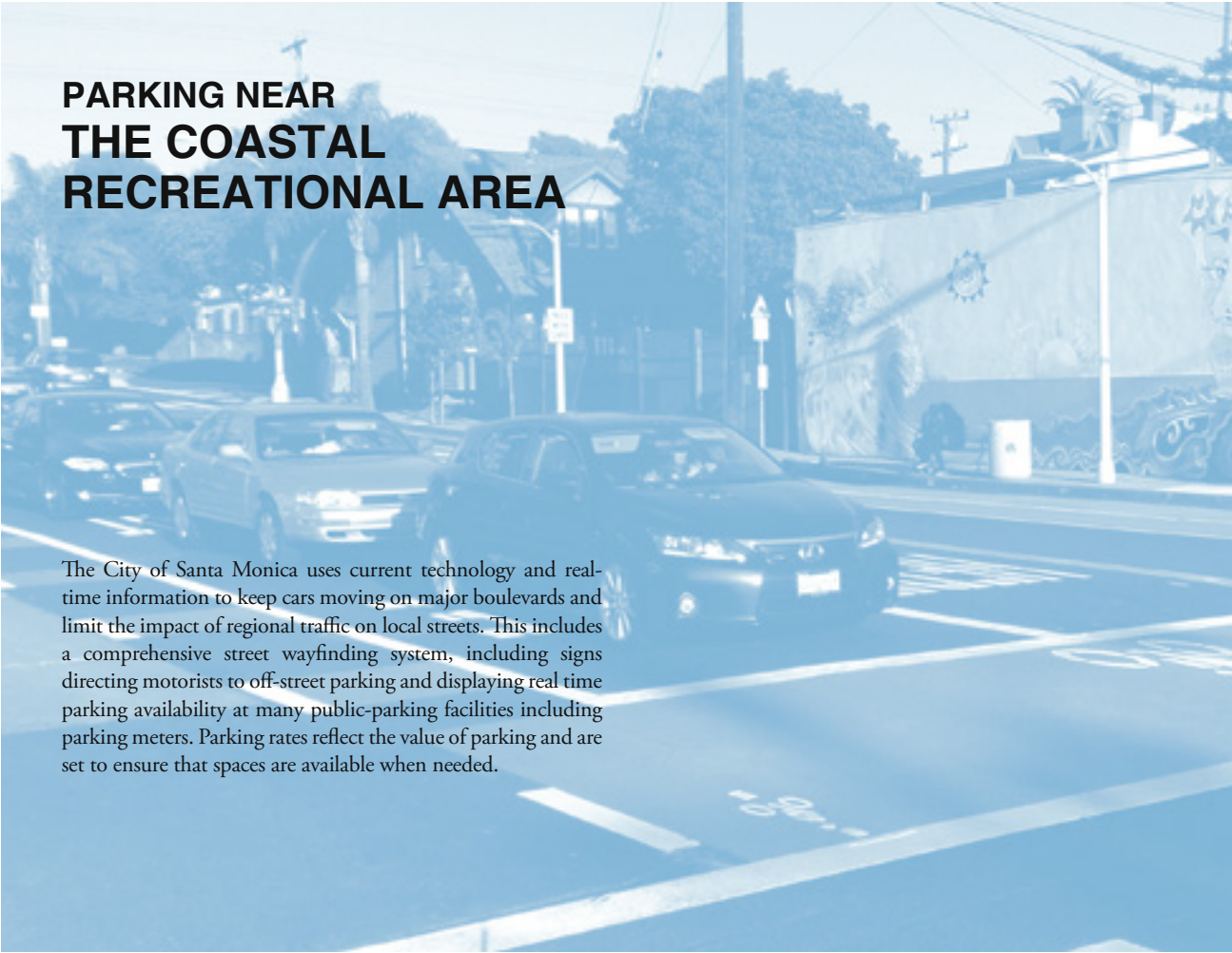
- At busy intersections, along heavily used streets
- At freeway on-ramps and off-ramps in the River Corridor
- At intersections connecting to major destinations, schools, and transit hubs
- On an improved River Green Street
- Any arterial intersections near the River
- At signalized bridges

Potential NELA Enhanced Green Intersections:

Doran Street and San Fernando Road, Brazil Street and San Fernando Road, Fletcher Avenue and San Fernando Road, Fletcher Avenue and on/off ram to the 2 Freeway San Fernando Road and Elm Street (Taylor Yard).

Build a network for Vehicular Transportation and Parking

While non-vehicular transportation is the key to enhancing and improving mobility within the NELA



Study Area and within the City as a whole, there needs to be guidance for improving the movement and parking of vehicular traffic. This should be done in a way that encourage the use of multi-modal and non-vehicular transportation, encourages community businesses to expand and thrive, as well as prevents traffic and vehicular inundation in residential communities adjacent to recreational river opportunities. One way to do this is to create a coordinated system of parking lots located within communities where there is a need for parking. It is also preferable that these parking sites are located adjacent to transportation opportunities to popular nodes and recreational activities, in order to

encourage users who would otherwise make several trips to just make one. Two examples for the need for this type of guidance were expressed during the NELA RC summer engagement meetings.

During the summer Planning and Mobility workshop held on August 24, 2013, several community members commented on the inundation of traffic caused by the pilot Recreation Zone Program. This program allowed for limited summer time access of people with non-motorized boats into a 2.5-mile portion of the Los Angeles River within Elysian Valley from Fletcher Drive South to Egret park. While a great experiment to analyze interest

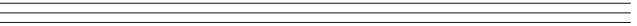
in the Los Angeles River, this program caused several instances of traffic congestion and parking inundation within the Elysian Valley residential neighborhoods. While River enthusiasts were instructed to utilize public transit, traveling with their non-motorized boat and associated equipment on public transit was infeasible, thereby forcing such enthusiasts to travel via automobile. And because there was no coordinated parking effort, River enthusiasts parked within small residential communities, causing severe congestion and use of streets not designed for that type of inundation. Until a system of boat rentals can be instituted, it is important to look for sites where these River users would have an organized program for parking their vehicles while using the River.

Also discussed during the summer Planning and Mobility public meeting as well as subsequent meetings with the neighborhood council and council district 13 staff, was the need to have coordinated and shared parking for existing built-out industrial and commercial communities in order to allow for a diversity of uses, such as cafés and restaurants. Several of these communities, like the industrial community within Elysian Valley, are constrained by their urbanized surroundings and are unable to allow for buildings to change uses from highly industrialized uses to commercial uses (which are more reflective of the community’s needs). This is due to the fact that non-conforming parking rights are removed when the use of the building changes. With no options to provide code-required parking, the sites, mostly located on the riverfront, remain vacant, underutilized and susceptible to illegal crime activity, instead of being transformed to provide the Elysian Valley community, which is geographically isolated, the commercial uses it so desperately needs. As a result of this lack of necessary uses, Elysian Valley residents are essentially forced to make several vehicular trips for daily activities. Providing this community with a coordinated, shared parking lot would allow riverfront commercial uses to flourish and provide Elysian valley with the necessities they need to grow in a sustainable way.

Creating a system for multi-modal non-vehicular traffic as well as preparing for users arriving by vehicular modes of transportation are ways in which mobility within the

NELA community can be improved. Several other cities adjacent to the City of Los Angeles have instituted a system of public parking lots in the vein of improving mobility and access within their communities, such as the City of Santa Monica, Culver City and Beverly Hills. These cities provide accessible vehicular parking lots to allow for a comfortable interface between residents, pedestrian and transit users and tourists visiting with vehicles.

Within the Implementation Chapter you will find recommendations for where these parking sites should be located and the system required to make them more efficient within the NELA community. You will also find recommendations to improve mobility for the entire NELA area.



# 4

## Improve ecological health of the River and the community's built environment

Natural waterfront areas are diverse and valuable assets, providing habitat for an astonishing variety of species and yielding benefits for the whole city. Wetlands are foraging and breeding grounds for shorebirds, fish, and invertebrates. They also filter the water and mitigate storm surges by absorbing the impact of severe storm events. Protecting, restoring and connecting natural areas and crafting citywide policies and programs to improve ecological systems will advance the health of the riverfront, the waterways, and all the City of Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles River sustains a host of natural ecosystems and habitats, provides a range of recreational opportunities that help ensure an active lifestyle and acts as a connector between communities, providing them access to healthy living, transportation, education and jobs. As such, the River enhances the quality of life for Los Angeles residents as well as visitors, providing a rich tapestry of hope and opportunity. But the River can only continue to provide all of these social and recreational benefits if advancements in the environmental quality of the River continue. Improved water quality and the creation of more sustainable environments is a desirable end in and of itself, as well

as a means to many other objectives of NELA Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy.

Thus far there have been several improvements in the environmental quality of the River and public health of residents surrounding the River. The City has created a network of green infrastructure, including green streets and green building measures which aid in collecting storm water while creating a network of public spaces. The City has also created efficient storm water capture programs within new parks and open spaces and continues to provide public education for residents desiring to improve not only their health but also water efficiency on their private properties.



While advances in improving the environmental quality and public health have dramatically enhanced the health of the Los Angeles River in recent years, further improvements would provide an even greater value to the ecology and public benefit of the Los Angeles River. Thus it is important to understand the existing environmental and health conditions while understanding the connections and implications they have on each other. This understanding and connection will aid in the creation of strategic solutions to improving the environmental condition of the River and ensure its continued success as a water resource, tool of public health, and mode of creating sustainable urban communities within the City of Los Angeles.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

In assessing the existing conditions of the NELA riverfront, the NELA collaborative researched the environmental health of the River and its surrounding environment as well as the health of the community. The environmental health of the River is dependent on sources of ground contamination that infiltrates the water, surface water contamination, air quality, and toxic sites adjacent to the River. The health of a community is related to the presence and impact of local resources and challenges, such as green spaces like the the L.A. River, or environmentally toxic sites like the Metrolink yard. More than just air and water quality, health outcomes are reflected through individuals and the community as a whole through rates of obesity and asthmas, as well as access to healthy foods and open space. Together, the environmental health as well as the health and vibrancy of a community can be defined through its built environment and the interactions that occur as a result.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

### Hazardous and Toxic Waste Contamination (HTRW)

According to the *Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report*, released by the Army Corps of Engineers in September, 2013, The NELA Study Area and adjacent areas contains three major areas of known contamination, and one area with high potential for contamination of concern. To the north of the Study Area, is a groundwater plume known as the San Fernando Valley Superfund Site, which is currently being remediated with oversight by EPA.

The USACE prepared an HTRW survey report for the proposed project as required by Engineering Regulation for the ARBOR Study. The Study Area and the adjacent zones are within a densely populated area with a history of manufacturing and industrial land use. A large number of HTRW cases listed in regulatory databases were initially identified. From these, 21 open cases were determined to overlap the Study Area. One additional site of localized groundwater contamination in remediation at the Cornfields site was determined through other document searches. The Piggyback Yard site is also anticipated to contain HTRW contamination, based on its similarity in historical use to Taylor Yard, for a total of 22 known and 1 likely HTRW sites in the Study Area. The site locations are depicted on figures found in Appendix K. As shown in Table XXX below, 23 of the relevant HTRW sites have a high impact within the Study Area due to the larger size of the contaminated area compared to the others and their likelihood of overlapping with project features. The three high impact sites are the San Fernando Valley Superfund Site, Taylor Yard sites G1 and G2. The Piggyback Yard site is also a site of concern with potentially high levels of contamination based on its historical uses, although there are no public records available for that site. The USACE determined that the other 19 sites have a moderate amount of overlap within the Study Area, they are in various stages of remediation, and contamination is not as widespread at those sites. Each of the three known and one suspected high impact sites is discussed below.

The San Fernando Valley Superfund Site is immediately north of the Study Area. Shallow groundwater in the area is contaminated with various chlorinated VOCs, specifically TCE and PCE. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is overseeing implementation of a basinwide remedial investigation and working with state and local agencies and other responsible parties to prevent exposure to contaminated groundwater, provide alternate sources of drinking water, determine the extent of the contamination, and address contamination through remediation and monitoring. Several areas of known groundwater contamination near the River are being treated by extracting groundwater and treating it at the surface. Groundwater extraction wells near the project area are at the Glendale and Pollock Treatment Plants and the Los Angeles Reclamation Plant. Although contaminant levels have been substantially reduced in many places, contaminants remain above safe water levels and remediation is ongoing (CH2M Hill, Inc. 2009; EPA 2013). Remediation is anticipated to continue for the next 50 years. The project site primarily overlaps the outer portions of the groundwater plumes, where contaminant concentrations are lower. The lateral extent of groundwater contamination from these contaminants is shown on figures in Appendix K.

Taylor Yard is a 243-acre rail yard that has been used for about 100 years. The G1 (19 acres) and G2 (50 acres) sites are portions of this rail yard. At the G1 site, four areas with elevated levels of lead and arsenic in soil were identified. These were remediated to meet site remediation goals that satisfy human health standards for industrial properties but not ecological or recreational standards and the property was sold to the California Department of Parks and Recreation (Camp Dresser & McKee Inc. 2011).

Remediation at the Taylor Yard G2 site is ongoing. The primary contaminants of concern at this site are metals, volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, and petroleum products. The contaminants are present in soil and groundwater. Remedial activities that have already occurred at the site include soil removal and soil vapor extraction. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) approved a Feasibility

Study for site remediation of the site in August 2012 (DTSC 2012). The project proponent will then prepare a remedial work plan and conduct additional remediation. When remedial activities are complete, soil with residual levels of contamination will remain beneath caps and building foundations. The site remediation goals will satisfy human health standards for industrial properties but not ecological or recreational standards (Camp Dresser & McKee Inc. 2011 Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Chapter 3 Affected Environment).

In addition to these three sites, Union Pacific's Los Angeles Transportation Center (LATC) is another key site adjacent to the Study Area. Although it has been paved for several decades, the existing rail yard can reasonably be anticipated to contain some contaminated soils requiring remediation; its historical use is similar to that of Taylor Yard uses. For the sites with soil contamination, the City must undertake or otherwise ensure the remediation of the sites to the standards necessary to support both human standards and the restoration of the Los Angeles River. LATC is a modern railroad freight transfer yard. City of Los Angeles has indicated that there are remaining hazardous waste concerns regarding the property. In a 1953 USGS topographic map, a portion of LATC is identified as a railroad maintenance yard, the same identifier used for Taylor Yard. Because LATC and Taylor Yard were in use as railroad maintenance yards during the same time, similar activities likely occurred on both properties. Furthermore, historical maintenance activities were the source of much of the contamination at Taylor Yard.

Despite investigations to identify HTRW sites of concern, it is possible that soil or groundwater contamination that is not documented is present in the Study Area and will be subject to further investigation as will be required for future development projects in the area.

### Surface Water Quality

Water quality within the Study Area is affected by point source and non-point source pollution entering the tributaries and main river channel. The River is

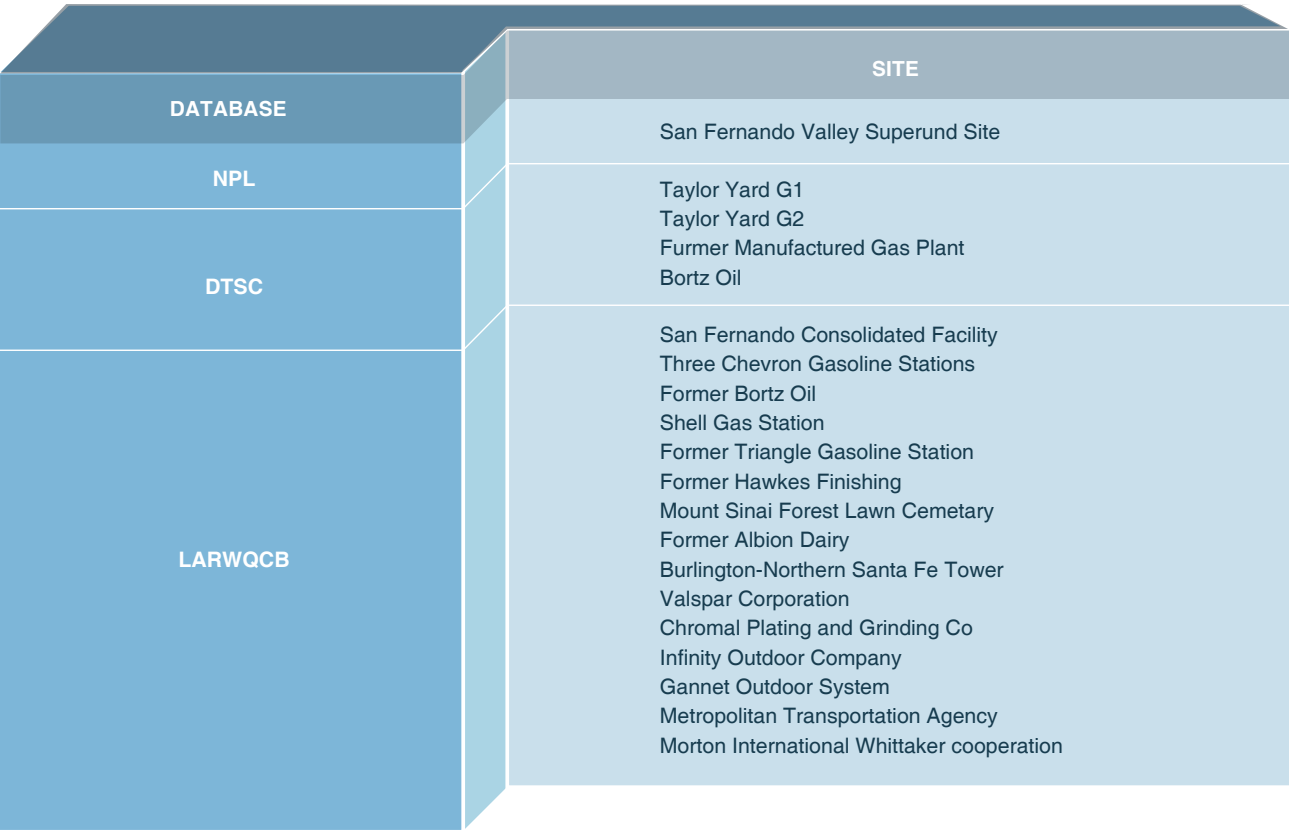


Fig. 50 Toxic sites and the database in which they can be found recorded

an effluent-dominated water body, with nearly 70 percent of its volume entering from the Tillman Water Reclamation Plan which releases approximately 89 million gallons of tertiary-treated effluent discharged daily. Although groundwater interactions exist, the major of storm drain discharges are believed to arrive from urban discharges.

Stormwater runoff and associated contaminates found in the Study Area are from surrounding urban areas and are the prominent source of water quality degradation. Runoff from pervious and impervious areas (streets, parking lots, lawns, golf courses and agricultural land)

carry accumulated contaminants (atmospheric dust, trace metals, street dirt, hydrocarbons, fertilizers and pesticides) directly into receiving waters.

**Toxic Sites**

NELA is unique in its overlapping network of transportation, industrial, and river infrastructure. While the freeways and railways provide key infrastructure for factories and warehouses that are at the heart of NELA’s local economy, they also produce and release harmful chemicals that affect respiratory health. Similarly, although the L.A. River is the largest natural and open

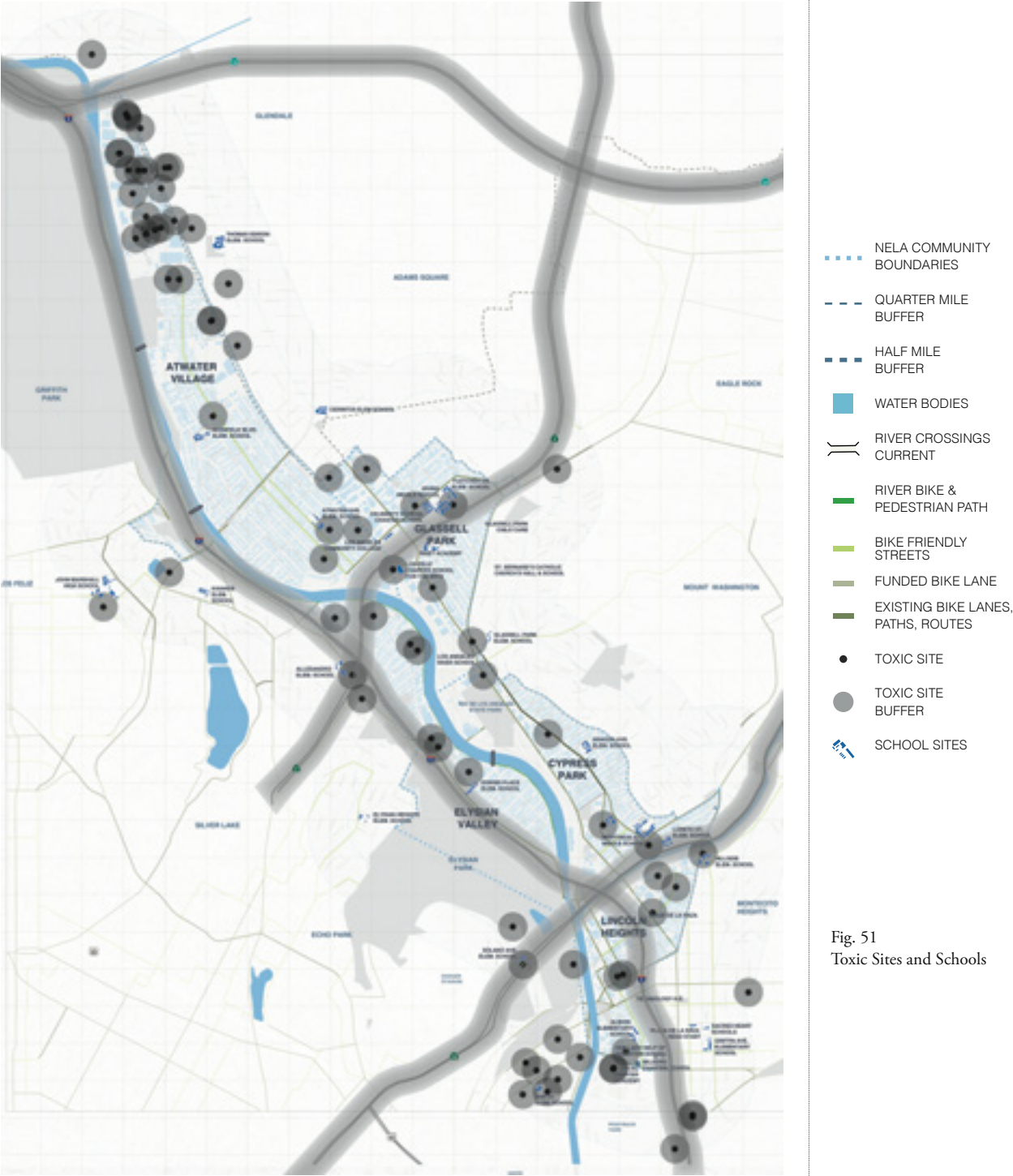


Fig. 51  
Toxic Sites and Schools

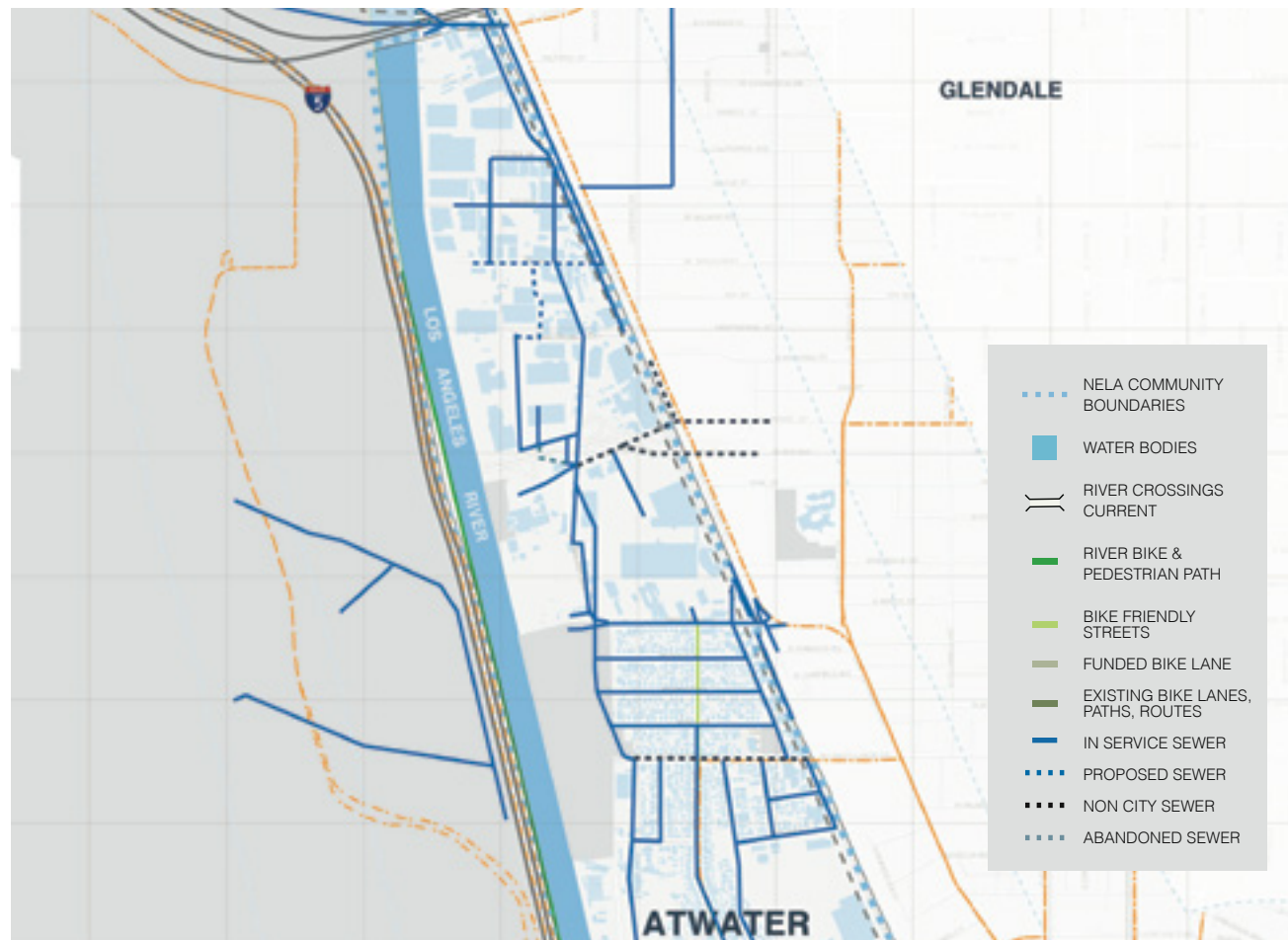


Fig. 52

space resource for NELA residents, its proximity to the 2, 5, 110 and 134 freeways, the Metrolink service yard, and truck routes frequently traversed by diesel-fueled vehicles is undermining. Ideally, this network of hard and natural infrastructure can positively reinforce one another. We recommend new and existing developments evaluate their site selection by its proximity to potential health hazards.

#### Offsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) in Atwater

During the NELA collaborative's research within the Study Area, it was discovered that there is an industrial

community within the North Atwater area, which utilizes onsite wastewater treatment systems, or septic systems, for sewage disposal. After discussions with members of the Bureau of Sanitation staff, the collaborative was informed that of these systems (47 total) several of these sites were either failing or on the verge of failing. Out of these commercial OWTS properties, eight properties are considered "High Risk" by the State Water Board and L.A. Regional Water Board due to their proximity to a 303(d) Listed Impaired Water Body for Nitrates and Pathogens (both linked to OWTS), and 21 properties are potential cesspools (do not provide any treatment to their wastewater before ground infiltration).

The most serious effect of a failing system is the potential for serious disease from the leaking and improperly treated waste. Dysentery and hepatitis can be spread by these wastes. In addition to the diseases themselves, mosquitoes and flies that spread some illnesses can breed in areas where liquid waste reaches the surface. Chemical or nutrient poisoning can also be a problem as many of the synthetic products which may be used by industrial scale buildings can be poisonous to humans, pets and wildlife if they travel through soil and into the watershed. Thus it is important to closely monitor these systems to prevent failure and protect the Los Angeles River from potential contamination.

#### Public Health

NELA's comprehensive freeway and railway network is not well complemented by a cohesive network of walkable and bikeable streets. The network of freeways and train lines are indicative of the area's role as a crossroads for employment centers, such as Downtown Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Glendale. However, despite the fact that residents are supported in their ability to commute by car and public transit to other parts of the city, travel within the NELA is disrupted by these embedded transportation structures. Ideally, pedestrian and bicycle friendly infrastructure will encourage walking or biking to a bus stop or Metro station. We suggest improving the overall walking and bicycling experience to the most popular bus and Metro stops.

#### Community Resources

NELA's strong network of shared spaces, such as active community gardens or community-oriented businesses, helps supplement lacking infrastructure. The presence and popularity of informal community resources, such as free yoga classes offered at a garden, pop-up cafes along the River, or homemade Mexican food sold from a home, is reflective of missing resources more broadly and indicative of vibrant nodes in each community. NELA has a below average median household income, making formal and informal resources even more important for the area's residents. Ideally, these shared spaces, including established resources

such as community centers, parks, and libraries, should offer opportunities for exercise, socializing, and learning that are essential to holistic mental and physical health. We recommend aligning both the formal and informal community resources with the needs of community members, while creating neighborhood destinations that promote community activity and interaction.

#### Healthcare facilities

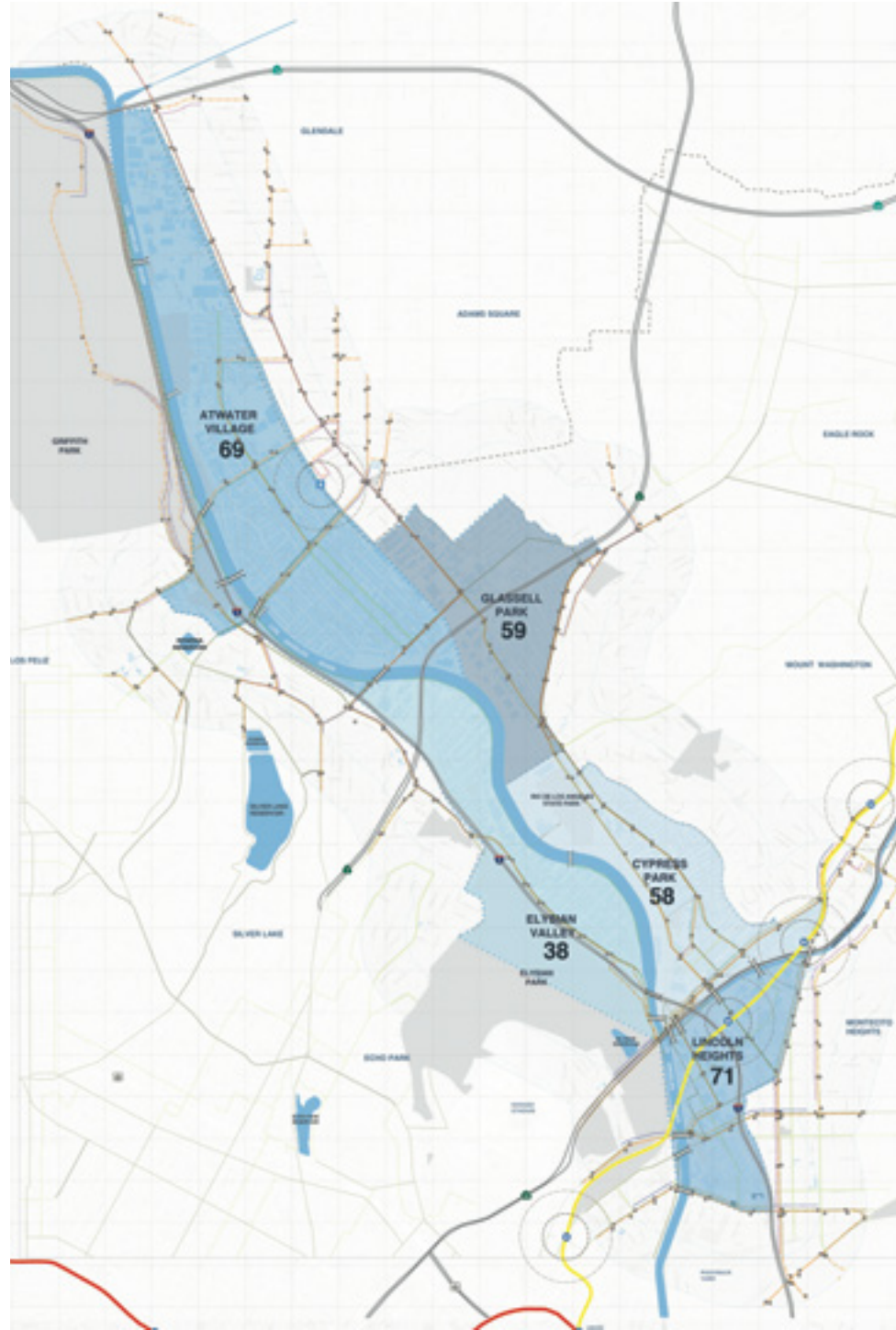
Compared to Los Angeles County residents, NELA residents have an above average ability to afford healthcare, yet an above average difficulty in accessing care (i). Despite adjacent healthcare resources such as Kaiser Hospital, USC Medical Center, and Glendale Memorial Hospital, NELA residents do not have similar centers embedded in their neighborhoods. Additionally, the few primary care services within NELA are primarily located in Atwater Village. The lack of healthcare services coupled with limited intra-community transit options limits healthcare accessibility. The presence of easily accessible primary care providers is linked to reduced rates of diabetes, asthma, and obesity. (ii) Ideally, NELA residents are able to access health care within their community or have convenient public transit access to nearby resources. We recommend implementing a marketing and transportation strategy to increase the use of existing healthcare resources by NELA residents.

#### Built Environment

While large pieces of infrastructure, such as freeways and the L.A. River are the dominant typologies in NELA, there are also street level conditions, such as wide streets, decorative street lighting, and community murals that create a sense of place that is unique to NELA. The built environment on a street level is linked to both healthy and vibrant outcomes, such as increasing walkability or encouraging artistic expression (i). However, some elements of the built environment, such as poor broken sidewalks or sparse streetlighting, decrease pedestrian activity. Ideally, NELA's built environment leverages its diversity to encourage positive interaction between people

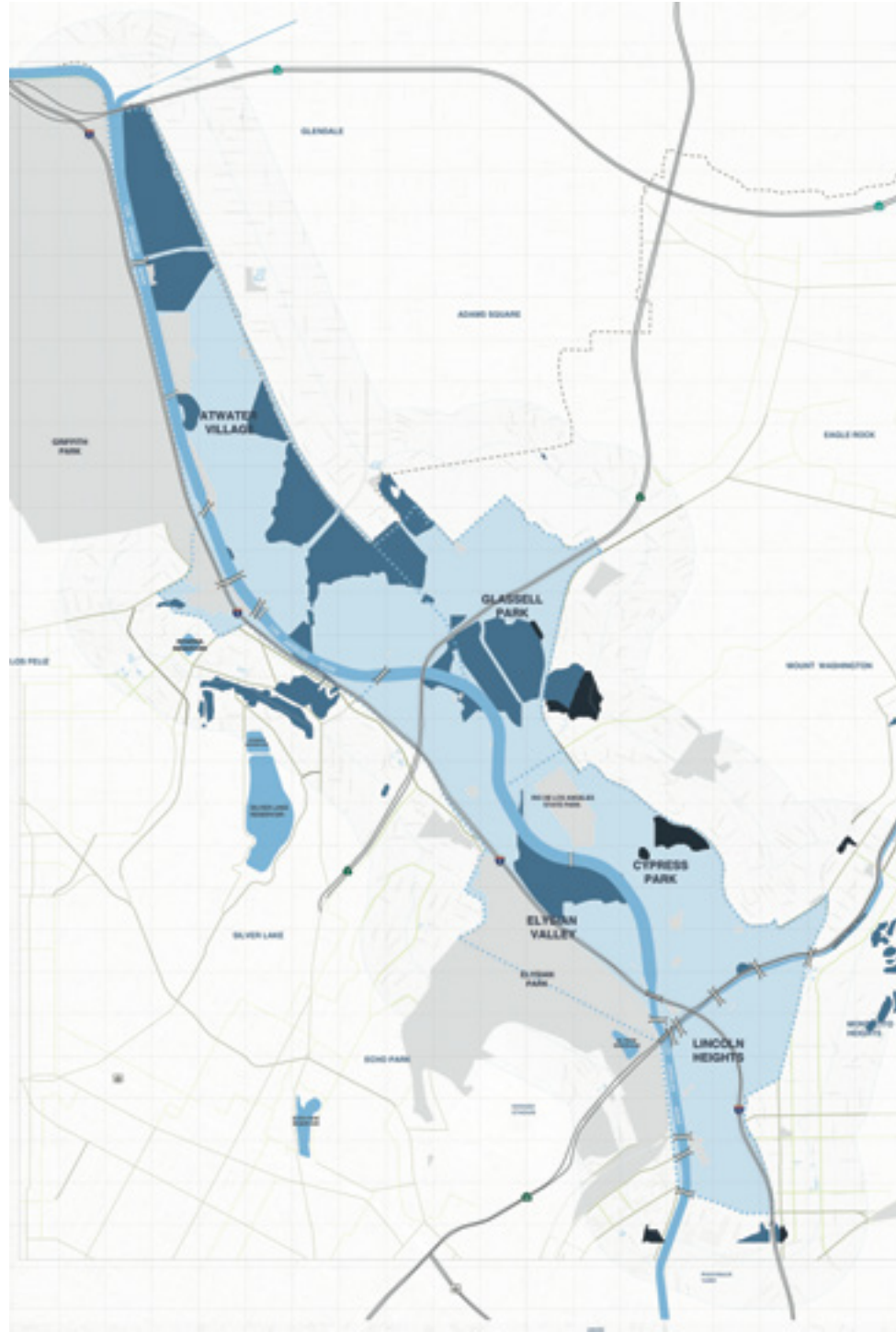
- NELA COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES
- QUARTER MILE BUFFER
- HALF MILE BUFFER
- WATER BODIES
- RIVER CROSSINGS CURRENT
- RIVER BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH
- BIKE FRIENDLY STREETS
- FUNDED BIKE LANE
- EXISTING BIKE LANES, PATHS, ROUTES
- METRO LINK STOP
- METRO BUS STOP
- METRO GOLD LINE
- METRO RED LINE
- BUS LINE
- BUS STOP

Fig. 53  
Walkscore and Transit Lines



- NELA COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES
- QUARTER MILE BUFFER
- HALF MILE BUFFER
- WATER BODIES
- RIVER CROSSINGS CURRENT
- RIVER BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH
- BIKE FRIENDLY STREETS
- FUNDED BIKE LANE
- EXISTING BIKE LANES, PATHS, ROUTES
- PARKSCORE: VERY HIGH NEED
- HIGH NEED
- SERVICED
- PARK

Fig. 54  
Parkscore



## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

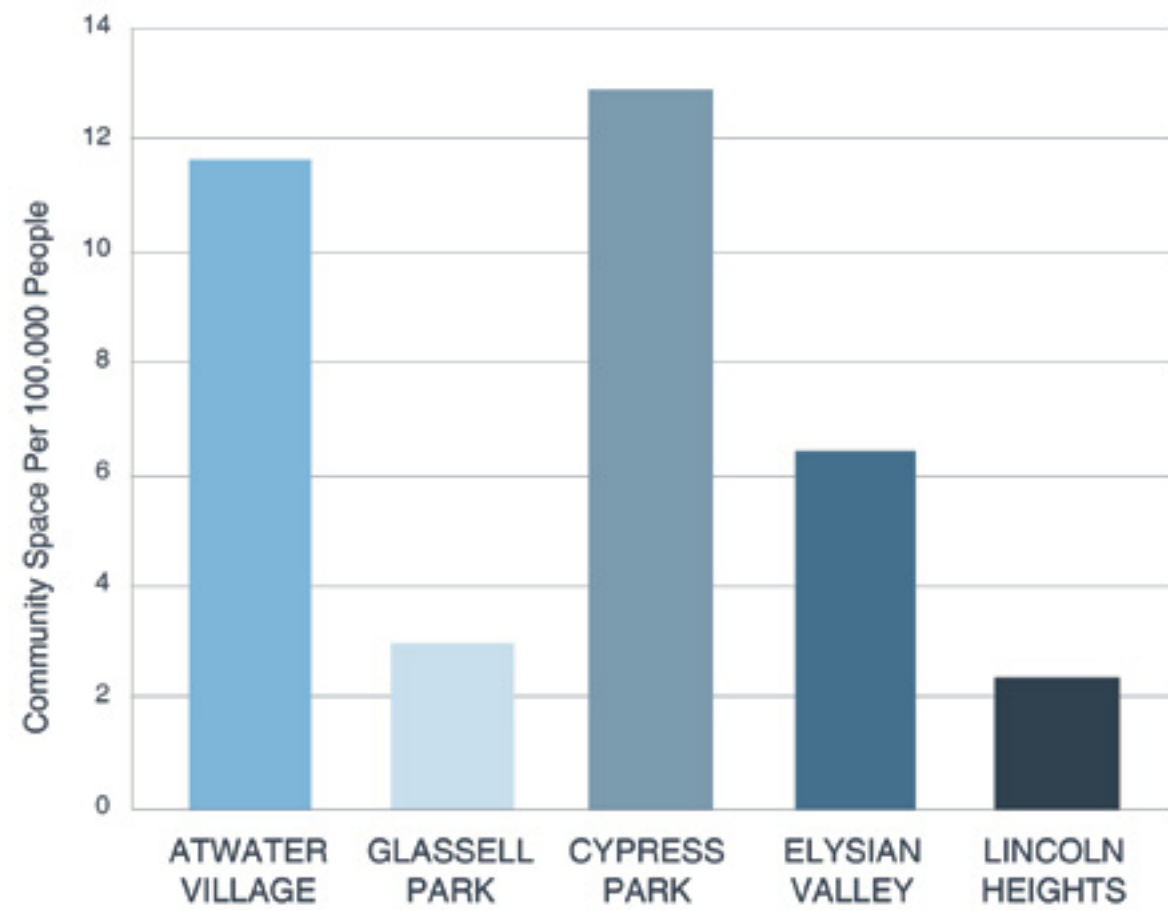


Fig. 55

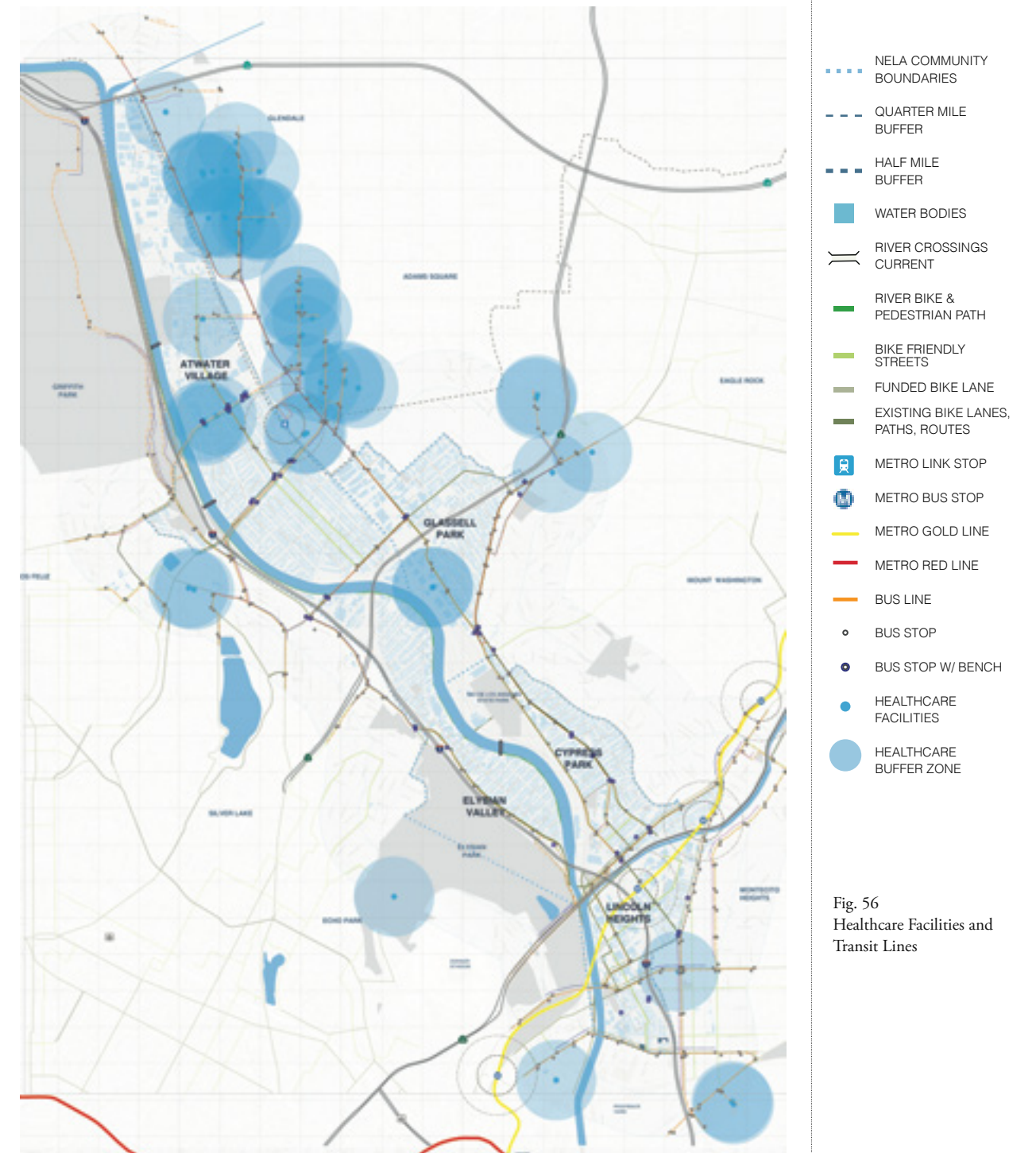
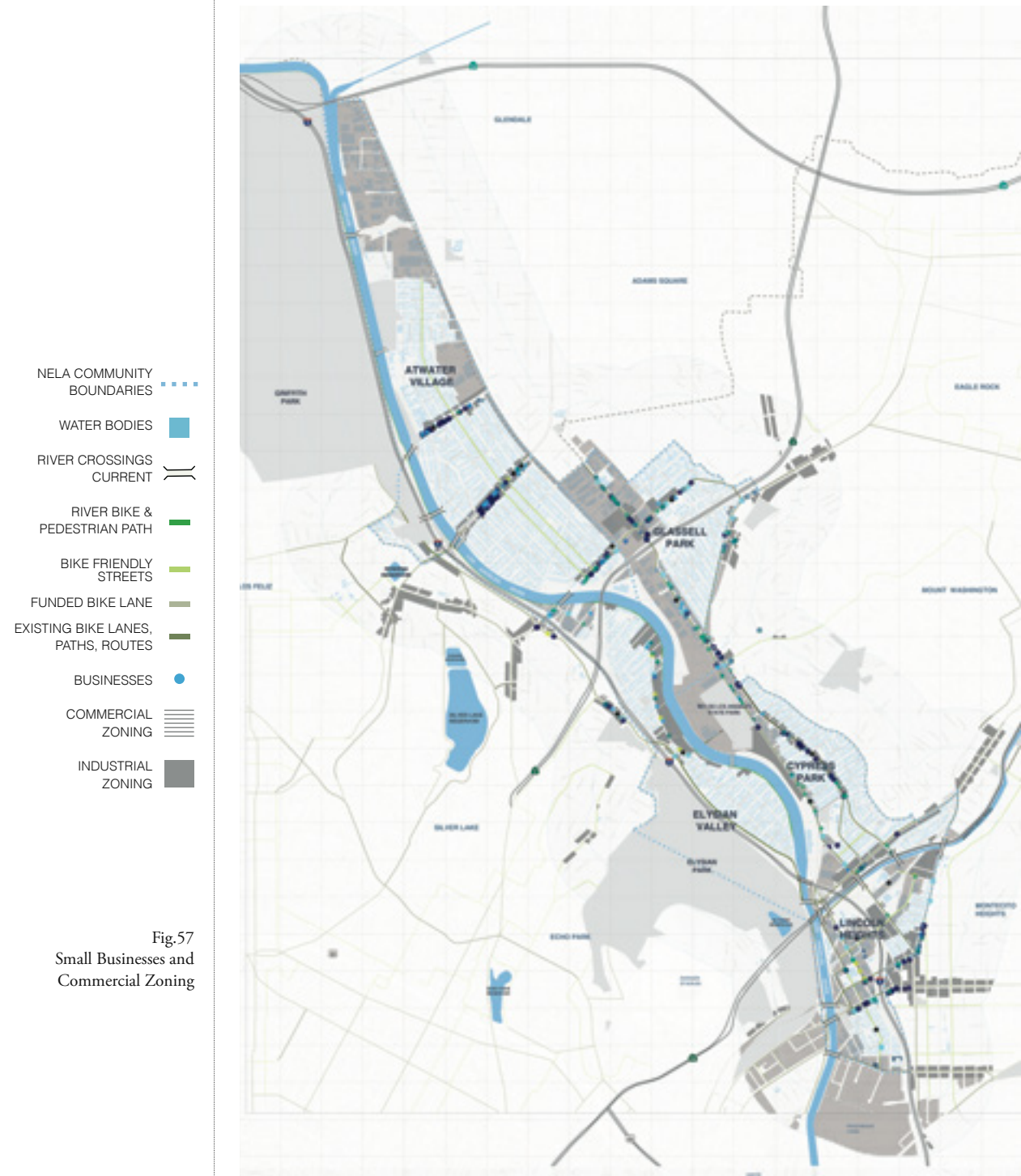


Fig. 56  
Healthcare Facilities and  
Transit Lines



and place. With a detailed catalogue of built environment conditions, we recommend small scale design interventions to promote walkability, as well as government support in prioritizing street improvements in areas with the greatest collection of built environment shortcomings.

### Current Environmental Protection And Enhancement Efforts

#### Arbor Study

The US Army Corps of Engineers has been working closely with the City of Los Angeles for more than seven years to develop a plan to restore and revitalize the Los Angeles River. Their program, the *Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study*, focuses on habitat and stream restoration to revive the life and quality of the river. This is not the type of flood protection program that the Corps is known for throughout the country, but rather an ecosystem study that emphasizes habitat and stream restoration in the ARBOR reach of the River, extending from Griffith Park through downtown Los Angeles.

After carefully evaluating a wide variety of sites and approaches, the Corps has now narrowed down the study to four alternatives. On September 13, 2013, the Corps announced that Alternative 13 is their tentatively selected plan. This plan would cost \$453 million dollars to restore 588 acres of habitat along several key points of the River from Griffith Park to downtown. It would remove concrete from the river bottom at its confluence with the Arroyo Seco, a major tributary; restore a historic wash at Los Angeles Central Terminal (Piggyback Yards) near Union Station; and widen the River by 300 feet to form a freshwater marsh in an area known as Taylor Yard, near Glassell Park.

While Alternative 13 meets several of the goals of River restoration, it is the hope that the US Army Corp will inevitably choose Alternative 20 which presents a much more comprehensive and dynamic approach with superior benefits. This plan would cost \$1.08 billion and would restore 719 acres and widen the River to provide terracing along its eastern banks. In addition

to the remediation efforts in Alternative 13, Alternative 20 would also connect the River to Los Angeles State Historic Park near Chinatown and restore its confluence with the Verdugo Wash, where L.A. borders Glendale.

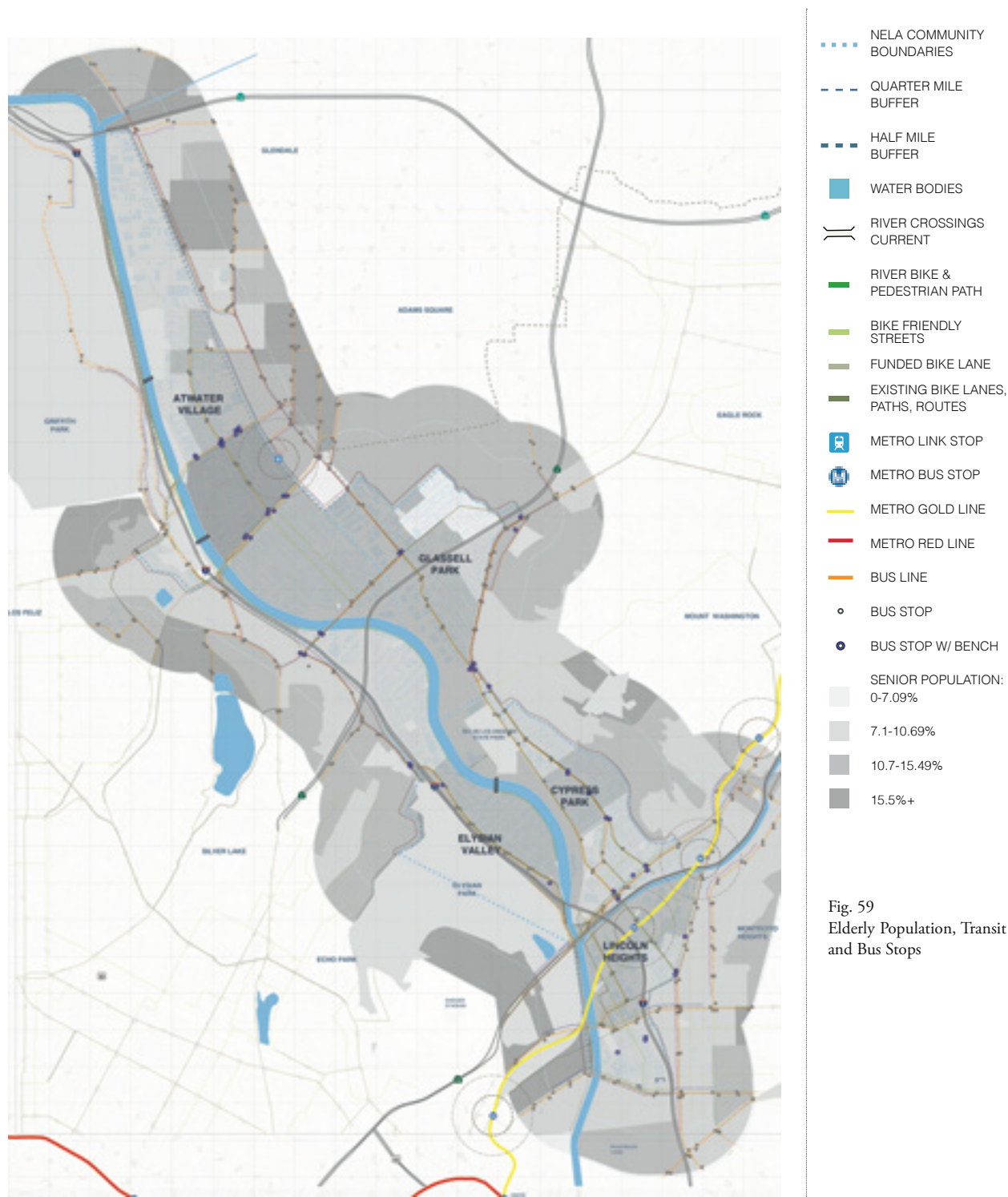
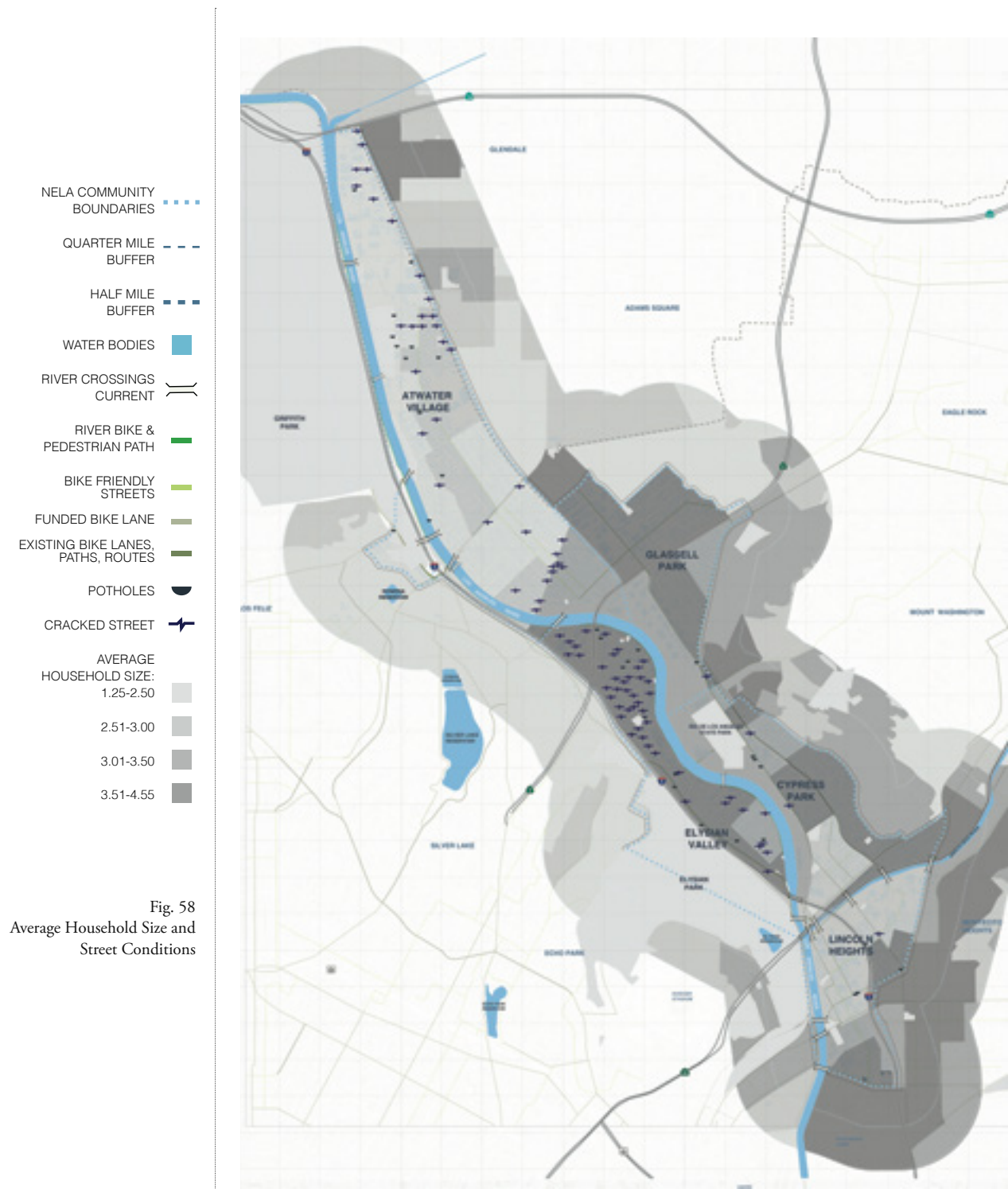
#### City Green Infrastructure Program

Southern California was designed and built mostly in the 20th Century, and the prevailing idea at the time was to move water quickly and directly to the ocean. In the 21st Century, the City has learned how to design streets, sidewalks, and landscaping to soak up runoff through a more natural process, weaving the textures of nature into the fabric of the city. Low impact development (LID) is an emerging and important international stormwater management trend. The City has begun to capitalize on the valuable services that nature can offer us: capturing, cleaning, and storing stormwater.

Nationwide research has proven that low impact development can be a cost effective solution to pressing problems pertaining to water quality and water supply, as well the other benefits noted in this paper, such as flood control, mitigation of climate change, and creation of more natural spaces. For instance, research conducted within the City has found that it can significantly increase its water supply, ameliorate climate change issues, and address much of the pollution found in urban runoff by converting its paved areas from gray to green. Moreover, implementing low impact development will create new, local “green-collar” jobs through the development of a workforce trained to install and maintain green infrastructure features.

The LID principles become particularly crucial as climate change consequences produce changing weather patterns that are predicted to cause longer term drought conditions throughout California. Harvesting all available rainwater by the various methods is an important means of addressing this looming problem.

The City of Los Angeles is well underway towards implementing the principles of low impact development. Through its Green Streets and Green



Alleys program, streets, sidewalks, and alleys are being designed with particular attention to stormwater management. With over 6,500 miles of streets and 900 miles of alleys, much could be accomplished by incorporating LID principles into new construction and by phasing in LID conversions for existing infrastructure. However, these paved areas only account for a portion of the hardscape found in Los Angeles, and thus only a portion of the stormwater burden. Implementation of low impact development on a wider and more intensive scale throughout the City is worth consideration, both on public and private property. Below are two examples of projects initiated by the City of Los Angeles and other private entities, within the NELA Study Area.

### Examples

**Oros Street** is a residential street in the Elysian Valley section of Los Angeles. Runoff from this street drains directly to Los Angeles River. This is one of the first streets in Los Angeles to be converted into a green street. Completed in 2007 at a total cost of about \$1 million, this project provides bio-retention areas in the street parkway, additional street landscaping and a large infiltration basin underneath Steelhead Park at the end of the block. The objective was to capture and treat 100% of the dry-weather runoff and at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of rainfall during storms. This project was a collaboration between North East Trees and the City of Los Angeles, represented by the Bureau of Street Services and the Watershed Protection Division from the Bureau of Sanitation.

**Riverdale Avenue** is close to Oros Street and was converted to a green street in 2009. The purpose of the retrofit is to capture and infiltrate urban runoff and stormwater from a 14.6-acre drainage area by using specially-designed diversion measures and infiltration planters. Existing parkways and sidewalks were replaced by native plant species. Construction costs of this project were funded by a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy (up to \$500,000) and the City of Los Angeles provided in-kind design services.

### Efforts to Remediate Contaminated Sites

Environmental remediation deals with the removal of pollution of contaminants from environmental media, such as soil groundwater, sediment or surface water for the general protection of human health and the environment or from a brownfield site intended for redevelopment.

Within the NELA Study Area, contaminants are commonly found on properties with a history of heavy industrial use. Since industry is often located along the riverfront, along the land zoned for industrial uses, many brownfield sites remain today along the Los Angeles River. Within the NELA Study Area, heavy rail yards along with landfill and industrial recycling activities are a source of land and potential water contamination. Also, an ageing system of septic tanks within the existing industrially zoned lands may contribute to that contamination.

Brownfield sites can remain underutilized or abandoned for years or decades, in part because of the significant potential for liability and financial risk for brownfield property owners and financiers. There is of course the substantial cost of site remediation and ensuring that the public or workers on the site are not exposed to contaminants or that contaminants are not released through site disturbance. Nevertheless, it is possible to surmount these obstacles when the value offered by new uses is sufficient to provide incentive for investment.

The City of Los Angeles has a vested interest in keeping the city clean and sustainable, and has been working on several projects that remediate and improve contamination along the Los Angeles River watershed. Within the NELA Study Area remains several sites with land contamination that remain as opportunity for creating more open space.

One example of where the City is actively remediating a toxic site for public use is the Albion Dairy Site. The Albion Dairy site is a 6-acre L.A. River adjacent site located next to Downey Park in the community of Lincoln Heights. For decades this site has operated as a distribution and warehouse center for the Swiss Dairy Company. In October of 2009, the site was purchased



The Green Street Projects on Oros Street and Riverdale Ave.

by the City of Los Angeles with funds from Proposition O - the \$500 million Clean Water Bond measure passed by Angelinos in 2004. The distribution and warehouse operations at the site will continue until 2011. After then, the site will undergo a makeover process which will incorporate multi-functional and multi-benefit design features that will serve as an amenity for the community while improving stormwater quality in the City.

The City took the possession of the Ross Swiss Dairy site on January 25, 2011. A Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project was approved by the City Council on April 12, 2011. Below are the phases of construction

- Phase 1 – Demolition and remediation: This phase includes demolition of all buildings as well as remediation of contaminated soils. Site's soil will be remediated to residential standards and left in a stabilized, rough-graded finish.
- Demolition and Remediation contract is currently out for bids. Bids will be opened on May 24, 2011. Demolition and remediation of the six acre site will be completed in fall of 2012.
- The competitive grant application process is now underway and applications for the second round of funding through the Prop 84 Statewide Park Program are due July 1, 2011. If awarded, the

grant will help to fund the development of the Albion Park site.

Implication of River Ecological Improvement on Public Health and Recreation

Making additional improvements to water quality requires a multifaceted approach. Continued investment in infrastructure must be coupled with new, innovative solutions to cleanse the Los Angeles River. To reduce levels of bacteria and nitrogen and to improve dissolved oxygen levels in the River and its tributaries, the City will continue to build new infrastructure while optimizing the existing system to treat wastewater and reduce combined sewer overflows. In addition, the City proposes to maximize the use of green infrastructure and other source controls to capture rainfall on impervious areas. Providing green space, trees, and other amenities that capture stormwater will enhance communities and further the City’s sustainability efforts. The City will also continue to restore natural systems, which capture and filter pollutants, cleaning water while also providing habitat, recreation, and climate-adaptation benefits.

It is also important to understand that ecological and economic benefits go hand-in-hand when developing a successful riverfront. Defining a river’s beauty is its natural appeal and healthy aquatic ecosystem supported by rich diversity. Development that brings people to the riverfront builds a connection and stewardship for the River. Healthy, functioning rivers are appealing and attractive to residents and businesses.

Lastly, the ecological revitalization of the River provides for the enhancement and increase of public recreation space, something dramatically needed within the City of Los Angeles’ park-poor communities. The ARBOR recognizes much of Los Angeles is park poor, income poor, and plagued by disparities in green access:

“Much of Los Angeles is considered to be park deficient [with] less than 3 acres of green space per 1,000 residents,

as defined by California law. . . In general, access to parks and acres of parkland per 1,000 residents is lowest in areas that have the highest number of families below the [annual household income] line of \$47,331. . . The City Project, a . . . nonprofit . . . organization was founded to find ways to improve park availability for all neighborhoods, regardless of ethnicity or income level.”

River restoration projects should be prioritized to serve people in areas with the greatest need, as shown in Fig \_\_\_\_

As shown in the public health maps earlier in this section, River communities have high levels of health disparities for both outcomes and exposures. River restoration will clearly and significantly affect those disparities. When addressing River revitalization efforts, it is necessary to understand these critical public health impacts of river restoration. The value of this analysis goes beyond weighing the alternatives and extends to how river restoration relates to climate change, strategic growth initiatives, and the national prevention strategy for health and wellness. Information from a well-done assessment will make a difference in decisions made.



Fig. 60 Albion Dairy River Park



Fig. 61 Park access for children of color living in poverty

## 5

## Strengthen and support employment opportunities surrounding the River

**Industrial and commercial industries near the River are valuable economic assets —crucial to the economic health and prosperity of the Northeast Los Angeles community as well as the City of Los Angeles as a whole. Approximately 48% of the total land in NELA is zoned for commercial and industrial uses, providing hundreds of jobs and millions in tax revenue. As such, it provides the City a unique opportunity to explore targeted incentives, recruitment, and coordinated regulatory policies, to help the working riverfront adapt and prosper.**

California's economy may be coming back, but more than four years after the end of the Great Recession, the comeback is still slow and uneven. In the past year, over a quarter-million jobs have been created in California, more than any other state. As big as California's economy is – if it were a country, it would be the eight largest in the world – the state's economic growth rate is still one of the top five in the nation. While this is certainly a cause for optimism, California's economic recovery is being experienced differently – and unevenly – across the state. For many Californians, the recession is still a grim reality—and the gap between rich and poor across the state is expanding.

The Los Angeles River has the potential to be an engine of economic growth, catalyzing opportunities and jobs in the surrounding riverfront communities. Without people, goods, business sector development and innovative ideas, that engine could no longer run. That is why the NELA RC has emphasized the importance of sustainable economic activity in the River's surrounding communities, and the introduction of new ideas for strengthening and supporting employment opportunities in high-priority industry sectors.

The NELA RC aims to spur new industries, maintain critical infrastructure and land uses, create a skilled

workforce, and improve the overall quality of life that is critical to attracting companies and increase the employment wage-rate. This NELA Vision Plan & Economic Development Implementation Strategy will lay the foundation for a future of well-paying jobs, a sustainable economic environment, and equal workforce opportunities that benefits all surrounding NELA riverfront communities.

### Expanding the capacity of the industrial area

Job-producing land is a critical component of a healthy and prosperous city. Industrial zoned areas of Los Angeles offer employment opportunities for residents of all skill and education levels, create and support jobs in multiple other business sectors, and generate taxes that sustain the quality of life by funding streets and sidewalks, police and fire services, libraries, trash collection, and more. For these reasons, the City of Los Angeles has had a long-standing adopted policy to preserve industrial lands.

In addition to directly supporting job-producing uses, industrial zoned land is crucial to many services essential to Los Angeles' business and residential communities including utilities, distribution, recycling, construction and maintenance yards, animal services, and automobile repair. When industrial businesses and jobs leave the City, it not only redirects economic value and revenues to other cities, it potentially leaves Los Angeles residents with fewer – and often lower-paying – employment opportunities.

As the public body responsible for implementing City land use policy, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP) has an obligation to ensure an adequate supply of land for existing businesses to operate and to employ the City's residents, as well as to enhance the City's ability to foster business and job growth.

There is an opportunity to provide more green and sustainable jobs that are sensitive to the environment and unique land use conditions. River revitalization may result in employment and wage impacts, especially in industrial areas that experience changes in the

composition of employment. The opportunity exists to better maintain industrial land uses and increase the workforce and wage-rate by encouraging higher-technology industries.

### Existing Commercial and Industrial Land Use

Commercial and industrial zoned lands in Los Angeles are occupied by active and productive businesses that provide employment and services to thousands of City residents, and are an essential component of the City's diversified economic base. These industrial/employment lands are vital for the City's long-term economic sustainability and efforts should be implemented to improve their quality, effectiveness and aesthetics.

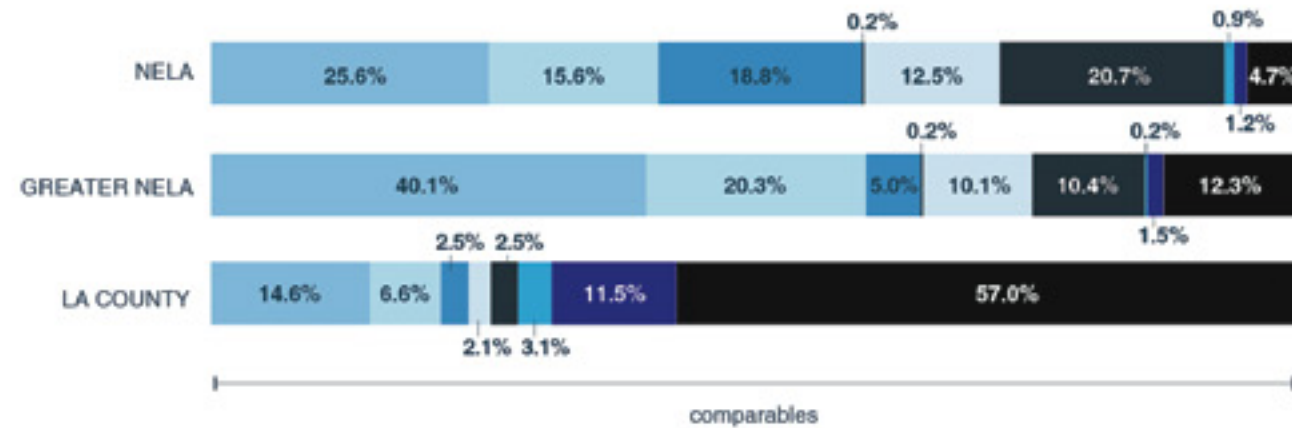
An examination of a region's land use according to zoning can give an illustration of where certain types of activity are located. It identifies the location of residential areas (where potential workforce is located), and commercial and industrial zoning (where industry and businesses are located). Greater levels of detail reveal specific characteristics, such as population density or where retail operations are located.

Additionally, prevailing zoning provides a realistic picture of the type of development that could take place within an area. For example, an area that is mostly zoned as residential will have limited opportunities for growth of industry. Similarly, an area that is adjacent to land zoned for heavy industrial uses will not be feasible for residential development, as often the traffic noise and congestion that surrounds businesses of this type are in direct contrast to what most homeowners are looking for when buying a residence.

- Land zoned for residential purposes is set aside for single-family residences, multi-unit dwellings and mobile homes, or a combination of these.
- Land zoned for commercial and services uses are predominantly for businesses which provide goods and services to resident populations, such as grocery and health care stores, restaurants, hotels and motels, retail stores, gas stations,

## LAND USE BY TYPE (% of Total)

Sources: LA County Zoning; LAEDC



residential commercial industrial mixed urban open space, recreational transportation agriculture other land uses vacant

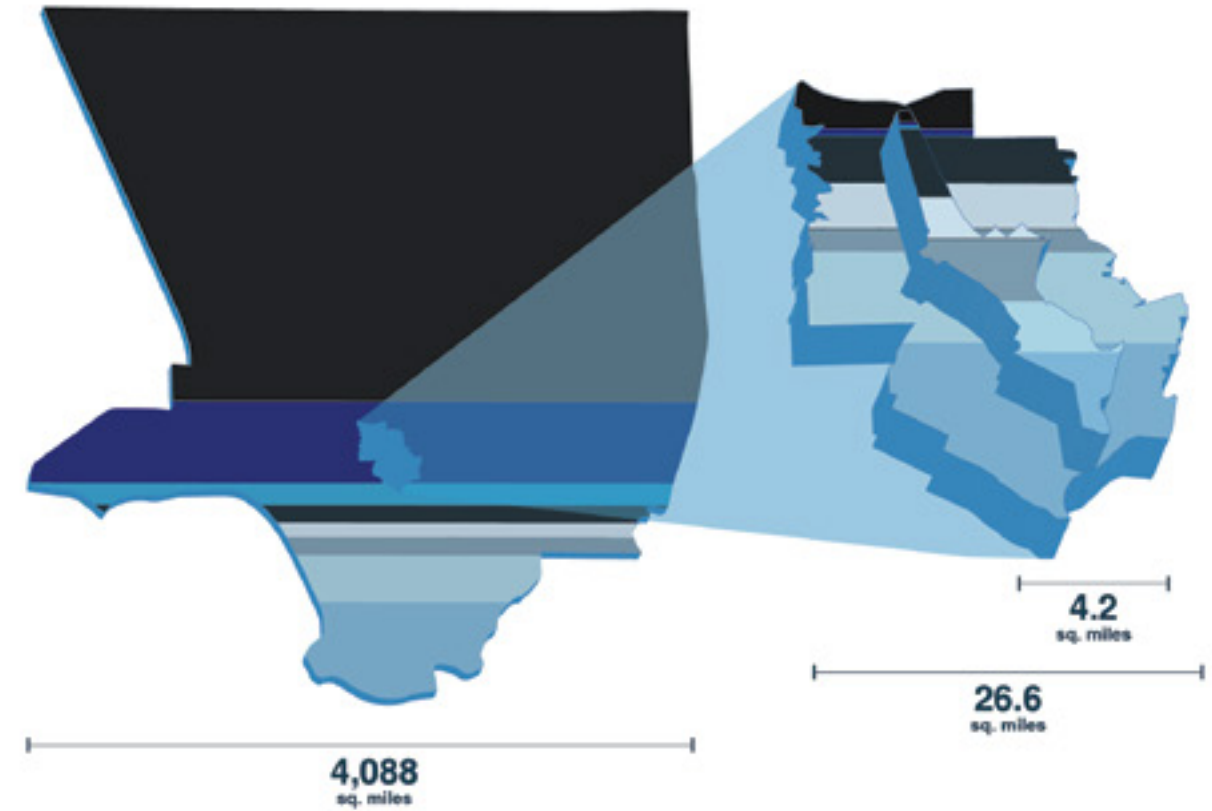


Fig. 62

banks, medical services, laundry services, insurance agents, and so on. Also included are government and public service offices, such as police and fire stations, military facilities, churches, and all levels of public and private schooling facilities.

- Land zoned for industrial uses are areas where manufacturing, assembly, processing, packaging or storage of products occurs. This includes:

- light industrial, such as design, assembly, packaging and storage activities, motion picture and television studio lots, and research and development labs;

- heavy industrial which are more traditional processors of raw materials such as refineries, foundries, smelters, chemical refineries;
- extraction such as mining and drilling; and
- wholesaling and warehousing.

Some of industrial uses in NELA include:

- Logistics + Warehousing (FedEx, UPS, Ralph's)
- Medical, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology
- (Baxter) Film/Entertainment Industry – Quixote, Cinnabar Small Business Art, Craft, and Design

### Land for Emerging Industry Sectors

Tomorrow's industrially-zoned land, reserved for business growth and employment, is likely to look different than today's. It is important to preserve and strengthen the City's ability to maintain and expand a diverse and flexible economic and industrial base. Key to such flexibility is maintaining industrial land upon which cutting-edge sectors can grow, and providing new foundations for our local economy, while retaining existing businesses that currently employ hundreds of thousands of Los Angeles residents. While economists predict that sectors such as trade and logistics will continue to be robust,

there are emerging industries in Los Angeles - such as green technology - that are particularly promising and important to the City's future competitiveness.

Los Angeles has significant strengths and is well positioned to be a global leader in fields as diverse as clean technology, biomedical device manufacturing, digital arts, furniture and apparel design and other high growth industries.

Additionally, industrial lands in Los Angeles play an important role as incubator space for small start up and creative businesses. This entrepreneurial pattern

## PROJECTED NEW JOB CREATION IN NELA 2012-2022 (Private Industries)

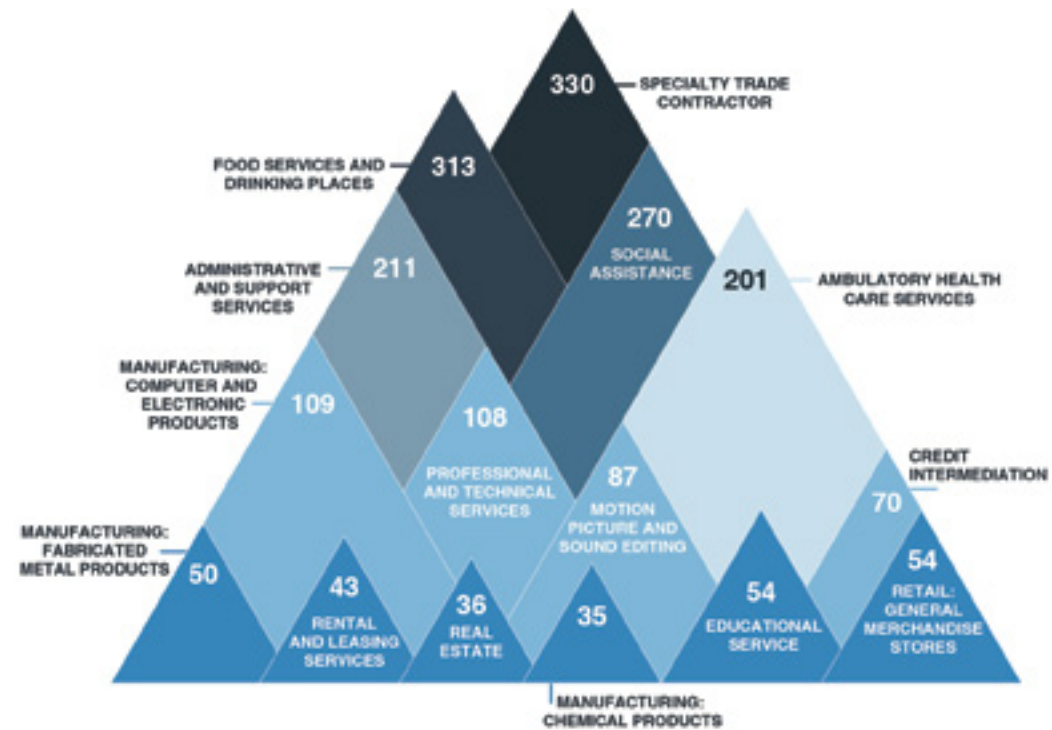


Fig. 63

fits perfectly into Los Angeles' tradition of supporting a broad base of independently owned and operated businesses; most businesses in Los Angeles are small, independently owned and operated.

These firms represent entrepreneurial and innovative businesses that can only become established under conditions available in industrial zones—relatively low rents, small spaces/lots and/or business incubator space. Many of these businesses are cleaner than those of the past and they provide good career-ladder jobs for local neighborhoods that have seen a decline in other local manufacturing jobs.

In order to recruit and attract these and other new businesses, the City must provide land where they can locate. Moreover, as businesses grow and expand, they often need sites to transition into larger-scale manufacturing and assembly firms. A common complaint from entrepreneurs and investors is that Los Angeles lacks available land to incubate start-up companies or to attract and retain more established companies. This factors into the decisions of some entrepreneurial businesses to leave Los Angeles once their products become commercialized. Preserving industrial land in the NELA area is critical to encourage innovation in these emerging industries, to attract growing companies

## INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH 2012-2022

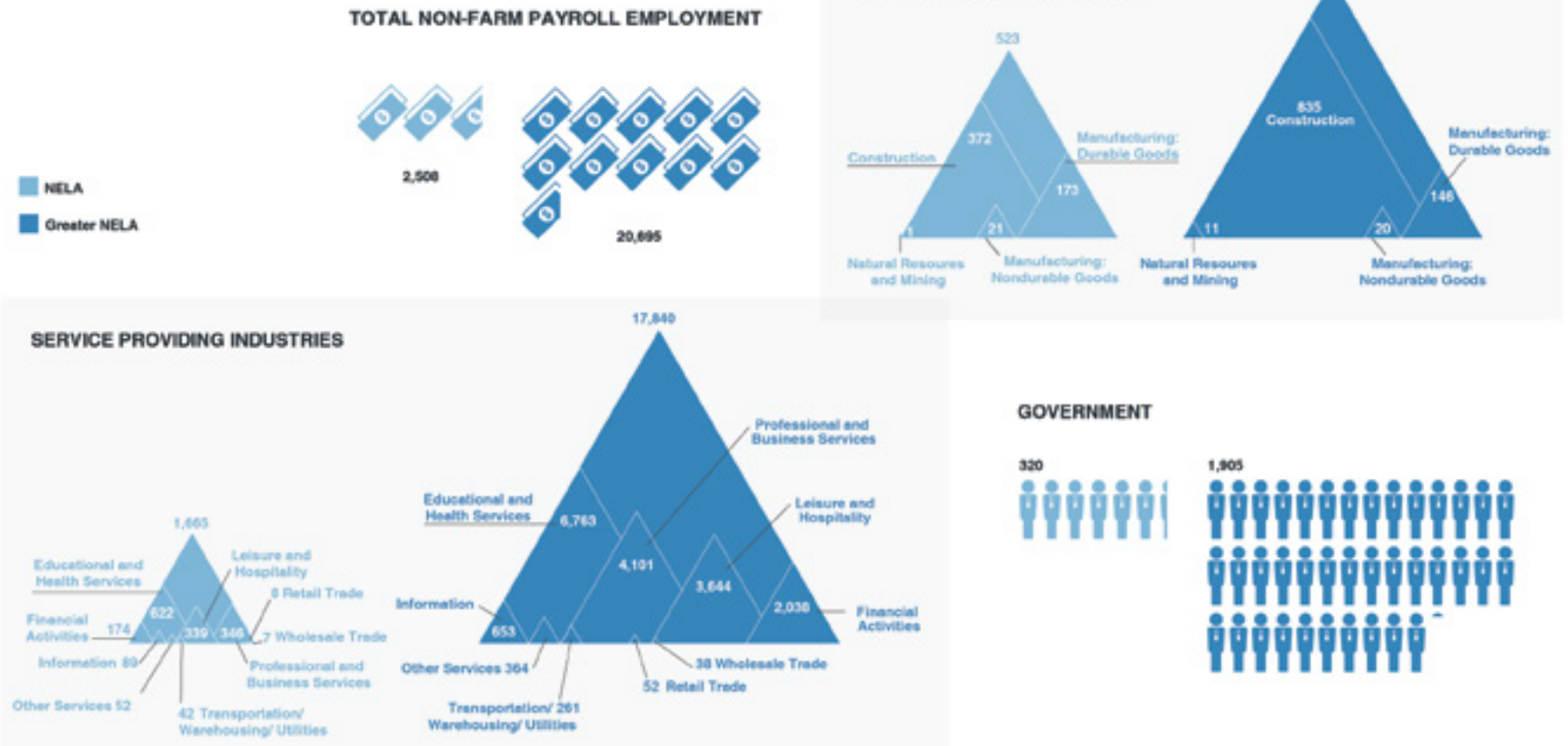


Fig. 64

from other areas, and to grow job-producing companies already in Los Angeles.

### Attract businesses that will employ the local population in the Study Area

#### Target Industries for NELA

Fig. \_\_\_ shows the top 30 industries in NELA by their 2011 employment location quotients compared to Los Angeles County and compared to the nation. This allows us to see not only how NELA performs compared to the same industries in Los Angeles County, but also to see if there are any specific industries which are stronger in NELA

compared to the national average that perhaps do not do well in other areas of Los Angeles County. All industries with a location quotient of greater than 1 (referenced against Los Angeles County) are shown in the exhibit.

The industry with the highest location quotient in NELA in 2011 was beverage and manufacturing. This would include such companies as the San Antonio Winery, a popular tourist destination, and the Eagle Rock Brewery. The second most concentrated industry in NELA was textile product mills, which would include companies such as G.A. Gertmenian & Sons.

The industry with the third highest location quotient in NELA in 2011 was chemical products manufacturing, which includes many smaller manufacturers of industrial cleaning products in the area.

The industry with the largest number of new jobs to be added during the forecast period is **specialty trade contractors**, which include companies that provide specific work involved in building construction, such as plumbing, painting, concrete pouring, electrical work, etc. This industry supports not only new construction but is also of course heavily involved in remodeling, reconstruction and upgrades of existing buildings.

Other industries that will add new jobs in NELA include food services and drinking places, social assistance, administrative and support services and ambulatory health care services. These are all large population-serving industries that will add jobs in keeping with population growth.

In addition to private sector industries, local and state government agencies are projected to add approximately 300 jobs, many of which will be in educational services and in ground transportation services.

### Health Care

This is a large and growing industry sector which includes establishments providing health care, including: ambulatory health care services such as doctors' offices, dentistry practices, medical laboratories and home health care services; hospitals; and nursing and residential care facilities. This sector employed almost 360,000 workers in Los Angeles County in 2011, and almost 800 in NELA. Average earnings in the sector were \$54,500 in Los Angeles County. These are large industries with high growth potential given the ongoing demographic shift, the advancement of medical technology and increased coverage through the American Care Act.

### Manufacturing

Although employment in manufacturing as a whole

has been on a long-term decline over the past two decades, several manufacturing industries appear to be promising targets for employment growth in NELA based on upon their performance. These include: beverages and tobacco; textile mills; and, to some extent, fabricated metals. The expected retirement of aging skilled craftsman in some specialized manufacturing industries presents opportunities for apprenticeships, new entrants, and those moving up the career ladder.

Boutique breweries will enhance revitalization of the area and its hospitality and tourism potential. The current regional strengths of small business enterprises engaged in artisan craftwork such as in apparel, textiles and fabricated metal contribute to the attractiveness of these industries for targeting.

### Administrative and Support Services

Establishments in this industry provide support to the day-to-day operations for other organizations, such as management, personnel, clerical activities and cleaning activities. The sector is expected to continue growing and will add 93,600 new jobs in Los Angeles County as businesses follow the trend of contracting with outside services for administrative and support services rather than conducting them in house. A wide variety of occupations in the sector can be filled by job seekers with community college degrees or technical training.

### Professional and Technical Services

These industries include establishments that specialize in performing professional and technical activities for others, such as legal services, accountants, bookkeepers and auditors, architectural and engineering services, interior and industrial design, computer design ad programming, management and environmental consulting, advertising and market research. These activities typically require a high degree of expertise and training, and can be highly compensated.

### Food Services

This is a large industry with a wide range of establishments serving customers. They include full-service restaurants, limited-service eating places, food service contractors (such as caterers), mobile food services, and drinking places. The industry is integral to tourism, and as the region develops the amenity value of the River, local eating establishments will be featured, making this an industry to target for development.

### Entertainment Industry

The entertainment industry maintains a significant presence in Los Angeles County, as well as in Greater NELA. This industry includes not only film and television production, but also sound recording industries, pre- and postproduction work, performing arts, independent artists and performers, and art galleries and museums. Additionally, several supportive manufacturing firms are in the NELA and Greater NELA area, including Technicolor, DX Communications, CMH Records and many smaller firms. These together form a critical mass of creative industries and workers, which together become a magnet for businesses engaged in supporting and encouraging entertainment. As revitalization of the NELA region continues, and the central relationship of the River takes hold, the region has the potential to become a center of artisanal and cultural life.

### Expand educational opportunities and job training programs for skills needed within the Study Area

Local employment programs can provide training and personal skills development programs to help disadvantaged social groups gain employment or acquire necessary skills to compete for jobs.

### Existing Industries in NELA

The largest private sector industry in terms of employment in NELA in 2011 was food services and drinking places, providing 1,127 jobs. This industry includes all food services, including full-service

restaurants, fast food outlets, caterers, mobile food services, and drinking establishments.

The second largest industry was social assistance, providing 1,056 jobs, which includes child and youth services, marriage counseling services, family social services agencies, day care centers and preschools.

The third largest industry was specialty trade contractors, which includes companies providing services for building construction, such as pouring concrete, plumbing, painting and electrical work.

In addition to the private sector, however, both state government and local government agencies each provide more than 1,300 employment opportunities in NELA, making them significant employers.

### Local Industry Employment Forecast

Combining the current industrial composition of NELA and Greater NELA, and applying the projected industry growth over the next ten years, we project a forecast for industry employment in NELA and Greater NELA, which are presented in Fig. \_\_\_\_.

Overall, NELA is projected to add 2,508 new jobs from 2012 through 2022, and Greater NELA will add 20,695 jobs.

The largest numbers of jobs will be added in service providing industries, such as educational and health services, leisure and hospitality, and professional and business services. This is a consequence of these industries being large and continuing to grow.

Construction will add the second largest jobs over ten years as it rebounds from catastrophic losses during the recession. These jobs will also see a spike when river revitalization projects and other key infrastructure projects becomes a reality.

Three industry sectors are projected to shrink: natural resources and mining, nondurable goods manufacturing and wholesale trade. Nondurable goods manufacturing

has been on a long-term sectoral decline, although the region still demonstrates competitive strength in some industries, as seen in following sections. Wholesale trade in the larger region will grow quite slowly, and in NELA in particular will face spatial constraints, and thus be unable to add jobs over the projection period.

Training and Education Strategies to Better Prepare the Workforce

**City of Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD)** - The Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD) is dedicated to building local businesses, providing residents with the tools they need for quality employment, and improving the total economic outlook for the City of Los Angeles. EWDD partners with local agencies and service providers to help shape this City into a progressive, competitive location for both businesses and skilled workers. The Economic and Workforce Development Department has offices in downtown Los Angeles and throughout the City dedicated to serving City residents and businesses.

**WorkSource California** - WorkSource California is a collaborative effort between multiple local Workforce Investment Areas within the County of Los Angeles, as well as **Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services/GAIN, Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, and the California Employment Development Department**, who came together to better serve the employment and training needs of the Los Angeles region. More than 40 of these One-Stop Centers throughout Los Angeles County have adopted the WorkSource California brand. As WorkSource/One-Stop Centers, they follow a business services model that provides a fundamentally different approach to serving customers. The model ensures the reliable delivery of services to businesses as well as the sharing of job listings and potential candidates throughout an entire countywide network.

**Career Technical Education (CTE)** - Career Technical Education (CTE) is working in every state and territory to help meet the country’s very real and immediate

challenges of economic development, student achievement and global competitiveness. In total, some 14 million students are enrolled in CTE programs in nearly 1,300 public high schools and 1,700 two-year colleges nationwide (1). Their mission: To prepare students of all ages for success in college and career by helping them develop the skills, technical knowledge, academic rigor and real-world experience for high-skill, high-demand, highly successful careers.

Promote local hiring, particularly with green, sustainable, living wage jobs

Education and Skills Requirement

Close examination of the detailed occupations that will provide the most job openings in the next ten years in NELA and Greater NELA reveal that many of these occupations require lower level educational levels and training. The expected openings for these job market participants are especially important to understand given the capabilities of the local labor supply.

More than half of the projected openings for the next ten years in NELA require workers without a high school diploma and no work experience. Another 24 percent will require workers with a high school diploma (or equivalent) and less than one year work experience. Together, these represent entry-level jobs for unskilled workers across industries and occupations.

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is the highest level of education that an individual has achieved. Knowing the educational attainment of the population within a specific area can provide insight into a variety of factors about the area. Areas with high rates of low educational attainment usually face challenges such as higher rates of unemployment and poverty and will therefore use higher levels of public services and resources.

Additionally, areas with high levels of educational attainment may be sought out by businesses during their

site selection process if they require highly educated and high skilled workers. Understanding the gap between workforce needs and resident capabilities can provide insight into the need for training programs and workforce development initiatives.

Educational attainment rates for NELA and Los Angeles County are shown in Exhibit 3-4.

Approximately 36 percent of NELA residents in this age group have not earned a high school diploma (or equivalent) while 22.5 percent have graduated high school but have no other education. About 21.7 percent of the residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Together, this shows a bi-modal distribution of educational attainment, with large proportions at both the low-end and the high-end of the spectrum.

Resident Employment by Industry and Occupation

While population growth can indicate the future availability of workers, and educational attainment can provide insight into the capability of residents, an examination of the actual employment status of current residents reveals what the working residents are performing in terms of occupations and in which industries. It is possible that working residents are underemployed, particularly in the wake of the Great Recession, but current employment will provide a baseline indicator of residents’ capabilities.

Residents of the NELA region are employed in quite similar industries. The top three employing industries are: health care and social assistance (accounting for 11.9 percent); retail trade (11.5 percent); and manufacturing industries (10.5 percent).

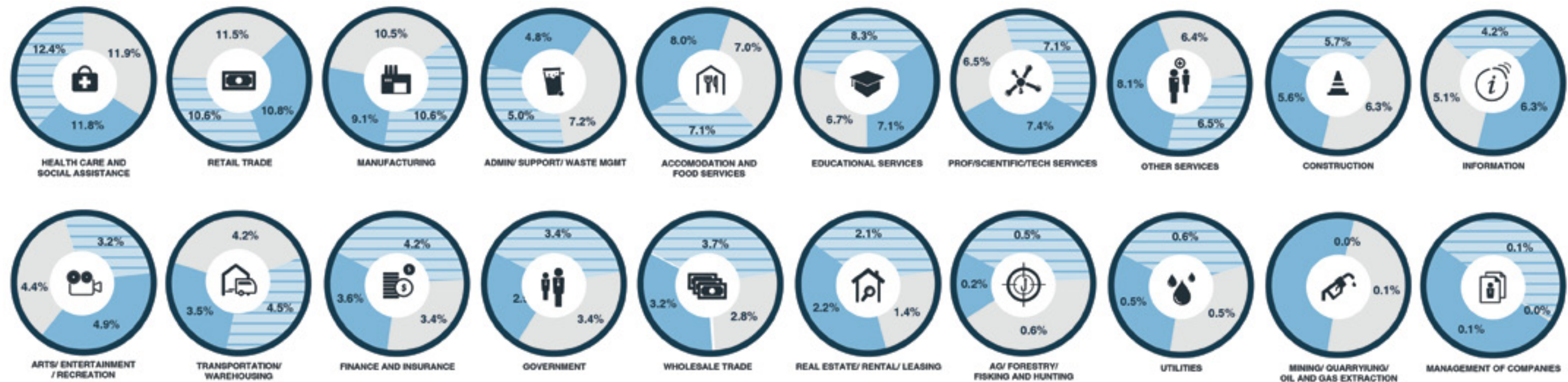
Other regional industries that employ local residents include administrative support and waste management services, accommodation and food services, educational services, and professional, technical and scientific services. This mirrors the experience at the county level to a large extent.

Commuters Impact

From the examination of the occupations of working residents of NELA and the industries in which they are employed, it is clear that the businesses in NELA are not providing employment for all residents, nor are residents supplying much labor to local businesses. In fact, businesses will employ people from across Los Angeles County and in neighboring counties as well. Approximately 80 percent of all jobs in NELA are filled by residents of Los Angeles County, 5.3 percent by residents of Orange County, 6.7 percent from the Inland Empire, and the remainder commutes to work in NELA from as far afield as Ventura County, Kern County, San Diego County and Santa Barbara County.

**In-area employment efficiency** is a measure of how efficient the community is in providing workers for businesses located in the selection area.

For both geographic areas, the vast majority of the workers employed in the selection area reside outside the area. Only 4% of the workforce who are employed in the NELA area *also* lives within the Study Area. This indicates that there is a mismatch between the capabilities of the local labor force and local business needs, with either workers not able to find appropriate employment locally (at their desired wages) or businesses unable to find local residents with the appropriate skills and education levels offered at a wage level that business owners are willing to pay.



## RESIDENT EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

(POPULATION 16+)

■ NELA ■ Greater NELA ■ Los Angeles Fig. 65

From smart phones and smart cars to biofuels and silicon chips, Californians invent solutions to our problems every day. To meet the economic challenges ahead, we must now do the same for NELA's riverfront economy, using our creativity to develop new ways to provide public goods—from infrastructure to a skilled workforce—that will attract the private investment needed to produce high-paying jobs, a sustainable environment, and equal opportunities.

We envision a sustainable riverfront that capitalizes on the City's economic growth by supporting businesses in the clean economy and training residents to fill the demand for skilled workers. Existing businesses will adopt healthier and more environmentally conscious practices to improve efficiency and the bottom line. Residents in all NELA neighborhoods will be able to compete in the new economy and benefit from a transformed foundation for the river's future economic prosperity.

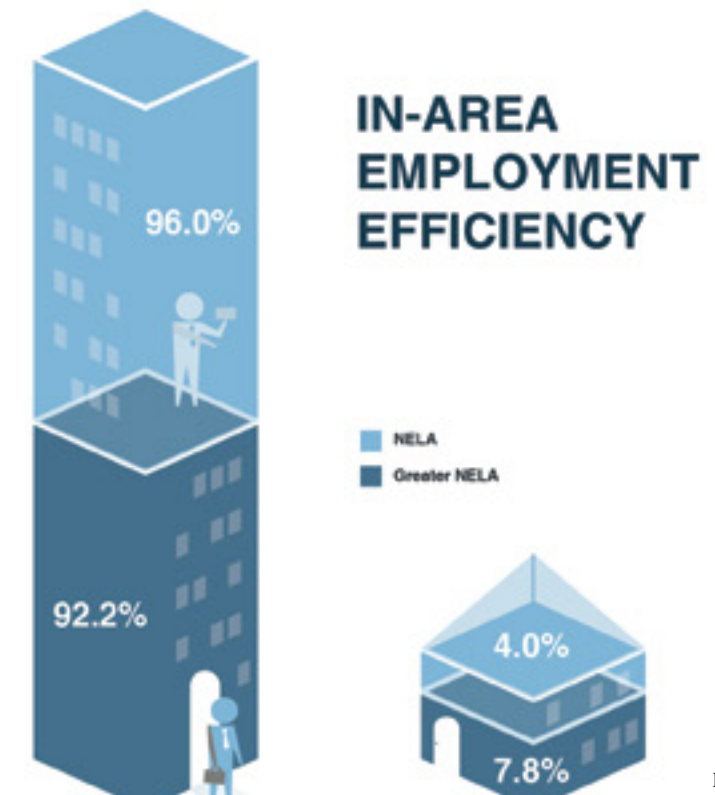


Fig. 66

# 6

## Improve governmental regulation, coordination, and oversight of the River

The riverfront is dynamic, requiring constant maintenance, repair, and oversight. Today many governmental entities—each with a different purpose—have jurisdiction over the riverfront. The complex regulatory process for construction along the River makes it difficult for private and public owners of riverfront property to build and maintain necessary structures. To enhance the riverfront with the parks, housing, and commercial and recreational activity envisioned in this plan, we need clearer procedures and better coordination at all levels of government.

Because of the multiple entities with jurisdiction over various aspects of the River, the management structure must be comprehensive yet flexible enough to allow these entities to work in collaboration, and enable these agencies to proceed independently when necessary.

### The River Channel

The River channel includes the River proper and it’s associated concrete lining, maintenance access paths, landscaping, fencing and bridge piers. In simplified terms, the River channel area is governed by three agencies, with the following jurisdictional authorities:

- United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) governs flood protection regulations and standards; water releases from the dams; maintenance of channel sections under Federal ownership
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (County) governs maintenance of channel sections under County ownership; most stormdrain outfalls; permits for channel modifications
- Los Angeles City (City) governs some stormdrain outfalls; water releases from treatment plants; use of the water within the channel

Generally, the Los Angeles River is maintained by either the

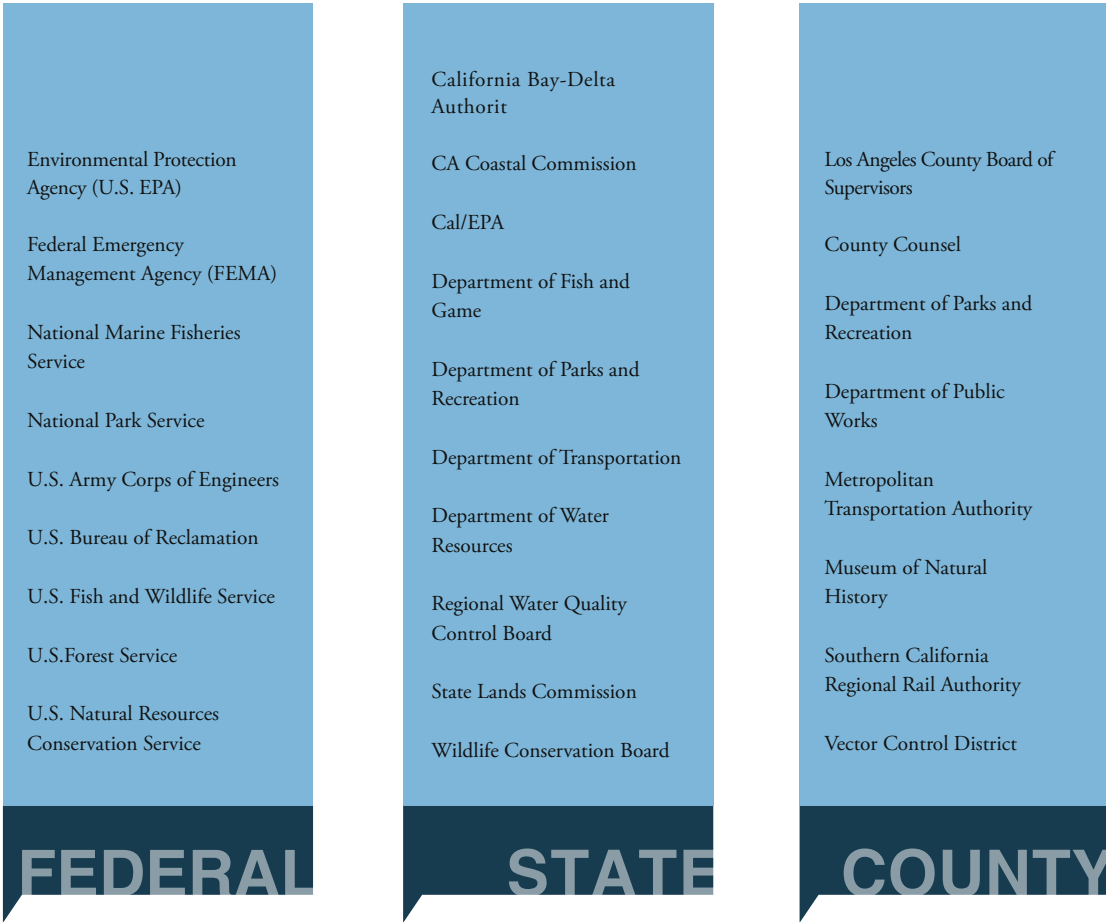


Fig. 67

Corps or the County. This differs from other public works flood projects that are federally built and fully transferred to the local municipalities for operation and maintenance.

No improvements or modifications may pass over, under, or through the walls of the River channel or levees, nor shall any excavation or construction be permitted within the limits of the project’s rights-of-way, without the prior determination that such improvements or modifications will not adversely affect the functioning of the channel and/or associated facilities. Improvements or modifications that may be desirable and permissible need to go through a permit application process, for which the

County is the first point-of-contact. Even for those reaches that are federally maintained, applications for permits are submitted to the County, and then the County requests comments from the Corps. County-initiated work—for example as would be necessary for construction of storm drain outfalls—are also submitted to the Corps for review. The only exception to this is that the Corps issues permits or leases for work within the Sepulveda Basin.

### River Ownership

Jurisdiction over operation, maintenance, and modifications of the Los Angeles River extends to the

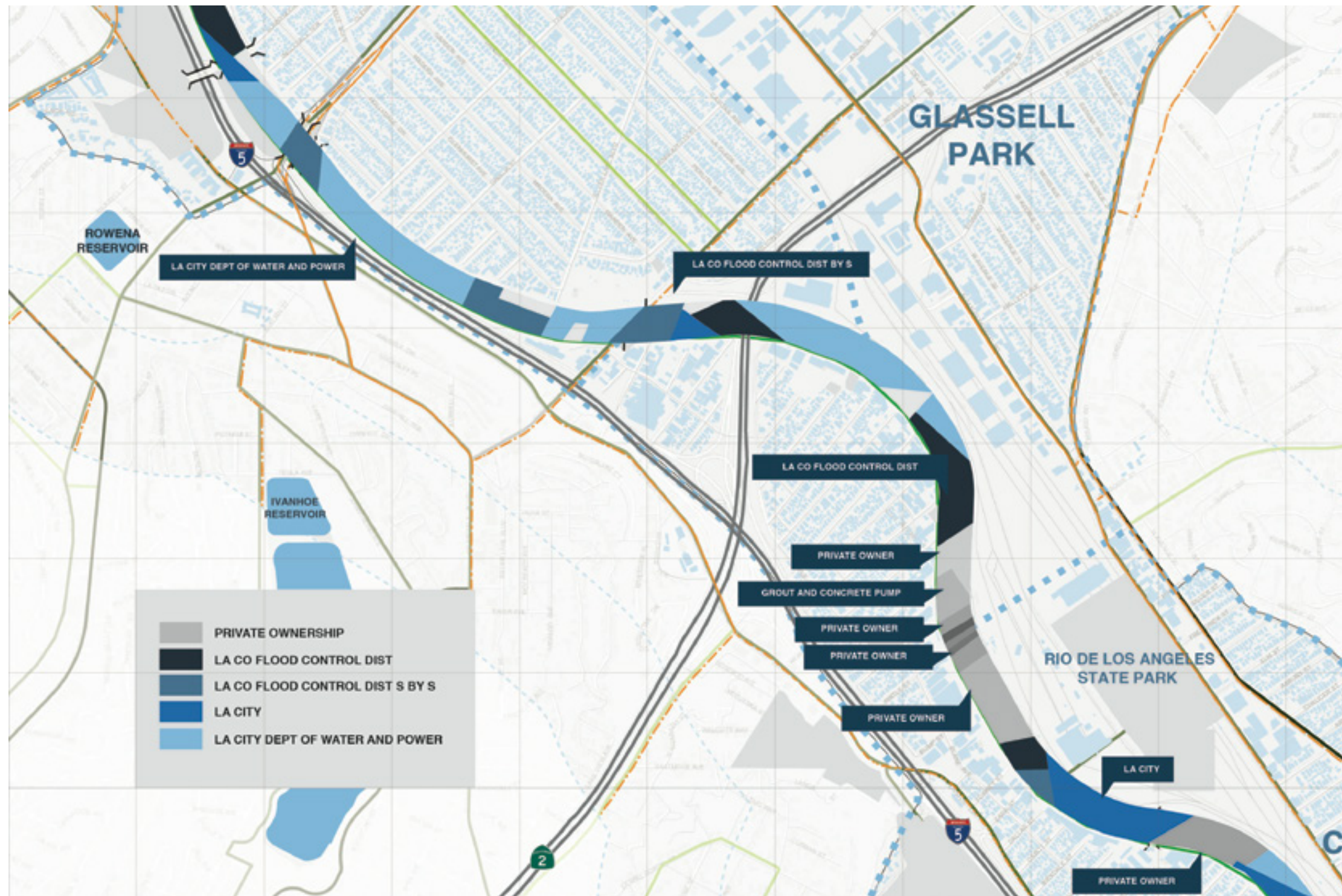


Fig. 68

limits of the rights-of-way, whether they are owned in fee title or held by easement. These limits include the channel itself, access roads, and associated facilities (for example, pump stations), and are typically fenced off with appropriate signage. The outer slopes of levees are also included in the limits of the rights-of-way.

Maps indicate that a variety of public and private entities own the land within the channel right-of-way. This includes public ownership by the City, County, and the Federal government, as well as private ownership, including single individuals and businesses such as Forest Lawn Mortuary, the Radford Studio Center, and the Lakeside Golf Club of Hollywood.

#### The River Corridor

This area includes adjoining neighborhoods, roads, bridges, and landscaping. It is governed by the full range of City of Los Angeles agencies. While the River is controlled by three agencies through ownership or easements, most of the land beyond the River is in private ownership and is regulated by zoning, ordinance and departmental standards. Therefore, the ability of the agencies that govern the River Corridor to make change is significantly different than the ability of the River channel agencies to make change.

The following City agencies, at a minimum, play a direct role in the development of infrastructure and the regulation of private development. Each of these agencies are directed by policies that may need refinement to support collaborative implementation of the Plan:

- Department of City Planning
- Department of Building and Safety
- Department of Public Works
- Bureau of Engineering
- Bureau of Sanitation
- Bureau of Street Lighting
- Bureau of Street Services
- Department of Recreation and Parks
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Water and Power

### Improve Predictability and Efficiency of the Permit Process for River Construction

Environmental permits are required for a wide assortment of projects that involve building in or on the riverfront, and it is important that these projects obtain permits in a timely, transparent manner. Permit applicants encounter regulatory hurdles, time delays, and uncertain outcomes that can hinder their ability to maintain their properties or create new housing, businesses, or open space.

Improving the permitting process for water-related construction is critical to ensure that riverfront projects can move forward. The process should ultimately foster outcomes that protect and enhance the environment as well as promote cultural and economic development on the Los Angeles River. Several approaches could be pursued to help applicants. A one-stop shop for permit applications could be established to provide applicants with a central information repository. Having a single place for application materials, regulations and guidance for all relevant regulatory agencies would help applicants understand the permitting process and get the information they need.

The LARRMP had proposed a new management structure that would simplify these procedures.

The Plan's proposed River management structure includes three elements:

**Governmental:** The Los Angeles River Authority, a joint powers authority (JPA) that includes the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, and through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The JPA would serve as the principal entity with authority and responsibility for River reconstruction, right-of-way management and maintenance, assuming responsibilities for public liability, permitting, and land development.

**Entrepreneurial:** The Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation would be a not-for-profit entity charged

with directing public and private financing for River-related and neighborhood revitalization projects.

**Philanthropic:** The Los Angeles River Foundation would be a not-for-profit body established by private individuals to support the Plan's revitalization goals.

This proposed management structure was intended to enable the City and its partners to maintain a long-term focus on River revitalization in order to ensure that the River remains a priority for future generations.

### Develop a River Orientation Guidebook

Another way to improve permitting administration would be to develop a River Orientation Guidebook. This Guidebook would offer training and guidance for the engineers and environmental experts often hired to prepare permit applications. The Guidebook could also offer design guidelines for riverfront infrastructure, making the permitting process more transparent and predictable. Design guidelines for in-water infrastructure could be put forth in partnership with the regulatory agencies and based on preferred design standard.

### Mitigation

Federal, state, and local environmental policy seeks first to avoid impacts, then minimize impacts, and, where impacts are unavoidable, mitigate them. Compensatory mitigation is the practice of restoring, enhancing, or protecting wetland, stream, or other aquatic resource functions to offset their loss elsewhere as a result of construction projects. In 2008 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued the Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources Final Rule, which establishes performance standards and criteria for mitigation for activities that require Army Corps permits. There are three primary classes of compensatory mitigation recognized: permittee-responsible mitigation, in-lieu fee mitigation, and mitigation banking.

- Permittee-responsible mitigation is habitat restoration and enhancement undertaken by the

permittee either at the site of the disturbance ("on-site mitigation") or at another location, typically within the same watershed ("off-site mitigation"). Because most permittees lack wetland experience, and because of the inherent difficulty of wetland restoration, creation, and enhancement, permittee-responsible programs are at the bottom of the preference hierarchy of the Army Corps mitigation guidelines.

- In-lieu fee mitigation involves permit applicants designating an approved third-party organization to undertake wetland creation, restoration, and/or enhancement. The third-party organization—typically a governmental agency or non-profit—has an agreement with appropriate regulatory agencies to use fee payments from permit applicants to engage in compensatory mitigation. In-lieu fees have proven beneficial because they allow organizations with technical expertise to tackle complex wetland projects. In the past, federal regulators have favored in-lieu fee arrangements, but the Army Corps now lists them second in its preference hierarchy.
- Mitigation banking, the Army Corps's preferred mitigation strategy, allows permit applicants for projects of all sizes to purchase "credits" from a restored, established, enhanced, or preserved wetland, stream, or other aquatic resource. Based on a wetland assessment, a mitigation bank assigns habitat/ecological value to those resources in the form of credits that can be sold by the bank to permit applicants to offset losses of natural resources due to dredge and fill activities. Bank credits can be disseminated for projects within a delineated geographic region, or service area. Assigning credits and standardizing mitigation ratios (for example, one acre of wetland impact could require three acres of restoration) make the process more predictable.

The mitigation bank organization, which can either be a private or public entity, is responsible for restoring, enhancing, or preserving natural resources. A bank's

mitigation requires a detailed plan prior to approval. The bank owners and regulators have a formal agreement, or bank instrument, to establish liability, performance standards, management/monitoring requirements, and terms of credit approval. An interagency review team, usually chaired by an Army Corps representative, provides regulatory review, approval, and oversight of the bank and its mitigation efforts. This built-in enforcement ensures that a project meets its restoration goals.

Mitigation banks are often more successful than individual attempts. Mitigating individually for such impacts often results in a mitigation project that provides little, if any, environmental benefit. In contrast, a mitigation banking plan can be implemented on behalf of multiple projects. By assembling and applying extensive financial resources, planning, and scientific expertise not always available to permittee-responsible mitigation projects, mitigation banks reduce uncertainty over whether the compensatory mitigation will be successful. Mitigation banks also reduce permit-processing times, and thereby improve the cost-effectiveness of compensatory mitigation.

Mitigation banking can provide economies and ecologies of scale for wetland restoration. The consolidation of scientific expertise, financial resources, and regulatory oversight into large-scale mitigation activities can streamline the permitting process and ensure that mitigation is both professional and ecologically significant.

Mitigation banking or in-lieu fee mitigation, if established, could channel resources to larger ecological restoration projects. Instituting a policy on these methods of mitigation could provide important new tools to improve the permitting process—and improve the environment.

### Management of Public Infrastructure

The bridges, bike paths, and other structures that make up the City's public infrastructure are essential to economic development and quality of life. Public and private infrastructure on the riverfront represents



Fig. 69

assets that today would have a replacement value in the billions of dollars.

Riverfront structures require routine maintenance and repairs. To ensure a prosperous future, investment in and maintenance and management of this infrastructure are critical. Maintenance of these structures can prevent the need for substantial capital demands for major repair and reconstruction. Replacement of deteriorated structures often results in more extensive costs as well as delays due to regulatory obstacles.

The division of responsibility for inspection and

maintenance of riverfront infrastructure among dozens of agencies can create confusion about which agency has jurisdiction over particular waterfront assets. This is especially true when structures abut multiple uses such as parks and roadways. In addition, the inspections and maintenance necessary to preserve waterfront assets can be costly in the short term, and difficult to prioritize.

### Regional Coordination

By enhancing and providing incentives for local, regional, and state cooperation, cities and counties can craft intergovernmental partnerships to effectively

respond to future challenges and opportunities in economic development, affordable housing, and building sustainable and healthy communities. This objective is critical because disinvestment and deterioration of core areas can affect the vitality of an entire region, and we must collectively address economic, environmental, and social challenges and opportunities.

Issues of regional significance require regional coordination. Several initiatives discussed in this document will necessitate coordination among numerous governments within the region.

Many of the recommendations in this VPEDIS have funding needs, large and small. The continued vitality of our riverfront depends on the availability of resources and revenues to support a wide range of public and private activities.

### Economic Development Government Coordination and Collaboration

Los Angeles has entered a new era of community and economic development with the dissolution of community redevelopment agencies statewide. The dissolution has created opportunities for local communities, community organizations, and local businesses to take more leadership toward the future development of their communities.

At the same time it remains beneficial for government to leverage its resources and finances together to assist local regions like Northeast Los Angeles and the River to develop. With the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities grant that has funded the NELA RC, local L.A. City government silos have been encouraged to work across city departments, community organizations, universities, public media, and private developers on a place-based project such as the NELA RC. Such collaboration in any form can only be beneficial to local community planning and development. The implementation and future of the NELA Riverfront District should find pathways to embed itself within the L.A. City departments in order

to continue to the leveraging of local government resources. Furthermore, the work in NELA and the River should continue find partnership pathways and federal coordination through the local field offices of the federal agencies that have created the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Such form of government coordination and collaboration will ensure that public/ private partnerships are given the best chance to be successful.

# 7

## Make space for social equity

**Embrace a Social Equity Driven Community Economic Development Approach within the NELA Riverfront District that makes space for economic, racial, ethnic, and cultural inclusion.**

Swaths of urban Los Angeles that is central or proximal to its original core has been experiencing rapid changes. Whether this is downtown or neighborhoods such as Echo Park, Silver Lake, or Hollywood—there is no question that new investment and development patterns have created physical and social change. Northeast Los Angeles and especially the neighborhoods adjacent to the L.A. River are no different, as real estate and capital speculation has intensified in the last decade.

This development speculation has caused tensions between the existing communities that center around themes of social equity or the fair inclusion of the

current community’s needs and visions in the face of the changing social and economic conditions. Too often the discussion of gentrification becomes polarized between the good and the bad without a progressive way forward offered and implemented.

The NELA RC acknowledges that increased investment into the L.A. River and the adjacent neighborhoods is the future of the area. From the NELA RC’s year of community engagement, the collaborative also learned that the community realizes these impending neighborhood changes and has concerns about social equity and the future of their place within the changes.

This document makes room for these social equity concerns by highlighting some tensions that arose from the engagement process and possible strategies that should be part of a social equity goal of future planning and economic development in the NELA Riverfront District.

### Housing and Displacement

Real estate speculation and gentrification causes concerns about housing on several fronts. One is the rising costs of homes in the area that gentrification brings. Many NELA residents are concerned about whether they will be priced out and displaced. Given that over 60 percent (cite Housing Figure in Chapter 3) of the population are renters, this is an important concern to their ability to live in NELA in the future. The area has also historically been a central and downtown proximal area where working class families could find affordable housing. The attractiveness of the area and the future investment patterns presents a concern that housing may soon be out of the reach of families seeking affordable options.

A second housing concern is the population of homeless who often finds refuge in the riverbanks, underneath the river bridges, and access the River for their own quality of life. The increased attention to regulate the L.A. River and clean it for the purposes of the neighborhood and tourism create tensions about what will happen to the homeless and their access to the River. A social equity driven approach calls for policymakers, developers, and the community to think about how to include the homeless in discussion about the L.A. River since it is a public space as well.

### Education

Education as a principle and as an administrative district is important to consider in terms of the future of the NELA Riverfront District. As Fig \_\_ (Cite Education Attainment chart in Chapter 3) over 35 percent of the population 25 years old and over have less than a high school diploma. This raises serious concerns about the ability of the existing residents to be prepared for and have fair access to the future development opportunities in the region.

This will need to change and the local school district, LAUSD, and charter and private schools will need to be brought into the process of local economic development in order to find ways to better connect the youth to future opportunities that arise from future development.

### Workforce Development

Jobs remained a huge concern of many of the local youth and young adult populations in the area who came out to the community engagement meetings. The effects of the most recent recession are still felt by many who do not have as many job opportunities as other more privileged areas of Los Angeles. An equitable workforce development strategy that focuses on quality jobs in high growth and living wage sectors has been the focus of the workforce and economic development goals of the NELA RC and needs to be seriously considered by policymakers when addressing the population in NELA who face high barriers to quality employment.

### Embracing Diversity

NELA is a very diverse neighborhood with several races, ethnicities, and cultural practices that call the area home. This diversity must not only be seen as a community asset but also an economic asset that can be leveraged for future economic development that reflects a more realistic picture of the demography of Los Angeles. NELA’s majority of Latino and Asian populations can play a major role as purchasing power for localized community economic development that can be sustained by the current population. A social equity driven economic development approach can see this local population as markets to build small business and larger development around.

### Sustainability and Healthy Communities

The NELA RC project began this project with a grant awarded by the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The principles of sustainability presented by the PSC was broad ranging as they considered aspects of sustainability that went beyond common pillars such

as environmental stewardship and alternative energy practices. The NELA RC validated this assumption as sustainability to the NELA community meant much more as community members were concerned about social aspects of sustainability that addressed their own preservation of their neighborhood identity and fair and quality access to the social equity concerns above such as housing, jobs, education, and public infrastructure.

Health was also a key component of social equity that the community was concerned about. They were not only concerned about access to personal health and ways to access quality healthcare—as many pointed to aspects of the built environment that could be improved to increase their own health outcomes. These aspects of the built environment included the improvement of public and open space access around the River, the creation of safe streets for pedestrians and bicyclists, and a local business, education, and political infrastructure that supported the healthy quality of life of residents and people who visit the area.

### Community Organizing Communication Infrastructure and Economic Development

Economic development, gentrification, and growth can often be demonized as practices that come from outside of local communities. This does not need to be the case and a social equity driven economic development model can value local community and work in partnership with local community to co-develop an area that meets both development opportunities and community needs.

A form of co-development with the NELA community is possible but needs the creation of a sustainable community organizing and communication infrastructure to shepherd in equitable development in NELA and the L.A. River. The NELA community as a region lacks a local development organization with a strong and sustainable community organizing approach for the future development of the region. A community organizing that focuses on the recruitment and education of local leaders—that especially focus on the lower-income communities that are vulnerable

to displacement—can serve as a community organizing infrastructure that can co-develop investment projects and development policy that serves the needs of the community in addition to taking advantage of opportunity development sites. Examples of Los Angeles community organizations with strong community organizing programs focused on development are East Los Angeles Community Corporation, T.R.U.S.T. South L.A., and Southeast Asian Community Association.

A social equitable economic development approach to the NELA Riverfront development can also benefit from the community organizing accessing and shaping the local communication infrastructure of the local neighborhoods when considering economic development opportunities. Local ‘communication infrastructure’ theory developed by the USC Metamorphosis project consists first of a ‘storytelling network’ made up of local residents, community organizations, and geo-ethnic media (or local media aimed at local geographies and/ or ethnicities). Studies have been conducted across diverse communities of Los Angeles that have seen that local neighborhood ‘storytelling networks’ that are strongly connected can contribute positively to higher levels of civic participation, neighborhood belonging, and collective efficacy around local neighborhood issues. The second component of ‘communication infrastructure’ is the ‘communication action context’ made up of local community conditions that can affect or be affected by the local ‘storytelling networks’ of local communities.

For the future of a more socially equitable economic development approach in the NELA Riverfront District it would be advised that a community organization develops a community-organizing program. The organizing should work to turn the local communication infrastructure towards a goal that develops an agenda for co-development that benefits local community needs at the same time that developers invest in opportunity sites.

## SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

A community organization in the southern end of the NELA study area that has created a successful community organizing agenda focused on the empowerment of local youth resident leadership around local planning and development issues is the Southeast Asian Community Association. SEACA’s office is located in Chinatown but its organizing and campaigns involve the neighborhood of Lincoln Heights. SEACA and its organizing became an integral grassroots campaign to educate local youth to submit comments on the impact of planning and development policies within the approved Cornfield Arroyo Specific Plan (CASP) directed by the Department of

City Planning. SEACA is a model of engagement that has worked to shape the local communication infrastructure that focus on equitable economic development and planning for neighborhoods such as Lincoln Heights that fall under the CASP boundary. This type of effort that focuses on the tenants of local empowerment, education, social equity, and genuine leadership development is something that needs to be developed for all of the Riverfront neighborhoods as increased real estate speculation and government interest takes hold of the River and the adjacent neighborhoods.



Community members participating of the visioning process.

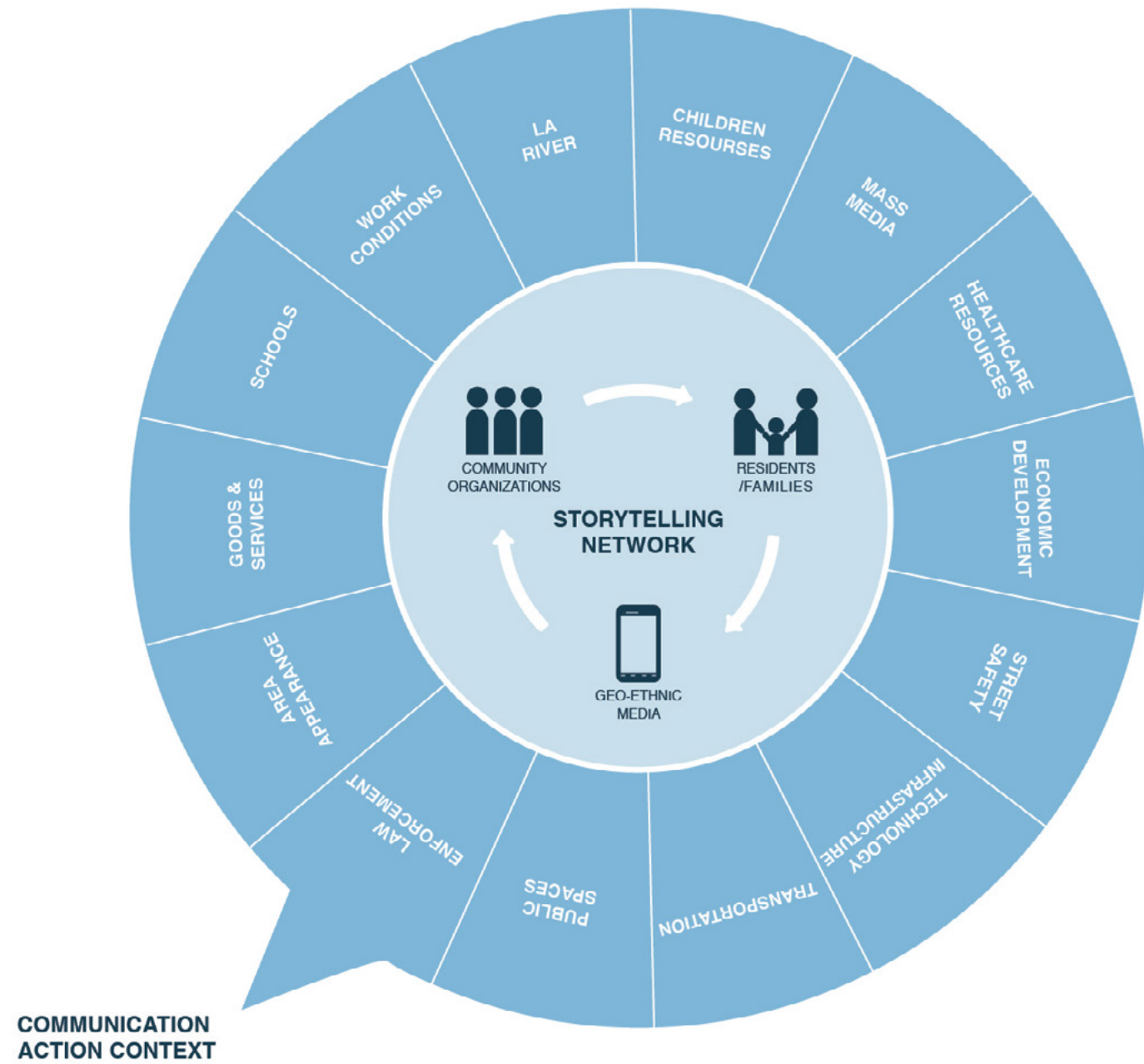


Fig. 70

# COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

# 8

## Provide new tools and strategies to promote economic development and build sustainable communities

Many cities across the country have reinvested in their rivers, reaping benefits that go well beyond economic returns. These projects have invigorated tourism, created a better quality of life for residents, and helped produce healthy, vibrant economies. The NELA neighborhoods need to be empowered to exercise a common set of tools directly, or through such entities as they might create, as a part of a comprehensive local economic development strategy that is sustainable.

“The idea that someone in Sacramento is going to come down and announce our economic strategy is preposterous. There is no white horse coming to save the day. This is economic policy developed and informed at the local level. It’s regions rising together”, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom recently stated in his keynote presentation at the 2013 California Economic Summit. This type of local-level economic policy and implementation plan is exactly the sort of undertaking the NELA RC is proposing with this VPEDIS to build a sustainable riverfront. The goals of creating value for riverfront communities, spurring riverfront investment, building critical infrastructure

and promoting collective prosperity represents some of the complex work for laying an economic foundation that will allow NELA communities to thrive for many generations to come.

This goal aims to focus attention on underused areas and catalyze opportunity areas to ensure opportunities for housing, parks, employment, education and transportation connections in areas that are especially lacking in these essential public amenities. Revitalization of the River can introduce a broad range of benefits that will enhance Los Angeles’ livability, and result in greater economic prosperity for everyone.

There is an important opportunity to create a riverfront district based on principles of environmental sustainability and neighborhood connectivity to the River. Significant investment in the area has already taken place, including the 40-acre Río de Los Angeles State Park, which provides a mixture of active recreation and passive open space in a landmark City/State partnership to address the surrounding communities’ need for both types of park amenities. This park is highlighted by environmental features, such as a stormwater retention basin with constructed wetlands, native planting, bioswales, and selected permeable surfaces.

Many cities across the country have successfully reinvested in their rivers, reaping benefits that go well beyond economic returns. The San Antonio Riverwalk, in Texas, is perhaps the earliest and most well-known, but many other cities, large and small—San Jose, California; Houston, Texas; Chattanooga and Memphis, Tennessee; and Washington, DC—have transformed their rivers into assets for their surrounding communities. These projects have invigorated tourism, created a better quality of life for residents, and helped produce healthy, vibrant economies to areas surrounding the riverfront.

In this goal, the VPEDIS will recommend a comprehensive set of new tools to promote economic development and build sustainable and healthy communities in California in the recent wake of redevelopment dissolution.

These new recommendations acknowledge the end of redevelopment as it existed and its ultimate financial burden on the state. With this in mind, the recommended VPEDIS program does not call for the restoration of independent redevelopment agencies, the use of tax increment financing (TIF) without the consent of affected taxing agencies, or any dedication of property taxes needed to fund schools. Instead, local jurisdictions would be empowered to undertake local and regional economic development activities to address local and regional needs by using a more flexible and common set of tools without creating a financial burden on the state or other taxing entities.

### Background

On February 1, 2012, redevelopment programs in California were abruptly ended as a consequence of the state’s challenging budget situation and state legislation enacted in 2011, which was upheld by the California Supreme Court in December 2011. The termination of California’s 60-year program in redevelopment dismantled about 400 city and county redevelopment agencies (RDAs), subject only to ongoing administration related to the enforcement of preexisting enforceable obligations and managing the winding down of redevelopment activities in about 750 redevelopment areas. It ended the longest and most successful program in the state to create and preserve jobs, boost local economies, increase taxes and other revenues to local governments, revitalize blighted areas, and produce affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents.

### Loss of Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

The termination of redevelopment ended property TIF, a time-tested financing method accepted by the bond markets, under which property owners faced no additional property tax burden and general funds of cities and counties were not at risk. California’s pioneering use of tax increment has been mirrored around the country. Currently all states deploy some form of TIF for a variety of targeted purposes, except Arizona and, now, California. The loss of redevelopment TIF removed the single most important source of financing for economic development and affordable housing in California.

### Redevelopment Helped Transform California’s Urban Landscape

Without redevelopment, California’s urban landscape would be very different, likely favoring even greater urban sprawl to the detriment of more compact development. Redevelopment helped reinvigorate older, distressed commercial, industrial, and residential areas and encouraged new private investment in these areas. Urban development took place more quickly and effectively



Counterclockwise top to bottom: Riverfront in Washington D.C., Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas, and ?

## Economic development as used in this VPEDIS is broadly defined as actions at the local level to:

- Create and maintain sustainable communities,
- Build healthy spaces,
- Provide for construction and maintenance of infrastructure,
- Create employment opportunities in businesses and industries,
- Preserve and create affordable housing,
- Address needs of underutilized areas,
- Promote transit-oriented and infill development,
- Remediate contaminated sites,
- Protect the environment and enhance open space/other public amenities,
- Generate tax revenues for all levels of government,
- Promote the general welfare and prosperity, through all appropriate means.

Fig. 71

because RDAs could coordinate land use approvals for infill sites, acquire and consolidate large parcels for development, finance new infrastructure, and sell land on economically feasible terms for new development. Before it was dissolved, redevelopment was estimated to stimulate thousands of jobs annually, in addition to new industrial, commercial, and residential developments in urbanized areas. It also represented the largest source of local funding for affordable housing, generating over \$1 billion annually to develop and preserve affordable housing for very low, low-, and moderate-income residents in severely constrained housing markets throughout the state. Without redevelopment,

California's physical, social, and environmental climate challenges would likely be even greater today.

### Building Sustainable Communities

Continued work to make the L.A. River green, continuous and accessible is expected to transform an undervalued asset into a valued amenity. Revitalization offers the opportunity for the surrounding NELA communities to engage in development that leads to an improved natural environment while also attracting investment that leads to new jobs, increased property values, more livable streets, and sustainable future growth.

Sustainability means meeting NELA's economic, social, and environmental needs while ensuring that future generations will also be able to meet their own needs. Economically, sustainability means growing the economy and ensuring that all residents have access to jobs; socially, it means ensuring fairness and providing equal opportunities for our entire population. A sustainable future will ensure equity and prosperity for every NELA resident.

### Areas of Concern for Economic Development

There is little question that physical improvements to the Los Angeles River will induce private investment

in new development on surrounding land. There is no question that this development will result in both construction period and permanent job creation, as well as new tax revenues payable to public agencies. These are generally considered to be positive economic effects. At the same time, however, this investment may have collateral or potential side effects that should be carefully evaluated and anticipated as part of the implementation process for this VPEDIS. The VPEDIS recommendations are intended to encourage revitalization's positive effects to benefit local NELA communities and for detrimental side effects to be minimized.

Specific areas of concern in regards to economic development include:

**Loss of industrial land** - The loss of industrial land in the City continues to be a major concern to the business community and a variety of City agencies. Because a substantial portion of the City’s industrial land lies along the River, possible changes in land use along the banks of the River should be evaluated and selected in the context of the City’s broader industrial land policy debate. The City may elect to consider targeted incentives, such as density bonuses, expedited approvals or relocation requirements and benefits to support an appropriate balance between industrial, retail, residential, and mixed-use developments.

**Lack of affordable housing** - Riverfront communities provide a certain amount of affordable housing today. These communities face upward occupancy cost pressures if higher or new land uses are proposed along the River. The City’s response to affordable housing issues in the River Corridor could include a range of measures for encouraging affordable housing; such measures include municipal housing bonds, density bonuses, inclusionary zoning, and other regulatory mechanisms. The overall issue of housing affordability and this toolbox of possible responses should be carefully addressed by public policy makers as part of the future River planning process.

**Gentrification** - Gentrification is potentially the most serious political issue associated with riverfront development. Its effects, both positive and negative, should be anticipated and mitigated consistent with public policy. The impact of increasing values on existing property has multiple implications. When existing residents, businesses, and property owners benefit from rising property values, neighborhoods are perceived as improving positively. When rising values displace people and force them to leave their communities without the ability to participate in these benefits, then most people recognize a serious negative impact. The City could address gentrification within the River corridor by encouraging affordable housing, sound community planning on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis,

establishing community benefits agreements to ensure that development benefits flow to affected local communities, meaningful community involvement in the implementation of projects, minimizing out-of-scale developments (such as excessive road width and parking), and partnering with community-based development organizations (such as community development corporations, community land trusts, and non-profit developers).

A key goal of the NELA RC and this VPEDIS is to utilize economic development as a community empowerment tool, rather than an unwelcomed agent of gentrification that is linked to a lost sense of community.

**Impacts on railroad operation** - One of the economic realities of the current River configuration is the location of railroad tracks on both banks in the downtown area. While consolidation of these tracks could create significant opportunities for River enhancements and economic development, these rail lines play an essential role in the local economy and in the movement of goods, services, and passengers through the region. River redevelopment plans, including those presented here, need to accept this reality and accommodate the needs of continued rail service in some form, while also anticipating possible future changes.

**Improving infrastructure and the built environment** - The built environment includes the human-made components of the riverfront and includes everything from housing, offices, and stores, to highways, utility networks, and rail lines. Because it surrounds us, the built environment is fundamental to the way the River operates and how residents interact in and around it. As NELA grows, we need to ensure both existing and new residents have access to opportunities and resources so that everyone enjoys the benefits of growth that is sustainable. To embrace the opportunities and challenges of growing our economy and population, the NELA recommends integrated strategies to drive growth that is sustainable through high-performance buildings and infrastructure.

Much of NELA’s existing infrastructure is not adequate to meet the needs of a 21st century economy – improvements to the built environment would help promote global competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and equal opportunity. With growing fiscal challenges, the State will have fewer resources to pay for infrastructure and finance long-term debt, yet California’s highly-centralized system for building infrastructure relies on large capital investments by state government (the state only has the resources to pay for about half of the estimated \$765 billion in infrastructure investments it must make over the next decade, according to the 2013 CA Economic Summit Report). There is a need to adopt a comprehensive approach to infrastructure planning, development, resource conservation and finance that is focused on economic growth, environmental sustainability, and equal opportunities for all.

By investing in the built environment, we can encourage growth and diversification in the NELA economy by making sure businesses and institutions have the specialized resources they need to expand locally, using greener goods and services. A commitment to enhance the quality and resilience of our built environment will create new jobs by increasing demand for new skills related to sustainable design, construction, and regeneration projects.

Improving the quality of key infrastructure will help create healthier conditions for residents to live, work, and play. Infrastructure improvements will improve health- related environmental conditions (such as poor air quality) and encourage more physical activity in residents’ daily lives.

Effective planning for the built environment can deliver improvements in all neighborhoods while prioritizing help to underutilized NELA areas. Incorporating sustainable practices in large, city-led projects and future growth will ensure the city is affordable for existing residents while bringing new services to underserved areas. Affordability of and accessibility to the facilities and services in the NELA community are central to the VPEDIS approach for revitalizing the NELA Study Area.

Need for New Tools and Strategies

Redevelopment dissolution ended the longest and most successful program in the state to create and preserve jobs, boost local economies, increase revenues to local governments, revitalize underserved areas, and produce affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents. There is now the urgent need for new economic development tools at the state, regional, and especially the local level to address the challenges facing the River and its surrounding NELA communities. Chapter 5 will cover a variety of recommendations to empower local NELA areas with new and alternative tools to fund community revitalization programs.

Many cities across the country have successfully reinvested in their rivers, reaping benefits that go well beyond economic returns. These projects have invigorated tourism, created a better quality of life for residents, and helped produce healthy, vibrant economies. The NELA neighborhoods need to be empowered to exercise a common set of tools directly, or through such entities as they might create, as a part of a comprehensive local economic development strategy.

# CHAPTER 5: Recommendations

The following recommendations of this Vision Plan and Economic Development Implementation Strategy are the direct products of a collaborative effort from various organizations, agencies, departments, businesses, community residents, and key stakeholders. With the expertise of planners, architects, academics, and economic development consultants emerged an interdisciplinary approach that targets riverfront revitalization comprehensively. The comprehensive planning effort has been driven by the main goal of ensuring that any revitalization efforts that involve the Los Angeles River in Northeast Los Angeles go hand in hand in co-benefiting the riverfront neighborhoods of NELA with planning and policy recommendations that benefit Atwater Village, Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Lincoln heights. The participation of organizations deeply involved with the Los Angeles River and its surrounding communities in NELA contribute a grounded understanding of the River that is sensitive to the River's history and consciousness of ongoing revitalization efforts. Most importantly, the engagement of the community, from door-

to-door resident and small business surveys to placemaking workshops, offers a vital component of the VPEDIS through the inclusion of voices whom revitalization efforts directly impact.

For this very reason, VPEDIS aims to go beyond goals. Through implementation projects and strategies, the Plan has the power to exceed the planning stage and translate words into action. Substantive methods for implementation range from utilizing catalytic projects and managing pilot programs to identifying funding sources and optimizing opportunity sites. The proposed implementation tactics are instrumental in reaching the actualization of the Plan's eight goals. While the goals provide a skeletal framework for a successful Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront District, implementation projects and strategies function as the drive to bring these goals to life. And, when a greenway corridor, sustainable communities, and long term economic viability consider each others strengths the momentum to revitalize the Los Angeles River and its surrounding neighborhoods merely becomes stronger.














































# ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTER

The chapter is organized through two main components, a matrix component and narrative component. The matrix presents an overview of the recommendations based on the following six areas:



































- Placemaking Projects
- Planning and Opportunity Sites
- Transportation and Mobility
- Environmental
- Creating Jobs and Improving Economic Development
- Policy and Programming





















After the matrix, the narrative section of the recommendations provides a more in-depth discussion of each of the recommendations correspondent to each of the six areas of recommendations.

	PROJECT AND/OR STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE	GOALS
1. Projects				
Viable and Catalytic Projects	East Side Trail Addition	Extension of the eastside LA River Trail throughout the NELA Riverfront District.		
River	Arroyo Seco Terracing	Transforming the Arroyo Seco Confluence into a terraced community open space.		
	Fletcher Drive	Improved multi-modal thoroughfare and neighborhood corridor.		
Corridors	Riverside Drive	Improved multi-modal thoroughfare and neighborhood corridor.		
	Community Garden	An open space for a community garden with integrated stormwater BMPs.		
Atwater Village	Industrial Green Streets	Renovation of industrial streets to include stormwater BMPs.		
	Trails to River from Hills	Pathways connecting the neighborhood residents from the hills to the River.		
Glassell Park	Community Garden/Yoga Park	An open space for passive recreation and urban agriculture.		
	Elysian Underpass/Gateway	Creation of a gateway to identify the neighborhood and calm traffic.		
Elysian Valley	Community Service Retail	Creation of community serving retail and facilities for the neighborhood.		
	Farmer’s Market/Pocket Park	Creation of a flexible plaza space for community events.		
Cypress Park	Riverside Bridge Park Space	Adaptive reuse of the Riverside Drive Viaduct as a plaza type open space.		
	Improve access to Gold Line	Improved conditions to access the Cypress/ Lincoln Gold Line Station.		
Lincoln Heights	Nature Education Center	A nature education facility to be located in near to the Arroyo Seco Confluence.		
Placemaking Desing Competition	Winning Projects	TBD		

					CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS
		PROJECT AND/OR STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE	GOAL
2. Planning and Opportunity Sites		Establish a NELA Riverfront District	Designate the NELA study area as a Riverfront District		 
2. 1		Implement Neighborhood Placemaking Projects	Create small-scale neighborhood projects that reinforce the history and identity of the neighborhoods		 
2. 2		Establish Artists and Maker Communities	Designate Elysian Valley an Artists and Maker Community		  
2. 3		Establish a local urban design committee	Create a local urban design committee of stakeholders to review urban design projects relevant to community needs.		 
2. 4		Elysian Valley Revitalization Plan	Community initiated Plan to redraft Ordinance No. 176825, to make it more reflective of current development Patterns, designate sites for parking and site specific Zoning Modifications.		 
2. 5		Griffith Park Central Service Yard Park	Redesignating the existing Service Yard into a publically accessible park.		 
2. 6		River Glen	Contamination Remediation		  
2. 7		Taylor Yards	Contamination Remediation		  
2. 8		CASP	Contamination Remediation		
2. 9		Van De Kamp’s Holland Dutch Bakery	Opportunity for future Community Space or educational Facility.	N/A	   
2. 10		San Antonio Winery	Opportunity for educational tours.	N/A	   
2. 11		Lincoln Heights Jail	Opportunity for filming, hotels, community uses or residential uses along the River.	N/A	   
2. 12		Glendale Hyperion Bridge	Opportunity for art and historical recognition of the River’s history in Los Angeles.	N/A	   
2. 13		Villa Rafael	Opportunity for future residential or boutique hotel near the River.		
2. 14					
3. Transportation and Mobility		NELA Mobility Plan	Designate “nodes” and methods of connections between the “nodes.”		
3.1		Rio Vistas Plan	Designate 3 streets for implementation of a cul-de sac entryway and functional open space into the River.		   
3.2		Elysian Valley Parking District	Designate 2 sites within Elysian Valley for the development of public parking for visitors and surrounding business customers and employees.		    
3.3					
209 NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES RIVERFRONT   DISTRICT VISION PLAN & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY					210

					CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS
		PROJECT AND/OR STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE	GOAL
		Taylor Yards Bridge	Bridge connecting Elysian Valley across the River to jobs, community resources and transit opportunities near Taylor Yards, Cypress Park and Atwater. Also connecting to the future Taylor Yards Park site		📍🚪🚶👜👥
3.4		NELA Riverfront District Bicycle racks implementation	Build bicycle racks along the river that are River and neighborhood themed		🚶
3.5		Recomendations for the Mayor’s Great Streets Initiative	Designate 3 NELA streets as prime streets for the “Great Streets” Initiative.		📍🚪🚶👜👥
3.6		Recommendations for DOT’s People Street Initiative.	Designate 5 NELA streets as prime streets for the creation of Parklets, Plazas and Bicycle Corrals.		📍🚪🚶👜👥
3.7		Reccommendations for DOT’s Bicycle-Friendly Business District	Designate 5 NELA streets as prime streets for the creation of Bicycle-Freindly Business District.		📍🚪🚶👜👥
3.8		Greenway 2020 - Broadway Connector	Build a connector from Broadway to the River, Connecting NELA to Downtown.		📍🚪🚶👜👥
3.9					
4. Environmental		Taylor Yards (Bow Tie Parcel)	Ecological Restoration - ARBOR Study		📍🚪🌿🏠
		Taylor Yards (G1/G2)	Ecological Restoration - ARBOR Study		📍🚪🌿🏠
4.1		Arroyo Seco Confluence	Ecological Restoration - ARBOR Study		📍🚪🌿🏠
4.2		Los Angeles Transportation Center / “Piggyback”	Ecological Restoration - ARBOR Study		📍🚪🌿🏠
4.3		Verdugo Wash	Ecological Restoration - ARBOR Study		📍🚪🌿🏠
4.4		Los Angeles State Historic Park / “Cornfield”	Ecological Restoration - ARBOR Study	\$1 Billion for all projects collectively	📍🚪🌿🏠
4.5					
4.6					
5. Creating Jobs and Improving Economic Dev		Connecting North Atwater Industrial District to Sewer System	Locate funding to replace septic and cesspools within the North Atwater Industrial District with Sewer line connections to improve economic development and job creation in the area.	\$ 1 Million	👜👥
5.1		Foster business attraction and retention in NELA	Attract new businesses and incentivize existing businesses to grow and diversify NELA’s business sectors		📍👜👥
5.2		Create a local hiring policy	Promote local hiring with green, sustainable living wage jobs		👜📋🏠👥
5.3		Expand education opportunities and job training programs	Invest in education opportunities and job training programs for targeted high-priority NELA business sectors		👜🏠👥
5.4					
211 NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES RIVERFRONT   DISTRICT VISION PLAN & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY					212

					CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS
		PROJECT AND/OR STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE	GOAL
		Create a more attractive regulatory environment to do business in NELA	Review and advocate potential regulatory reform options to make it easier to do business in NELA		  
5.5		NELA Food Hub Development effort	Examine how the NELA Study Area could respond to needs identified by the City of Los Angeles Food Policy Council for a Food Hub.		  
5.6		Provide additional support and resources for small NELA businesses to succeed	Expand entrepreneur programs, apprentice opportunities and business services; form a business improvement district (BID) to collectively market/brand distinctive NELA commercial corridors		  
5.7		Explore various infrastructure enhancements around the riverfront	Expand adaptive reuse throughout NELA communities, identify specific sites with the potential for higher density projects, and explore the ability to transfer Floor Area Ratio from certain parcels to others		
5.8		Encourage higher-technology industries that maintain existing industrial uses	Create biotech and technology overlay zones to develop higher-technology industries that will increase workforce and wage-rate		  
5.9		Strengthen regional coordination and partnerships	Cooperate with regional LA River stakeholders where opportunities exist to share information, advocate joint-benefit projects, or jointly seek federal funding for the NELA area		 
5.10		Expand use of Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs)	Utilize IFDs as jobs/economic financing districts, much like the proposed Assembly Bill 690 (California Jobs Act) aims to accomplish		 
5.11		Strengthen role of the state Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (I-Bank)	Position the I-Bank to facilitate private sector investment through public-private partnerships for NELA projects		 
5.12		Build Neighborhood Sit-Down Restaurants	Add neighborhood sit-down restaurants as anchors in relevant NELA neighborhoods.		  
5.13		Build a local movie theatre	Build a local neighborhood movie theatre in one of the major NELA Riverfront business corridors.		  
5.14		Leverage the county Healthy Design Ordinance	Leverage the county Healthy Design Ordinance to strategically identify and fund community gardens and farmer's markets in NELA.		  
5.15		NELA Riverfront District Local Tourism Maps	Curate and produce maps that support local recreation and tourism		  
5.16					
6. Policy and Programming		Establish a EWDD NELA Riverfront District Implementation Position	Embed NELA Riverfront District Implementation activities within City EWDD		 
6.1		Create a HUD field local liaison position	Embed NELA Riverfront District and LA County Riverfront Implementation within HUD local field office.		 
6.2					
213 NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES RIVERFRONT   DISTRICT VISION PLAN & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY					214

					CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS
		PROJECT AND/OR STRATEGIES	DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE	GOAL
		Affording Housing Policy	Ensure new housing developments set aside a percentage for affordable housing.		 
6.3		Renter to Buyer Program	Public/ Private partnership to assist renters to become home owners.		 
6.4		Homeless Belonging Storage Hub	Find capital funding to build a storage hub for homeless to store their belongings temporarily as they access the River for recreation.		
6.5		Land Trust Initiative	Ensure a local organization starts a community land trust initiative.		 
6.6		Local High School Workforce Development Policy	Create high school bridge programs to local workforce development opportunities.		  
6.7		LAUSD Partnership on Local Planning and Development	Create a LAUSD program on local planning and development that educates and involves enrolled youth and parents.		  
6.8		Community Organizing Initiative	Ensure a local organization creates a community organizing initiative focused equitable planning and economic development.		 
6.9		Direct local Communication Infrastructure toward Equitable Economic Development	Ensure that the local community organizing initiative created activates the local communication infrastructure of residents, community organizations, and local media toward a discourse and activities that will encourage equitable economic development for the NELA Riverfront District.		 
6.10		NELA Riverfront District public events programming	Plan public rituals that celebrate the NELA neighborhoods and the L.A. River		 
6.11		Get local support to allow 55% voter approval for financing mechanisms	Advocate for 55% voter approval (as currently allowed for schools) for bonds and other long-term financing requiring voter approval		 
6.12					
215 NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES RIVERFRONT   DISTRICT VISION PLAN & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY					216

# 1

## PLACEMAKING PROJECTS

Seven Potential Projects are proposed and profiled in the following section. These include one project per each of the five neighborhoods in the NELA Study Area, as well as one street corridor project and one river-related project.

### Selection Criteria

The projects originally stem from a series of community-based workshops held throughout the Fall and Winter of 2013. This first series of community workshops included five different meetings, one held in each of the five neighborhoods located in the NELA Study Area: Atwater Village, Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Lincoln Heights.

The focus of these five workshops was to inform the community about the NELA Riverfront Collaborative and Placemaking Plan initiative, as well as to gather information from community members about resources, assets, and points of interest that currently exist in and around the NELA Study Area. Through a series of interactive mapping activities, workshop participants identified existing places within their communities that were of value to them. Additionally, information was gathered about residents’ connectivity to the Los Angeles River, healthcare, and one another.

In addition to the first series of Placemaking workshops, a Bus Tour was organized, providing Angelenos the opportunity

to visit 20 different predetermined sites within the NELA Study Area, as part of a guided tour led by the Consultant Team. During this tour, attendees had the opportunity to explore potential projects that could occur throughout the communities, and provide feedback via a survey.

Information gathered during the first series of workshops and the Bus Tour was subsequently recorded and analyzed by the Consultant Team, and used to inform the second series of workshops that followed.

The second series of workshops comprised of two separate meetings held in different parts of the NELA Study Area. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit the community’s feedback on specific project-related information, such as desired locations of signage and trees throughout NELA. Through interactive mapping exercises, participants proposed projects they desire in their communities.

Projects that were proposed during this second series of Placemaking workshops were then analyzed and narrowed down by the Consultant Team based on what projects were considered to be ‘viable’ (in that it is practical and feasible to implement within a five year time period) as well as serve a catalytic purpose (in that through its implementation, supports positive change to occur through a series of other projects that take place over a series of future phases). The short list of these community-driven projects were then used as the basis for the final aspect of the community engagement effort, which was an Open House held at The Los Angeles River Center.

The purpose of the Open House was to summarize and gather feedback on a truncated list of potential community improvement projects. Six projects were selected and presented for each of the five NELA neighborhoods. In addition to highlighting neighborhood-specific projects, the Open House also summarized and presented projects for a series of street corridors throughout the NELA RD, as well as specific projects associated with the Los Angeles River.

Open House attendees reviewed the proposed lists of projects associated with these seven different categories, and cast their votes for those they felt were most viable and desirable to implement. The Consultant Team identified the projects that were most popular, and fleshed them out in more detail in the following section.

### Project Profiles

Each project profile provides a narrative that summarizes the essence and effect each project will have on the NELA RD. Additionally, each profile outlines a projects’ overall character, purpose, opportunities, logistics, and approximated cost. Existing conditions associated with the project site are identified and explained through a series of photographs and schematic plans, and future possibilities are also presented, along with precedents. These schematic design possibilities highlight proposed improvements, as related to the project site’s context and existing condition.

### Opportunity Areas

A series of opportunity areas were identified associated with each of the seven project profiles, intended to highlight areas that in their present state and function, do not positively contribute to the quality of the public realm and/or neighborhood. These areas primarily consist of vacant or underutilized sites, vehicular storage areas, and car oriented business or facilities (which consist of large surface parking lots, or surface parking adjacent to the street, and drive through businesses utilizing setback conditions for vehicles.) Additionally several plots of land zoned as “Public Service”, typically infrastructural or storage yard type uses, have been identified as they also do not contribute to the quality of the public realm and/or neighborhood. These areas have been identified for consideration to improve conditions that foster pedestrian activity, safe environment, neighborhood identity, improved mobility (e.g. bike, transit). As it relates to the NELA Riverfront District, it is the intention to strengthen the identity of the district through special attention to the series of street corridors and most notably to continue to support the revitalization of the Los Angeles River.

# Los Angeles River East Side Trail Extension

Current access to the Los Angeles River in the NELA Study Area exists in portions on the west side of the River, via the Los Angeles Greenway Trail. The current narrow, paved pathway is striped for two-way pedestrian and cyclist use. Although pedestrians and cyclists traverse the informal maintenance road and river channel located on the river's east bank, there is currently no formalized or legal pathway established for such activity on the east side of the river.

Creating a formalized multi-use, shared trail for pedestrians and cyclists along the east side of the Los Angeles River will increase access to the river and recreational opportunities for Angelenos. The proposed trail expansion would connect the existing Greenway Trail in Atwater Village north to the Glendale Riverwalk and extend access south from Fletcher Drive down through the Lincoln Heights neighborhood.

In its initial phase, the project proposes to mirror the improvements made to the westside trail beneath Fletcher Boulevard, creating a safe and continuous path, as well as provide opportunities for riparian planting through a series of river terraces. This re-routing will allow for existing automobile traffic to remain intact, while simultaneously allow East Side Trail users to enjoy uninterrupted walking, jogging, and bicycling.

Essential amenities that are currently limited and/or lacking along the existing Los Angeles River Greenway Trail will be incorporated into the East Side Trail Extension. Such Trail improvements include, but are not limited to: seating, water fountains, plantings, rest room facilities, lighting, signage and safety call boxes.

Small squares, public art works and waterfront decks will also be located at regular intervals along the River to increase the amount of usable space for resting and relaxing along the river banks. Incorporating plantings of native vegetation along the riparian corridor will also be a focus of the East Side Trail Expansion, and aim to improve both the ecology and visitor experience along the Los Angeles River.

Aside from stretching alongside the banks of the Los Angeles River, the East Side Trail Extension will also extend into surrounding neighborhoods in the NELA study area, and connect to existing parks and open spaces. Establishing a larger connected network of access will be achieved by working with the City of Los Angeles' related programs, such as Mayor Garcetti's Great Streets and Green Streets Initiatives.

The number and quality of access points from neighborhoods and streets to the river will also be addressed and achieved through the East Side Trail Extension project. Opening up dead ends of streets, and providing more formalized entryways to the river and trail will be a large focus of the project. Signage and other way-finding mechanisms will be used to increase the awareness that the river and trail exist, and assist Angelenos navigating there.

Linking the Los Angeles River to surrounding neighborhoods and open spaces through the East Side Trail Extension will achieve a more robust and contiguous matrix of green and open space in Northeast Los Angeles.

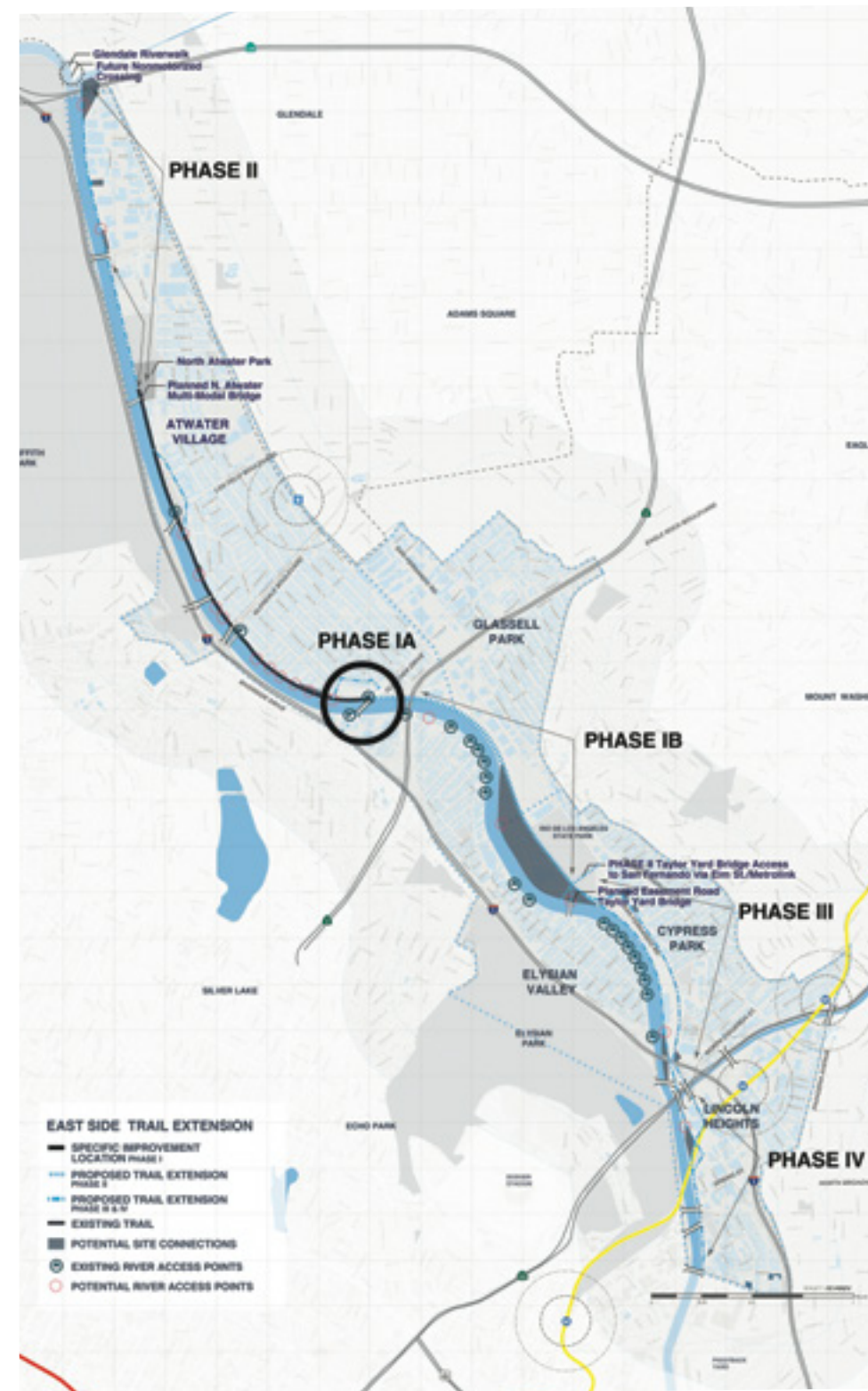


Fig. 72  
The proposed Los Angeles River Eastside Trail Extension project will increase opportunities for Angelenos to access and engage with the Los Angeles River. Stretching south from North Atwater Park, the Eastside Trail Extension will provide additional pathways for pedestrians and cyclists, and offer essential amenities along the way, such as signage, lighting, water fountains and fill stations, rest rooms facilities, and seating.

CONCEPT DESIGN:

OVERALL EXTENT:  
6+ Miles, Eastside Trail Extension

SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT  
LOCATION:  
East Bank at Fletcher Drive.

BENEFITS:  
Extend existing access on East Bank of Los Angeles River, both north and south.

Promote Access Points from neighborhoods, create inboard routes to integrate neighborhoods when River Trail is inaccessible, connect with other parks, and bike paths.

LOGISTICS:

*Establishing Easements:* Acquire access to adjacent properties beginning with public facilities along river at Fletcher.

*Integrating with other Street Improvements:* Coordinate with other planning efforts that affect trails, streets and open spaces.

*Connect with Adjacent and Nearby Public Spaces:* Extend the trail along streets and sidewalks to connect to open spaces.

*Expand Existing and Proposed Access Routes:* Link to existing Trail Networks and neighborhood nodes.

*Signage Way-finding Effort:* Expand and increase current efforts to identify access points and trails along the river. Incorporate interpretive signage at significant locations along the East Side Trail Expansion.

*Health and Safety:* Provide Amenities that promote increased recreation throughout the day and night.

Small < 1 Mil  
GENERAL COST:  
Large >5 Mil

TOTAL PROJECT: Large  
PHASE I: Medium  
PHASE II: Large  
PHASE III: Large

PHASE I:  
Extend Existing Eastside Trail South improving access with underpass embankment at Fletcher.

PHASE II:  
Acquire easment conditions and improve trail access along embankments north of Atwater Park and South of Planned Taylor Yard Bridge.

PHASE III:  
Extend Path further south from Arroyo Seco Confluence south to Mian Street. Requires comprehensive approach to reconstruct embankment as a series of terraces and existing rail corridor would be reconstructed in alignment as a trestlized structure.

RELATED RESOURCES:

PLANNING POLICY, FUNDING,  
& ADDITIONAL STUDIES  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Los Angeles River Ecological Restoration Feasibility Study  
Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan  
Mayor Garcetti’s Initiatives  
Greenway 2020  
Green Streets  
Great Streets  
People Streets

PRECEDENTS IN LA:  
West Side Los Angeles River Trail

PRECEDENTS OUTSIDE LA:  
Buffalo Bayou Promenade  
East Bank Esplanade  
City/Park Hybridized Quebec Riverfront  
Trafford Wharf Promenade  
Railway Project Landscape  
Narrabeen Multi-Use Trail  
Cheonggyecheon Stream Restoration

## Access

The majority of the Los Angeles River remains inaccessible to the public, due to gates, fences and walls that are erected to intentionally keep people from nearing or entering the channel and/or surrounding area.



## Safety

The existing Los Angeles River Greenway Trail is a narrow paved pathway accommodating two-way pedestrian and cyclist traffic. A lack of lighting, especially under overpasses, makes for challenging and unsafe use for travelers.



## Connectivity

The Los Angeles River runs through the center of the Los Angeles Metropolitan region, but remains relatively cut off from surrounding communities due to the railways and industrial facilities that directly abut the river's banks.



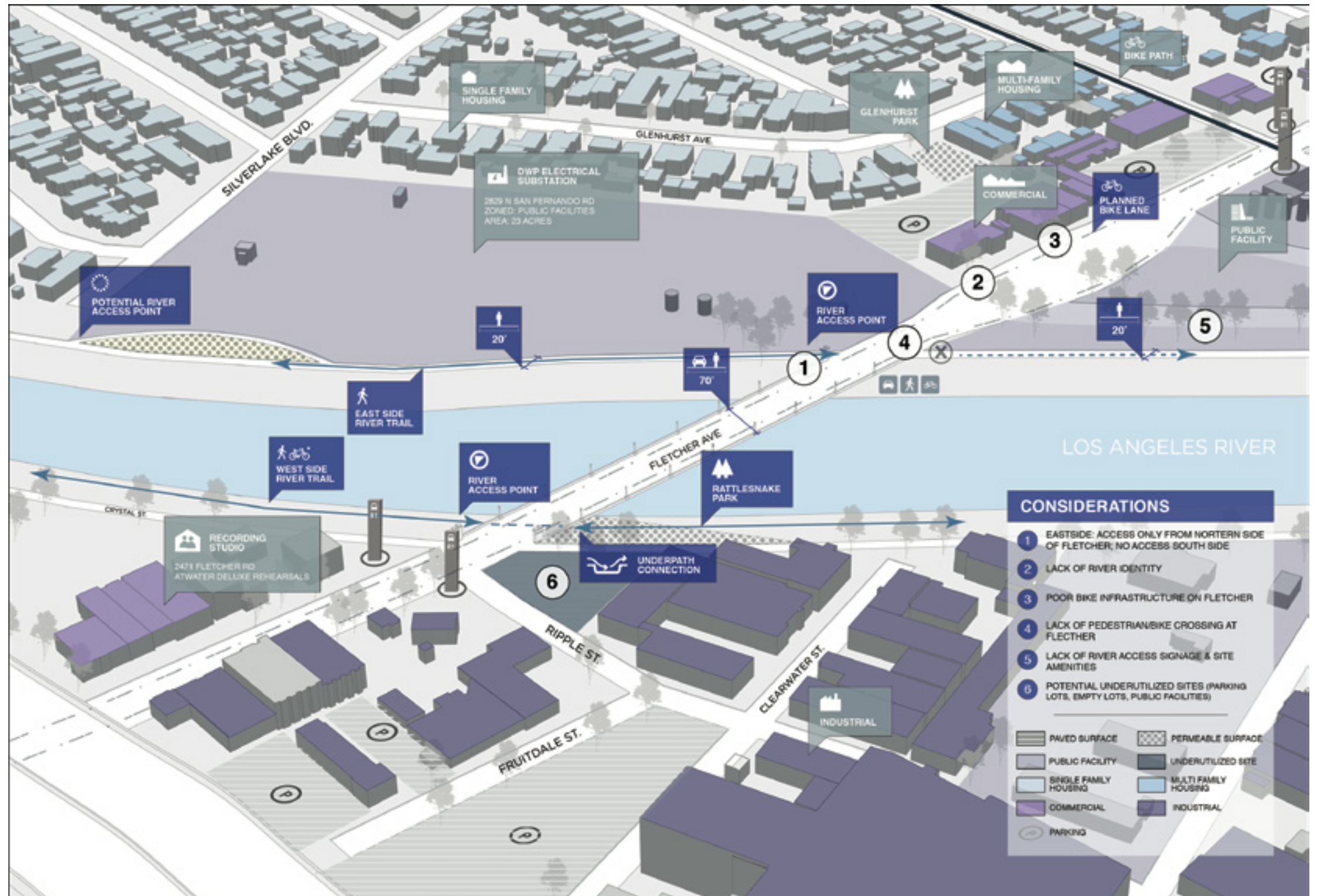
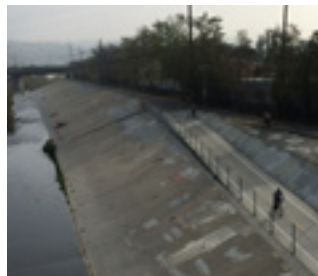
## Vegetation

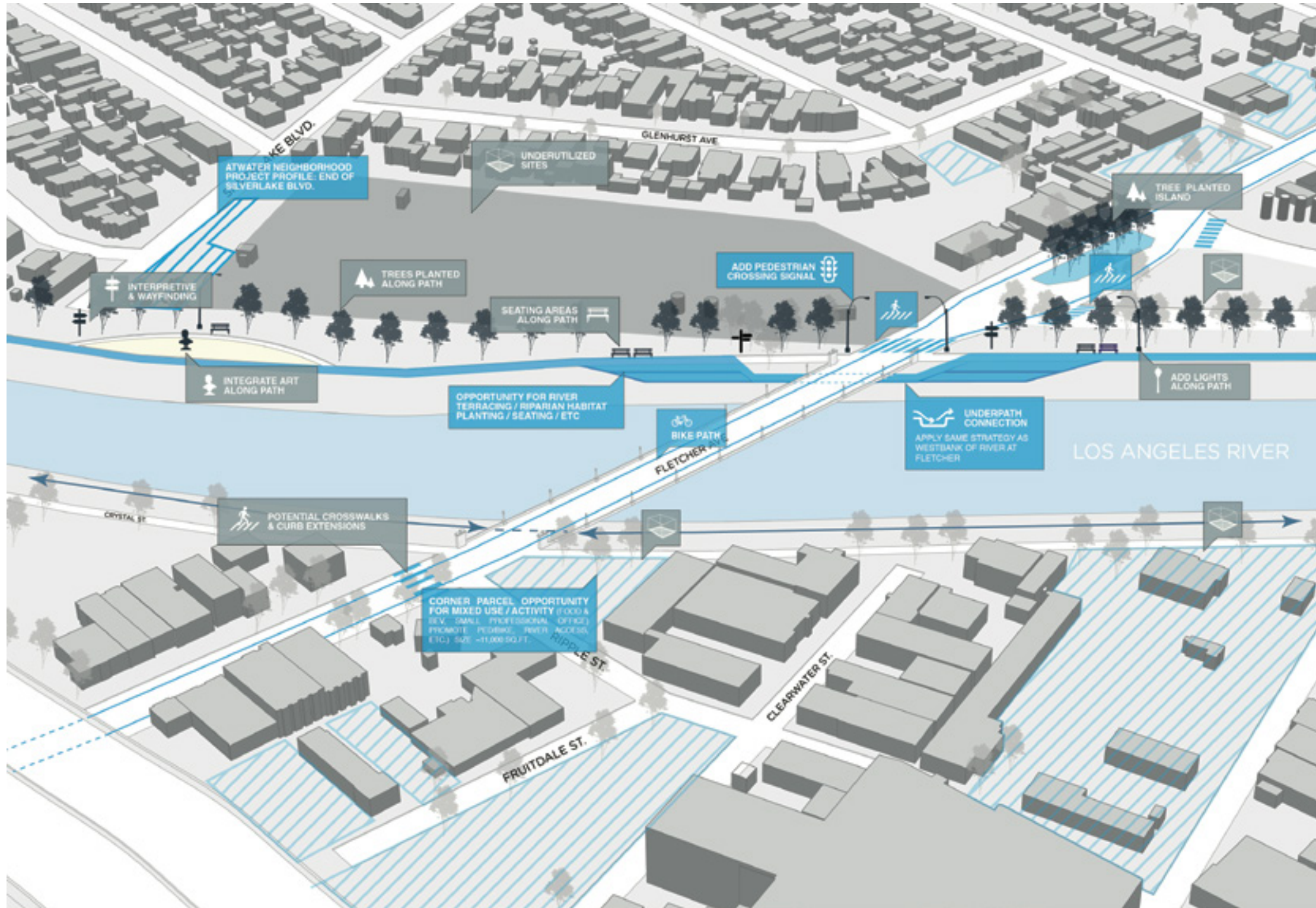
Existing vegetation in and around the Los Angeles River is sparse and often unintentionally planted. Invasive species, such as Arundo donax, make up the majority of the vegetation throughout the riparian corridor.



## Recreation & Fun

The Los Angeles River offers limited opportunities for Angelenos to recreate. Biking, walking and jogging can be enjoyed year-round on the formal pathways and trails, and boating and fishing is permitted during special recreation times.





### Path Expansion

The Buffalo Bayou Promenade in Texas connects Houston's city core to its river through a series of pathways and extensions. To accommodate such connectivity, trails have been taken under existing overpasses and roadways.



### Lighting

Lighting incorporated into the Trafford Wharf Promenade in Manchester, England allows for safe extended use of the waterfront throughout the day and night.



### Amenities

Narrabeen Lagoon Multi-use Trail in Sydney, Australia provides recreation and resting opportunities through a series of boardwalks, lookouts, and seating installations.



### Vegetation

Quebec Riverfront has employed vegetative buffers along the riparian corridor as a means to separate traffic uses on the trail and strengthen the local ecology of the area.



### New Perspectives

The East Bank Esplanade in Portland, Oregon provides residents and visitors with unique opportunities to see the city and surrounding areas in new ways.

## Street Corridor Fletcher Drive

Fletcher Drive is a key corridor that crosses the Los Angeles River, providing an important linkage between the east and west neighborhoods. The initial phase of the project identifies improvements associated with the intersection of Fletcher Drive and San Fernando Road, then extends east and west along the corridor, providing the potential to improve public health, social, environmental, and economic benefits to the community. This includes supporting mobility and accessibility, creating a sense of identity and increased spaces for social gatherings while simultaneously promoting a network of green infrastructure practices to improve the health and quality of the overall environment.

Currently, the intersection of Fletcher and San Fernando is dominated by automobile traffic, surface parking lots and drive-thru fast food restaurants making it undesirable and unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists to inhabit the space. In the first phase of this project, this intersection can be improved through the incorporation of clearly demarcated bike lanes and street crossings and a distinctive streetscape design that promotes the identity of the neighborhood and signal the welcoming and safe conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

Until new development opportunities emerge to improve the general urban form and create a more continuous street frontage, interim phases could include enhancing building facades and space between the sidewalk and storefronts/businesses. Fletcher corridor could benefit from recent City of Los Angeles street initiatives including “People Streets”, “Bike Friendly District”, and is a strong candidate to become one of the Mayor’s “Great Streets” projects. These initiatives would enable funding streams and provide opportunities to

achieve a more vibrant and distinctive street experience. The renovation of Fletcher Drive Corridor should embrace the ‘Complete Streets’ ideology, whereby mobility is enhanced through the consideration for all ways of movement including pedestrian, bike, bus and personal automobile. To increase pedestrian safety, sidewalks, shared pathways and crossings should be designed so people can easily find a safe and direct route to a destination free of hazard, while providing ample space for cyclists. Cyclist safety can be enhanced by appropriately sized and clearly identified bike lanes, safe crossings and protected intersections that take advantage of extended curbs and protected portions of the bicycle pathway whereby the cyclists are separated from motorists via a curb, planting strip or furnishing zone.

Through the installation of art at key locations, including the intersection at Fletcher and San Fernando, the underpass beneath the rail corridor and extent of the blank walls along Fletcher, will further evolve the character of this important corridor of the NELA Riverfront District and express the unique quality of the community. In addition, way-finding signage that reflects the identity of the NELA Riverfront District should be prominently placed intermittently along the corridor.

To express the journey to the Los Angeles River, a series of stormwater infrastructure elements are expressed through a series of planters, curb extensions, and larger rain gardens to capture, convey, filter and release stormwater back into the river. This improves the quality of water and makes for a more didactic riparian experience. In addition to filtering stormwater runoff, incorporating a native plant palette can enhance the identity of the corridor and adjacent

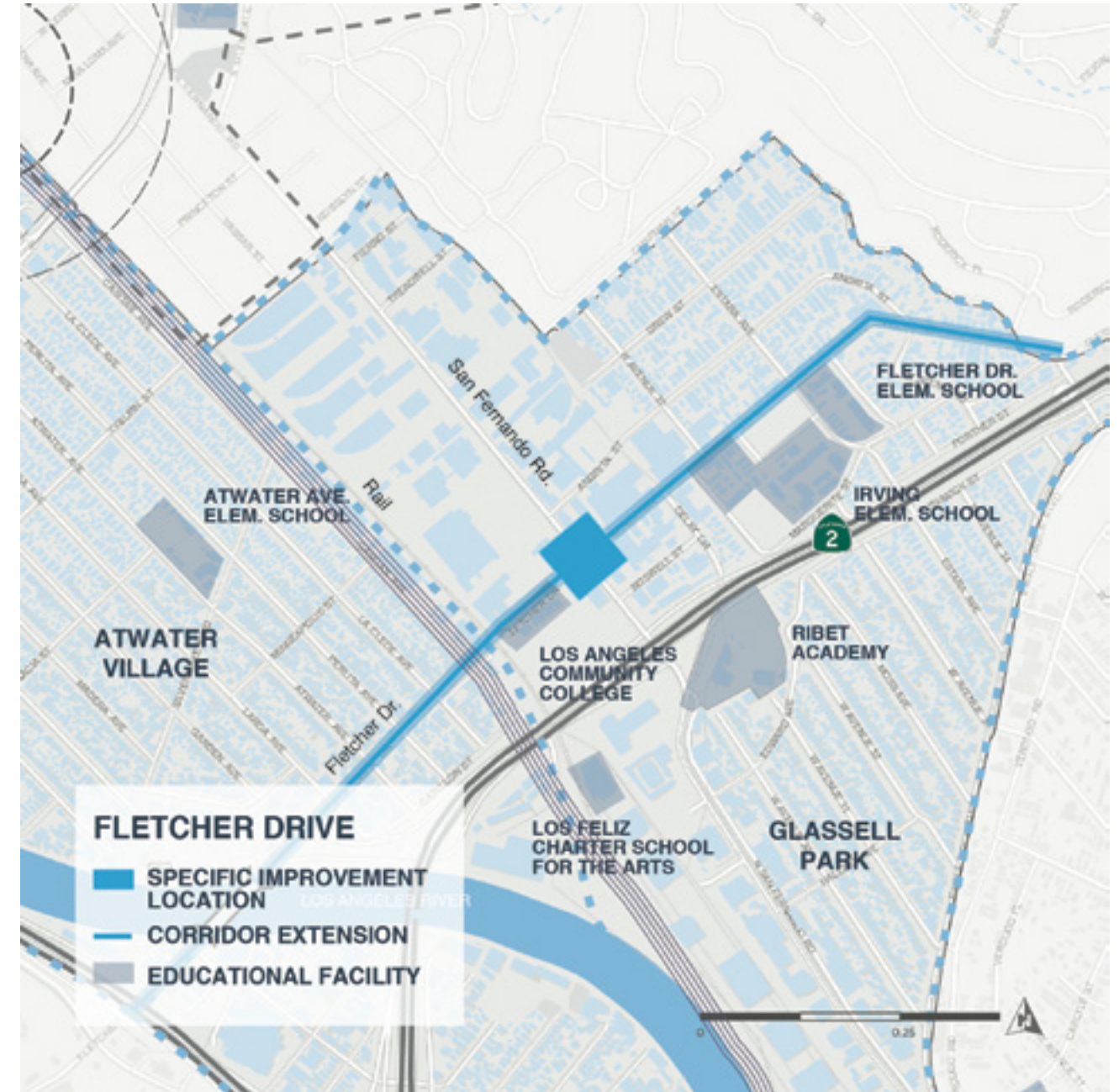


Fig. 73

neighborhoods, contributing to a ‘riverly’ sense of place.

CONCEPT DESIGN:

OVERALL EXTENT:

1.64 miles long

SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT LOCATION:

Fletcher Drive and San Fernando Boulevard

LOGISTICS:

*Establishing Easements:* Acquire access to adjacent properties beginning with the intersection at Fletcher and San Fernando.

*Integrating with other Street Improvements:* Coordinate with other planning efforts that affect streets, mobility, and open spaces.

Small < 1 Mil

GENERAL COST:

Large >5 Mil

TOTAL PROJECT: Medium

PHASE I: Medium  
PHASE II: Medium  
PHASE III: Medium

RELATED RESOURCES:

PLANNING POLICY, FUNDING, & ADDITIONAL STUDIES

Los Angeles Equity Atlas  
Great Streets Los Angeles Action Plan  
Green Streets Initiatives  
Green Infrastructure City Initiatives  
Greenway 2020  
Safe Routes to Shools  
National Complete Streets Colaition  
Reconnecting America  
Re:Streets.org

BENEFITS:

Improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety, providing a continuous and accessible direct route and convenient connection between destinations.

Enhance identity of neighborhood incorporating amenities including street furniture, art, plantings

*Connect with Adjacent and Nearby Public Spaces:* Extend the corridor along the course of Fletcher and along sidewalks to connect to open spaces when viable.

*Expand Existing and Proposed Access Routes:* Link to existing Trail Networks and neighborhood nodes, moving from west to east.

PHASE I:

Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and crossings at the intersection of Fletcher and San Fernando.

PHASE II:

Create corridor enhancements to the west from the Fletcher and San Fernando intersection towards the Los Angeles River.

PRECEDENTS IN LA:

Third Street Promenade Santa Monica  
CicLAvia  
Outdoor Living Rooms  
Mobile Commerce and Food Trucks

and distinctive paving, while promoting historical elements and cultural references.

Create a community/active street frontage where activities are encouraged when they do not interfere with safety and accessibility.

*Signage Way-finding Effort:* Expand and increase current efforts to identify access points and trails along the river. Incorporate interpretive signage at significant locations along the East Side Trail Expansion.

*Health and Safety:* Provide Amenities that promote increased recreation throughout the day and night.

PHASE III:

Create corridor enhancements to the east from the Fletcher and San Fernando intersection towards West 36th Streets.

PRECEDENTS ELSEWHERE:

Powell St. Promenade  
Portland Green Street Program  
Portland Mall Revitalization  
Fan Pier Public Green & Streetscape  
Pavement to Parks  
Denver’s 16th Street Mall  
Ocatavia Boulevard

### Bike Corridor

Many streets lack basic infrastructure that promotes safe bicycling practices. Even on streets that the City identifies as being part of the Bicycle Master Plan, cyclists are forced to share lanes with automobile traffic, without signage or buffers.



### Car Environment

The existing streetscape caters to automobile traffic, making it difficult for alternative modes of transportation (such as pedestrians and cyclists) to compete and have a safe and equal share in such transportation corridors.



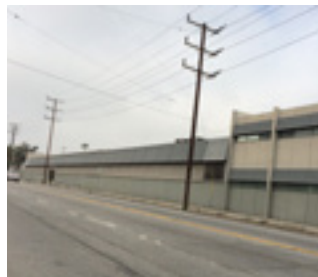
### Uneasy Access

The interface between streets and sidewalks is unsafe as well as uninviting in many areas, especially near under- and overpasses.



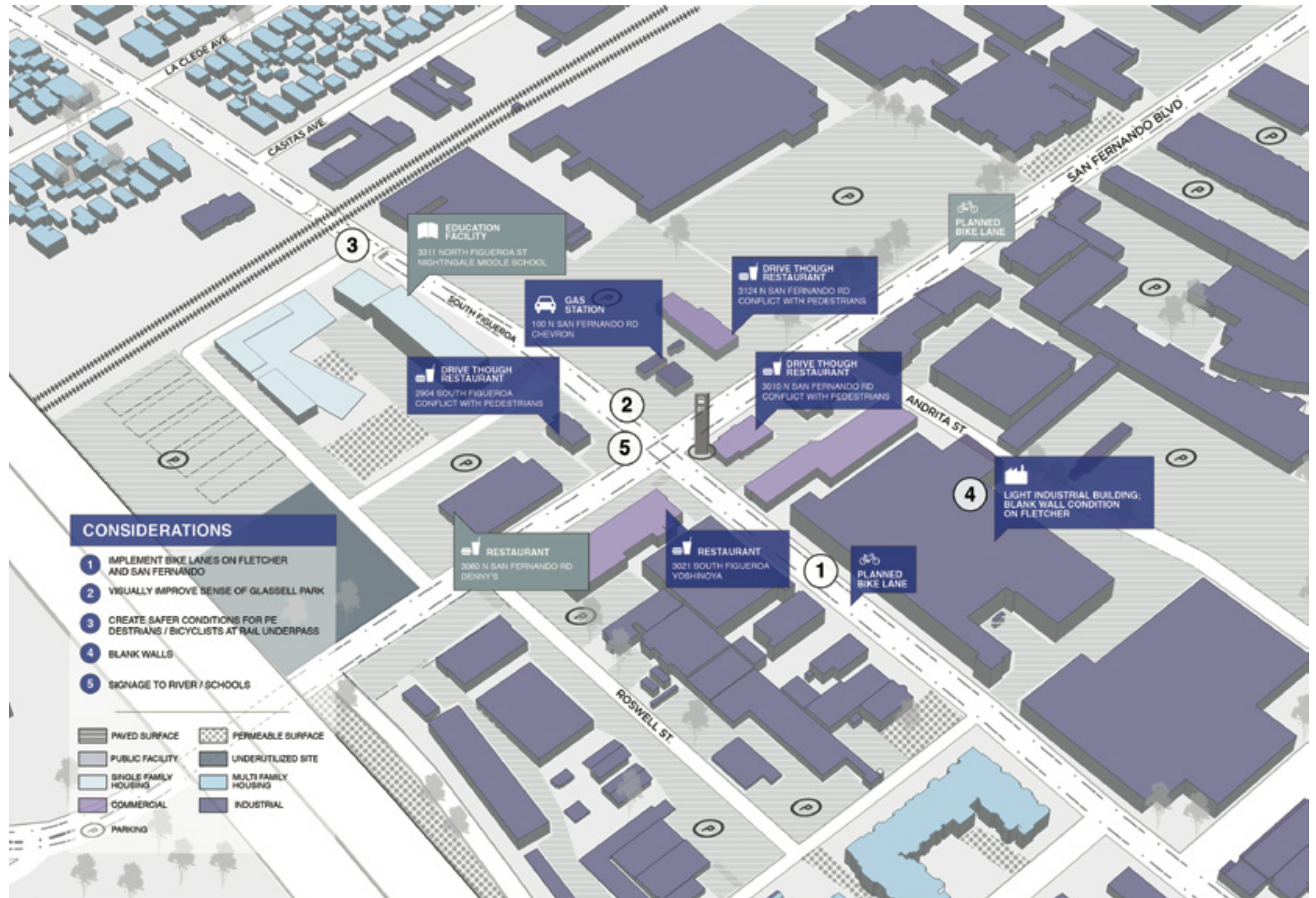
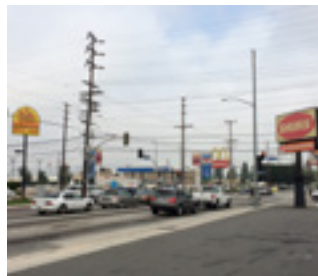
### Blank Walls

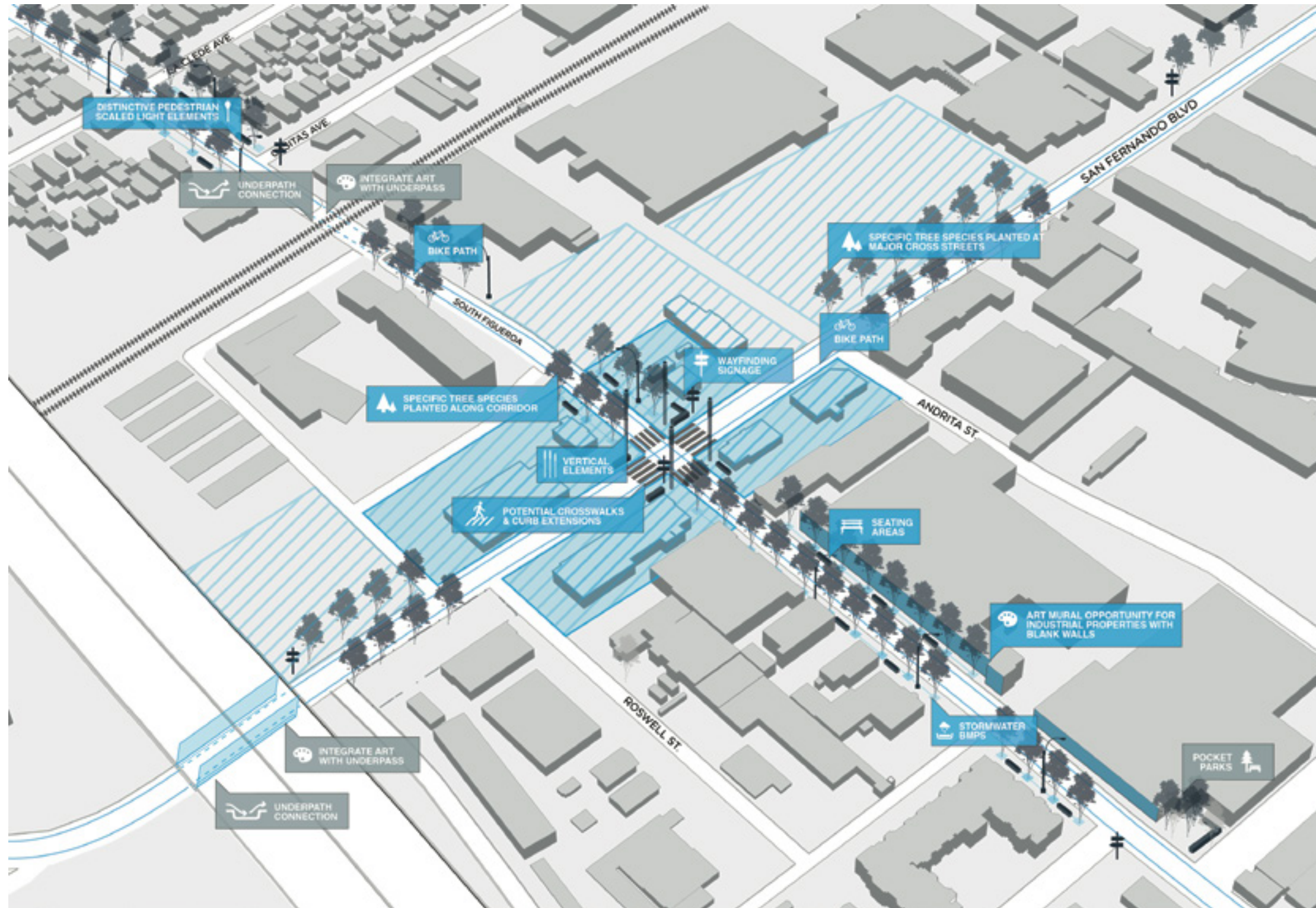
Buildings that line many of the streets have blank and uninteresting walls facing the street corridors.



### Signage

An abundance of styles of signage exist along street corridors, advertising nearby commercial and retail uses. Neighborhood way-finding signage is currently not as prevalent along street corridors.





### Pedestrian/Bike Infrastructure

Providing pedestrians and cyclists with the proper infrastructure (such as lane stripping and signage) needed for safe commuting is an essential component in strengthening street corridors.



### Neighborhood Identity

Incorporating vegetated buffers and seating spaces alongside of streets encourages people to enjoy a neighborhood from outside of a car, and helps to build a strong neighborhood identity.



### Street Enhancement

Developing a more deliberate separation between streets and sidewalks through the use of curbs, plantings, and signage increases the safety and appeal of pedestrian travel along streets.



### Art/Mural Projects

Two-dimensional art murals add aesthetic interest to blank walls, and also offer opportunities to incorporate culture and history into shared community spaces.



### Signage/Way-Finding

Adding signage and way-finding mechanisms that promote alternative forms of transportation (such as bicycling and walking), as well as highlight local points of interest (such as the L.A. River) help create stronger street corridors.



# Community Garden Atwater Village

Taking advantage of an underutilized site on the east side of the Los Angeles River at the end of Silver Lake Boulevard adjacent to the Department of Water and Power (DWP) Substation, a half-acre plot of land has great potential to become a new space for the Atwater Village neighborhood. Voiced by the community through the series of Placemaking Workshops, the desire to have a community garden was a standout among recommended projects. In addition to improving physical and psychological health, a community garden can help foster community identity and spirit, increase access to and develop a sense of community ownership and stewardship for the Los Angeles River, and provide a unique opportunity for the youth of the community to learn about where food comes from as well as increase their knowledge of the environment.

Bordering the Los Angeles River and the Eastside Trail Extension, the community garden will provide a natural access point to the river which can be enhanced by increasing the line of sight from the street and framing the view of the river. This will allow connectivity from the Silver Lake Boulevard to the Los Angeles River East Side Trail Addition.

During the first phase of the project, the community garden site will provide lots (raised planter beds) to be used by the community, interpretive signage, composting bins, seating areas, appropriate lighting, as well as a community gathering space to be located within the garden. Later phases could expand the community space beyond the extents of the garden to include a grander access point to the river integrating a series of stepped terraces to treat stormwater, create habitat and demarcate a new gateway to the Atwater Village neighborhood at the edge of the river.

Beyond promoting a more localized foodshed, where food

is grown and consumed within a closer context, the garden will serve as an important regenerative community building mechanism by consistently involving new and long-term residents, and encouraging their reinvestment in shared community public spaces. Overall the quality of life is anticipated to improve as people develop a closer connection with nature, especially children, and the space provides Atwater Village a new and distinctive gateway to the Los Angeles River.

The proposed project also provides opportunity to integrate stormwater management both within the garden during the first phases of the development and later target larger infrastructure by strategically integrating measures at the stormwater outlet. These larger measures could combine ideas of rain gardens and other water filtration techniques with terracing that can double as a community gathering space and access point to the East Side Trail Extension.

In addition to the community garden and subsequent phases that allow for revitalizing the length of Silver Lake Boulevard and access to the river, this project will lay the groundwork for more community gardens and pocket parks to take advantage of interstitial spaces that lack formal programming occurring throughout the NELA Riverfront District, offering opportunities for new park or green space development and providing green relief throughout the district. Furthermore the larger scale stormwater mitigation could catalyze more projects of this scale along the edge of the river and throughout the watershed.



Fig. 74

CONCEPT DESIGN:

OVERALL EXTENT:

Silver Lake Boulevard

SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT LOCATION:

Silver Lake Boulevard with a portion of the DWP Substation to create a combined half acre plot of land.

LOGISTICS:

*Establishing Easements:* Acquire access to adjacent City-owned DWP.

*Integrating with other Street Improvements:* Coordinate with other planning efforts that affect streets, mobility, healthy living, and open spaces.

GENERAL COST:

Small < 1 Mil  
Medium 1 - 5 Mil  
Large >5 Mil

TOTAL PROJECT: Small-Large

PHASE I: Small  
PHASE II: Small  
PHASE III: Large

BENEFITS:

Provide space for a fresh, local food resource.

Foster the development of a community identity, community interaction and offering a focal point for community.

Promote healthy lives, sustainable environmental practices and place-based education.

*Signage Way-finding Effort:* Expand and increase current efforts to identify access points and trails along the river. Incorporate interpretive signage within and/or adjacent to the community garden with a focus on food, habitat and or stormwater.

*Connect with Adjacent and Nearby Public Spaces:* Spur a corridor connection through Atwater Village.

PHASE I:  
Acquire permits, clean up the site and install garden planters.

PHASE II:  
Install elements (lighting, seating, planting, signage, etc.) in garden and create formal access to the Los Angeles River.

Capture and clean stormwater before releasing it into river preventing it from becoming runoff.

Transform underutilized land into a community amenity and shared space.

*Expand Existing and Proposed Access Routes:* Link Act as a gateway to the Los Angeles River East Side Trail.

*Health and Safety:* Provide Amenities that promote increased outdoor activity and environmental awareness.

PHASE III:  
Create series of river terraces at street end to open access and implement engineered planted filtration forebays to capture and treat stormwater drainage before being released into the Los Angeles River.

RELATED RESOURCES:

PLANNING POLICY, FUNDING, & ADDITIONAL STUDIES

Great Streets Los Angeles Action Plan  
Green Streets Initiatives  
Green Infrastructure City Initiatives  
Greenway 2020  
People Streets

PRECEDENTS IN LA:

Marsh Park  
Oros Green St.  
Ed Reyes Park

PRECEDENTS IN LA:

Marsh Park  
Oros Green Street  
Ed Reyes Park

PRECEDENTS OUTSIDE LA:

Cadillac Urban Gardens  
Chemin-Qui-Marche Lookout  
Grapes Hill Community Garden  
Nemours Community Garden  
North Green Community Gardens  
Red River Community Garden  
San Jose Riverfront  
Taqwa Community Farm

River Street Ends

Numerous neighborhood streets deadend at the banks of the Los Angeles River. Many of these streets, especially along the east side of the River, lack direct entryways and/or access points to the parks and/or trails along the Los Angeles River.



Leftover Land

Unused and/or underutilized sites are sprinkled throughout the NELA Study Area, especially in areas along the Los Angeles River. Such interstitial spaces lack formal programming and therefore use to the surrounding communities.



Stormwater Streets

Streets in L.A. are designed as stormdrains that help funnel water from surrounding land into the Los Angeles River and eventually out to the Ocean. The movement of such stormwater is highly visible in some streets that act as larger catch basins for



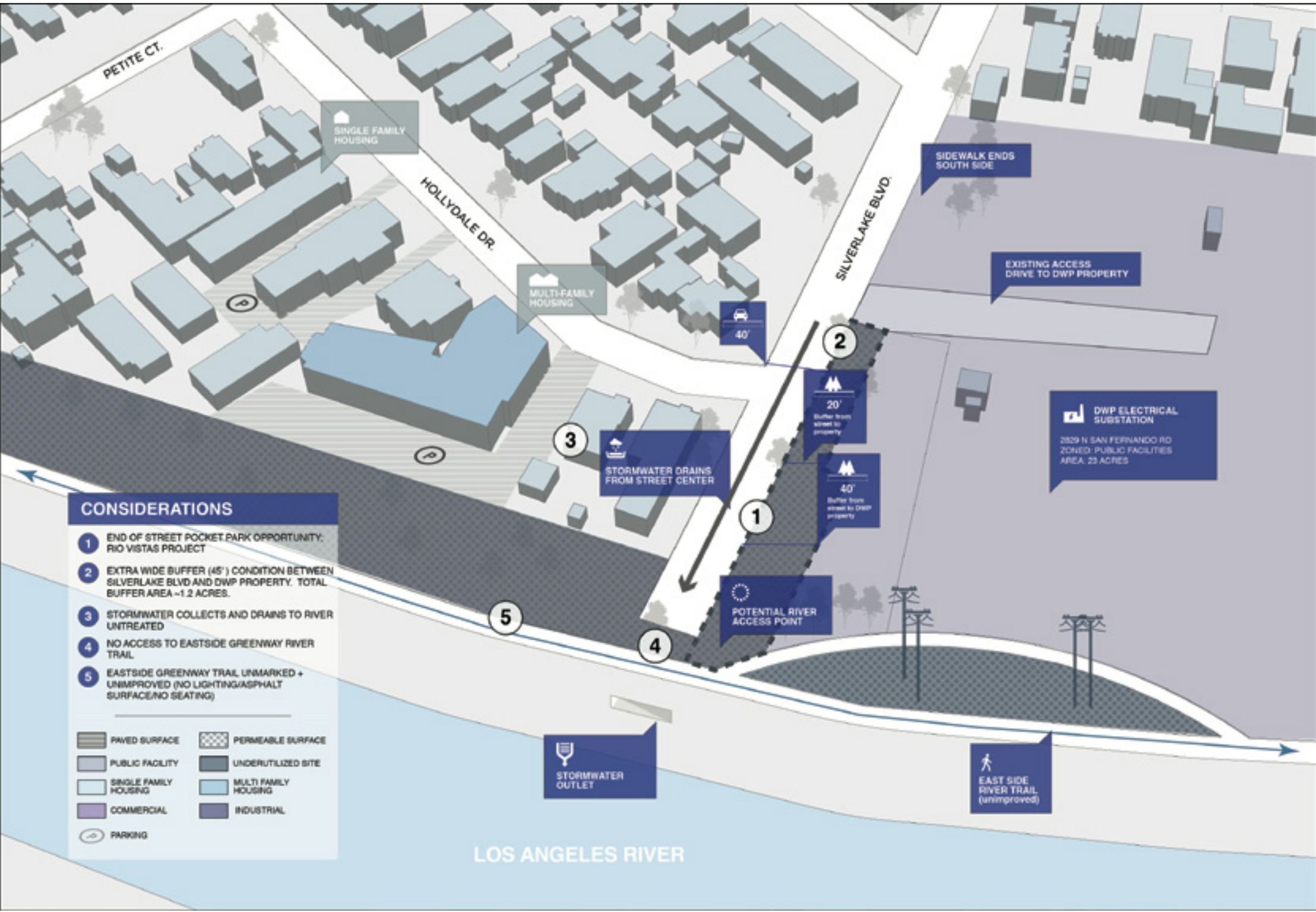
Atypical Street

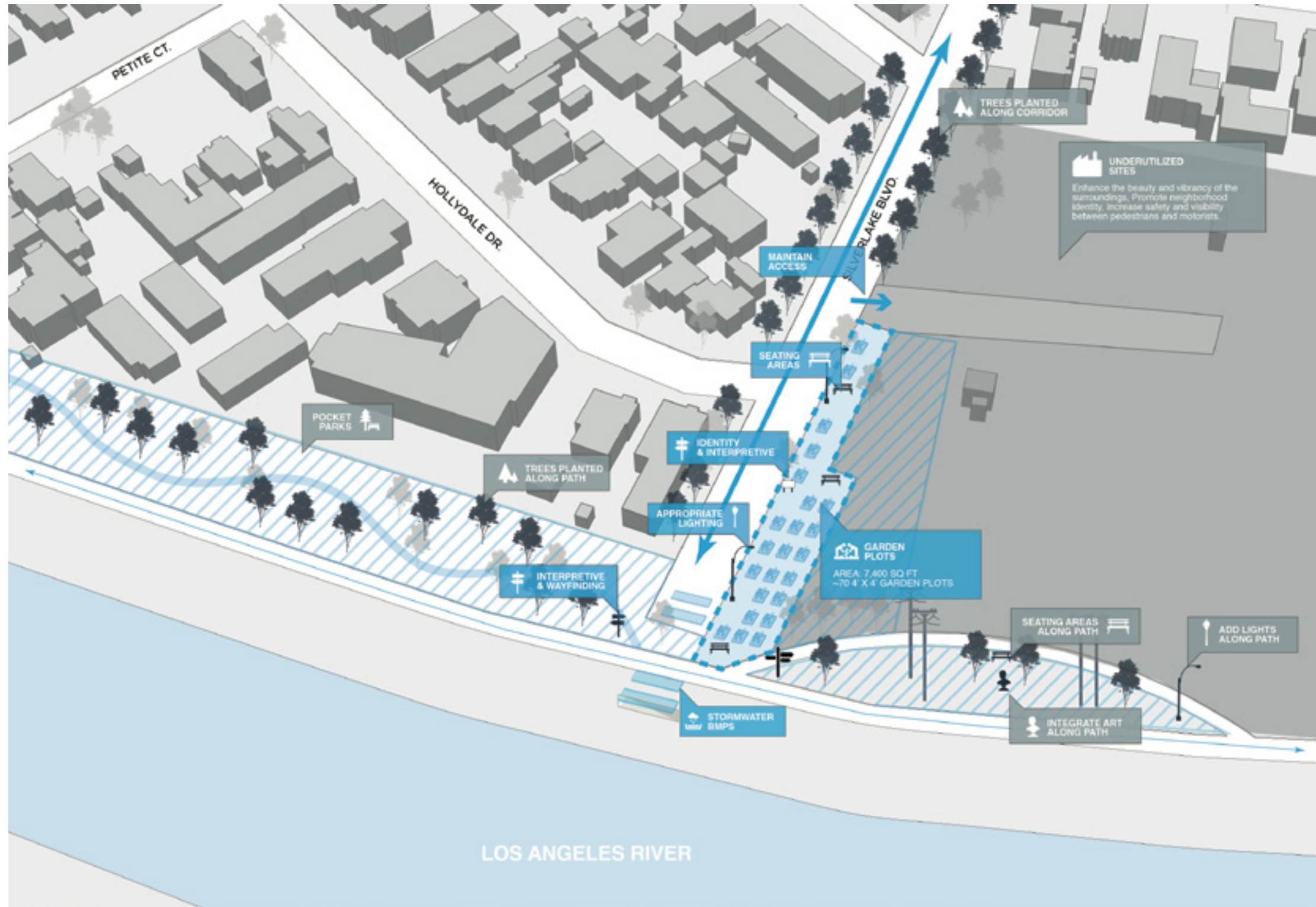
Cutting diagonally through the neighborhoods on the east side of the Los Angeles River, Silver Lake Boulevard is an anomaly among the typical urban grid.



Eastside Greenway

A maintenance road for service vehicles runs along the eastern bank of the Los Angeles River, offering informal opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to access and traverse the River.





### Rio Vistas

Opening up deadends of streets and converting them into functional access points and entryways to the L.A. River increases connectivity opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists, and provides additional open and/or green space.



### Productive Spaces

Even leftover land and small sites can be converted into useful communal common grounds. Populating vacant lots and underutilized sites with flexible and/or temporary programming, such as growing gardens for food production is one such strategy.



### Green Streets

Diverting the flow of stormwater through vegetated bioswales located alongside streets aids in the filtration of pollutants, increases local wildlife habitat, and simultaneously beautifies neighborhoods by increasing the amount of planted garden space.



### Character Building

The diagonal orientation of Silver Lake Boulevard offers a unique opportunity to establish a main transportation corridor that simultaneously fosters a vibrant neighborhood community.



### Formal Access

Creating a more formalized path for pedestrians and cyclists along the L.A. River (incorporating vegetation, lighting, seating, and signage) will increase recreation and open space opportunities for Angelenos.

# Glassell Park

## Trails to River from Hills

A new urban trail system connecting the local hills to the river will provide the Glassell Park neighborhood with a valuable amenity to enable residents and visitors to access their immediate natural resources. This network will increase access, pedestrian activity along existing streets, and a more viable local economy to businesses throughout the neighborhood. Community members will have a more enriched experience traversing between natural realms, while local businesses will benefit from their proximity to the adjacent to the trail network and supporting places for outdoor gatherings, rest stops and points of interest to take advantage of increased pedestrian traffic.

The multi-use public trail system will extend from the Los Angeles River funneling streams of pedestrian traffic via Division St. up to the hills of Mount Washington, with secondary paths weaving through the neighborhood of Glassell Park, followed by new pathways moving through Cypress Park connecting to existing trails in Elyria Canyon Park.

The two most challenging portions to make the connection from the hills to the river include: 1) crossing the two major North/South street corridors – Cypress Boulevard and San Fernando Road and 2) implementing a vertical grade separated crossing over the rail corridor to access the Eastside embankment of the river. Currently, it is difficult to traverse this area as a pedestrian or cyclist.

The urban trail proposes to utilize a “pedway” and a “bikeway” to support a safe walkable and bikable route to

the river by redesigning the public right-of-way (shoulder of road, utility easements, road bridges) to accommodate active transportation. The neighborhood trail network would feature a way-finding system to navigate to regional and local parks and feature selective locations for streetscape enhancements including tree and landscape plantings, distinctive paving, and interpretive signage to distinguish the varying local biomes.

These biomes exist as a series of topographic plant communities that include the existing Pine stands topping the hills, Oak woodlands in the transitional foothills, Sycamore groves in the canyons, and Poplar and Willow drifts that fill the riparian plains of the River. Ecotones, or transition between biomes, will be highlighted along the trails distinguishing species from the local California plant communities.

Along major arteries and other appropriate regions in this greenway system, stormwater filtration strategies (stormwater bump outs, stormwater planters, and rain gardens on larger swaths of land) will improve the overall stormwater quality as it makes its way to the river. In addition to providing a unique asset to the neighborhood, the trail network will provide an enhanced safe access to schools, encourage residents to walk or bike to school, work or connect with transit, and support the revitalization and health of the greater Los Angeles River Ecosystem.

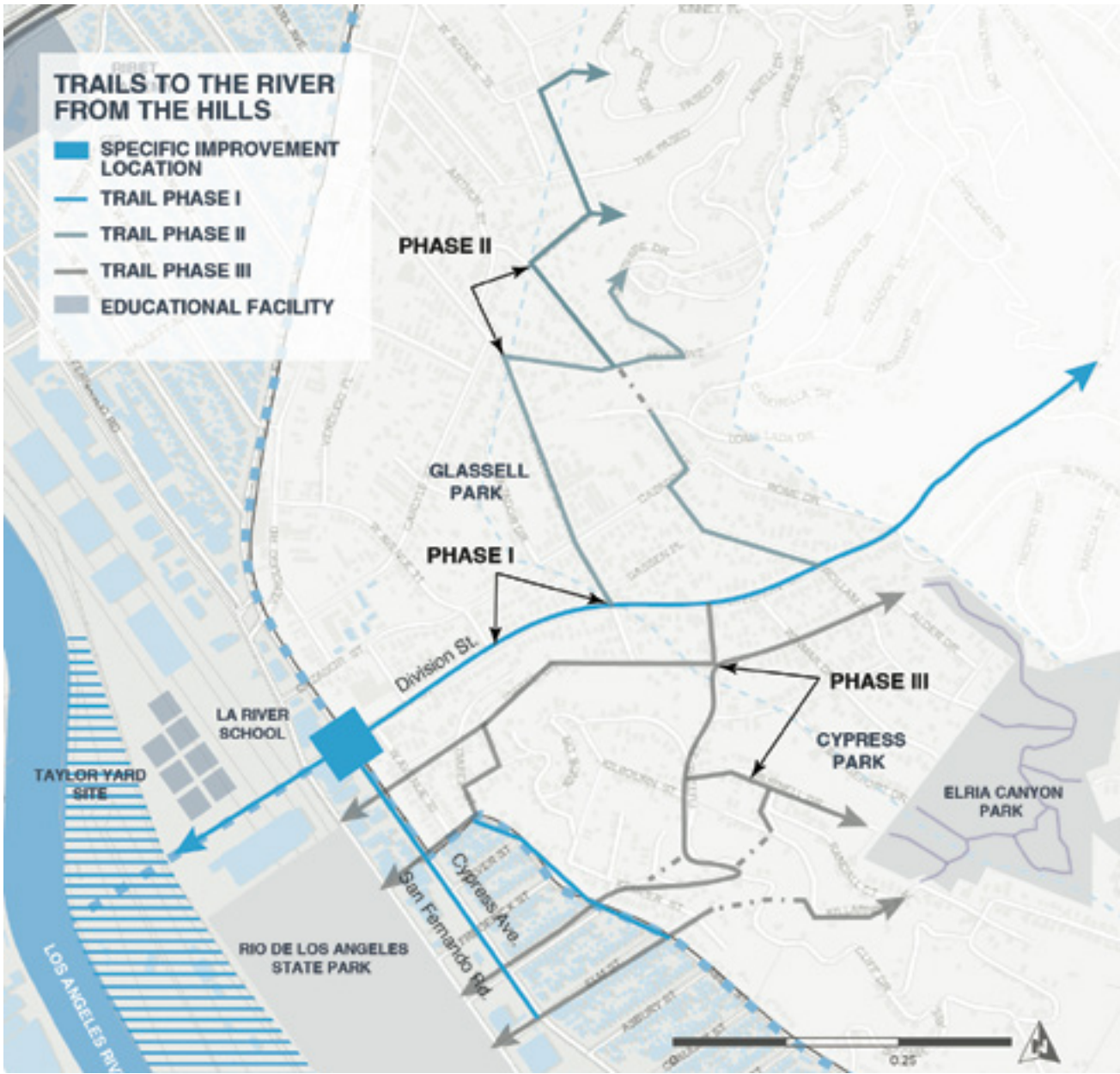


Fig. 75

CONCEPT DESIGN:

OVERALL EXTENT:

10+ Miles long

SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT LOCATION:

Division Street at San Fernando Road and Cypress Avenue

BENEFITS:

Connect hillside neighborhoods to the Los Angeles River via a safe walkable path that improves access, mobility & safety through a well identified and accessible route.

Enhance identity of the neighborhood trail system incorporating amenities including tree and landscape plantings, distinctive paving, signage capitalizing on the local ecologies.

Incorporate a stormwater filtration system along the trails that reinforce trail identity.

LOGISTICS:

*Establishing Easements:* Acquire access to adjacent properties beginning the intersection of Division Street and San Fernando Boulevard, followed by utility owned ROWs, road shoulders within the public right-of-way, in fill developments, undeveloped land, and parks.

*Integrating with other Street Improvements:* Coordinate with other planning efforts that affect trails, streets and open spaces.

*Connect with Adjacent and Nearby Public Spaces:* Extend the trail along streets and sidewalks to connect to open spaces.

*Expand Existing and Proposed Access Routes:* Link to existing Trail Networks and neighborhood parks and nodes.

*Signage Way-finding Effort:* Expand and increase current efforts to identify access points and trails along the river. Incorporate wayfinding and interpretive signage at significant locations along the trail.

*Health and Safety:* Provide Amenities that promote accessibility throughout the day and night.

GENERAL COST:

Small < 1 Mil  
Medium 1 - 5 Mil  
Large >5 Mil

TOTAL PROJECT: Small-Medium

PHASE I: Medium  
PHASE II: Small  
PHASE III: Large

PHASE I:

Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and crossings at the intersections of Division Street at San Fernando and Cypress Avenue.

PHASE II:

Implement trail way-finding system and trail elements including ecotone plantings and interpretative signage.

PHASE III:

Install series of stormwater BMPs throughout neighborhood in connection with trail system. Incorporate new street/trail elements (lighting, seating, garden plots, planting, signage, pathways etc.) in select areas.

RELATED RESOURCES:

PLANNING POLICY, FUNDING, & ADDITIONAL STUDIES

Great Streets Los Angeles Action Plan  
Green Streets Initiatives

PRECEDENTS IN LA:

PRECEDENTS OUTSIDE LA:

Fan Pier Public Green and Streetscape  
West Toronto Railpath

### Awkward Access

Pedestrian opportunities in Glassell Park are limited, and therefore often unsafe and undesirable. Accessing the Los Angeles River from Glassell Park is especially challenging, as few streets and/or sidewalks connect to the banks and trails.



### Blank Canvas

Street corridors are lined with vast expanses of industrial and commercial buildings. Such close-sitting, blank facades create a feeling of enclosure for pedestrians and automobiles.



### Undefined Identity

Although Glassell Park is very unique, little in the landscape shows the identity of the neighborhood or highlights that streets, houses, and storefronts in the area are in close proximity to the Los Angeles River.



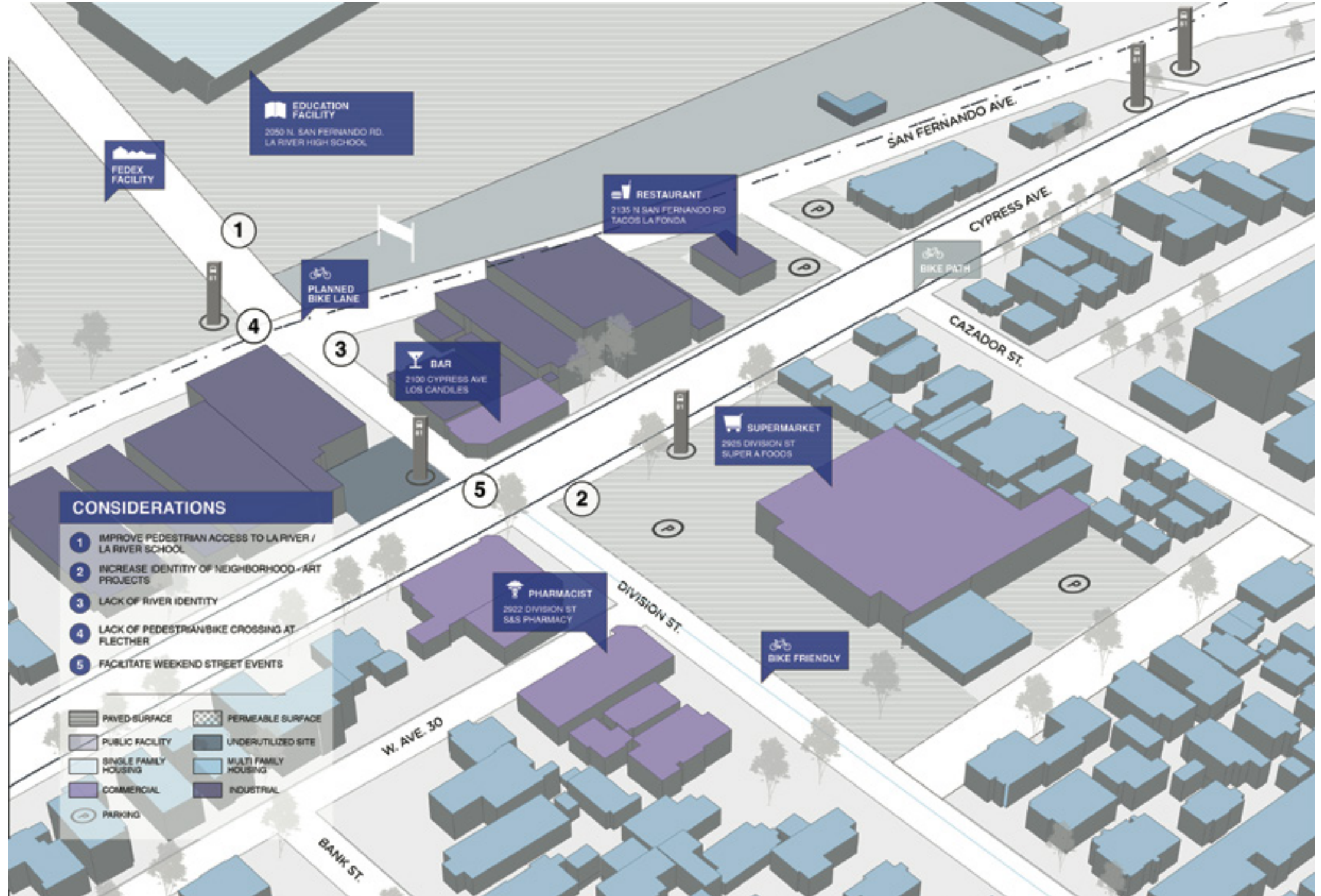
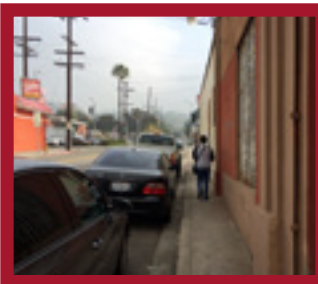
### Hillside Condition

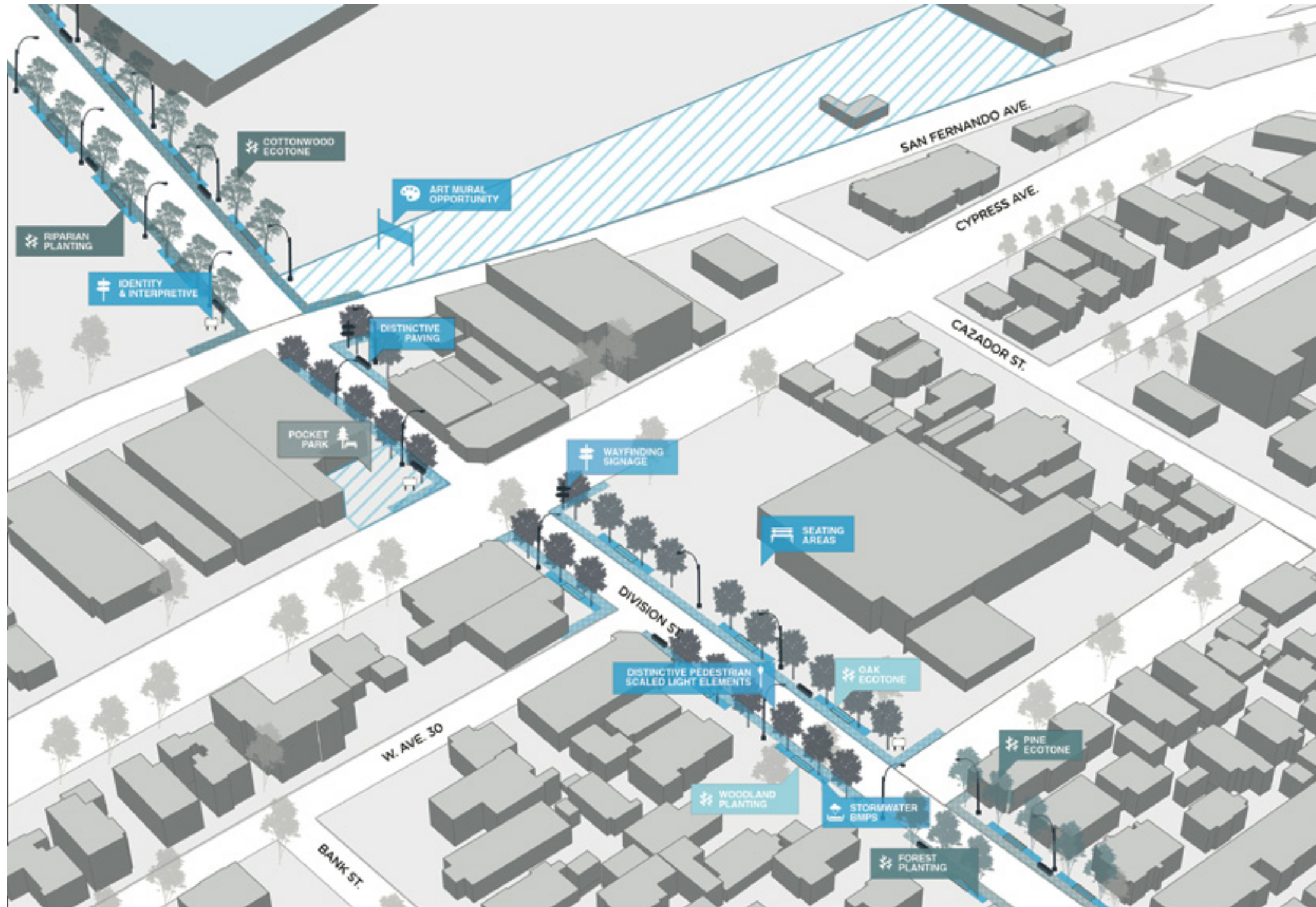
Many arterial streets in Glassell Park are woven in and around the hillsides, but lack safe and/or inviting accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists.



### Open Space

Numerous sites in the Glassell Park neighborhood have minimal or fluctuating usage, such as parking lots.





### Making Connections

Providing pedestrians and cyclists with a safer and more inviting environment can be as easy as delineating special zones and re-stripping crosswalks to have a more visible and playful appearance.



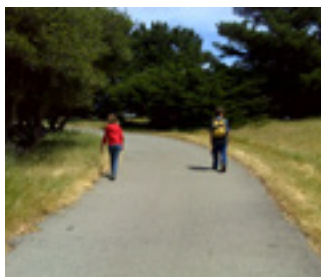
### Art/Mural Opportunity

Art murals and installations can be an immediate and relatively cost-effective way to beautify blank walls, such as the exterior facades of buildings. Adding such interest will increase the attractiveness of the neighborhood for all passersby.



### A River Identity

The Los Angeles River should be showcased as a main feature and recreational resource in Glassell Park, helping to define the unique identity of and opportunities within the neighborhood.



### Hillside Connections

Developing bicycle and pedestrian paths and amenities along existing streets in Glassell Park will promote the use of alternative modes of transportation, and also provide safer routes to the Los Angeles River.



### Flexible Event Space

Sites that have fluctuating or low usage patterns, such as parking lots, offer opportunities for programming temporary events during non-peak hours of use.

## Elysian Valley Under Pass Gateway

This project looks to transform the portion of Riverside Drive that passes beneath Interstate 5 as well as looks to utilize portions of the public right-of-way and conditional use of adjacent vacant parcels to work comprehensively as both a new gateway to the neighborhood and provide needed community serving uses.

The Interstate 5 and Highway 2 have created a common instance of deeply shaded and inhospitable moments for pedestrian and bicyclists to pass through. The intent is to treat these underpasses as opportunities for art that lead to safer conditions but also express the varying identity and character found within this portion of Elysian Valley, also known as ‘Frogtown’. As a companion effort, the project will look to integrate the much needed retail and community services to amend the historically unbalanced land use designations as part of this district.

To increase a sense of comfort, safety, and level of interest near and around the underpass vertical landscape elements, lighting, navigation through the underpass, way-finding signage, clear sight-lines and visual connections to overall network will be incorporated into the site. Further enhancements would include soliciting community-driven art projects beneath the underpasses, distinguished tree plantings and distinctive paving to transform the existing impacts caused by the freeways/highways and contribute to the identity of the neighborhood.

Providing a well-identified and accessible route will also improve bicycle and pedestrian accessibility, mobility and safety providing connection in and out of the neighborhood of Elysian as well as accessing another entry point to the

River. The addition of a DASH bus line will also increase public transport ridership and mobility around Elysian Valley and neighboring communities.

In order to transform underutilized spaces into vital places that highlight local assets, spur rejuvenation and serve common needs an alternative pop-up retail is suggested in the space adjacent to the Public Storage Facility. This could include portable or temporary local entrepreneurial opportunities such as an outdoor market and/or café. As a recommended public private partnership, these spaces could be co facilitated by Public Storage connecting private sponsorship to opportunities for local entrepreneurs to help revive our communities’ shared places, from parks and parking lots to downtown corridors which could at times (week nights or weekends) spill out into the Public Storage parking lot.

As part of a longer term transition, the identified opportunity areas should be planned for the eventual contribution to the neighborhood as locally serving retail and community facilities that are currently absent. It is important to note that several community members, including representatives from the Elysian Valley Neighborhood Council, have stressed that the existing infrastructure of Elysian Valley is reaching, or has already reached capacity and additional growth will stress the system and compromise the integrity of the neighborhood. With that, it is the intention of this proposed project to put forward improvements that can contribute to improve the identity of the neighborhood as well as provide much needed community resources within the neighborhood.

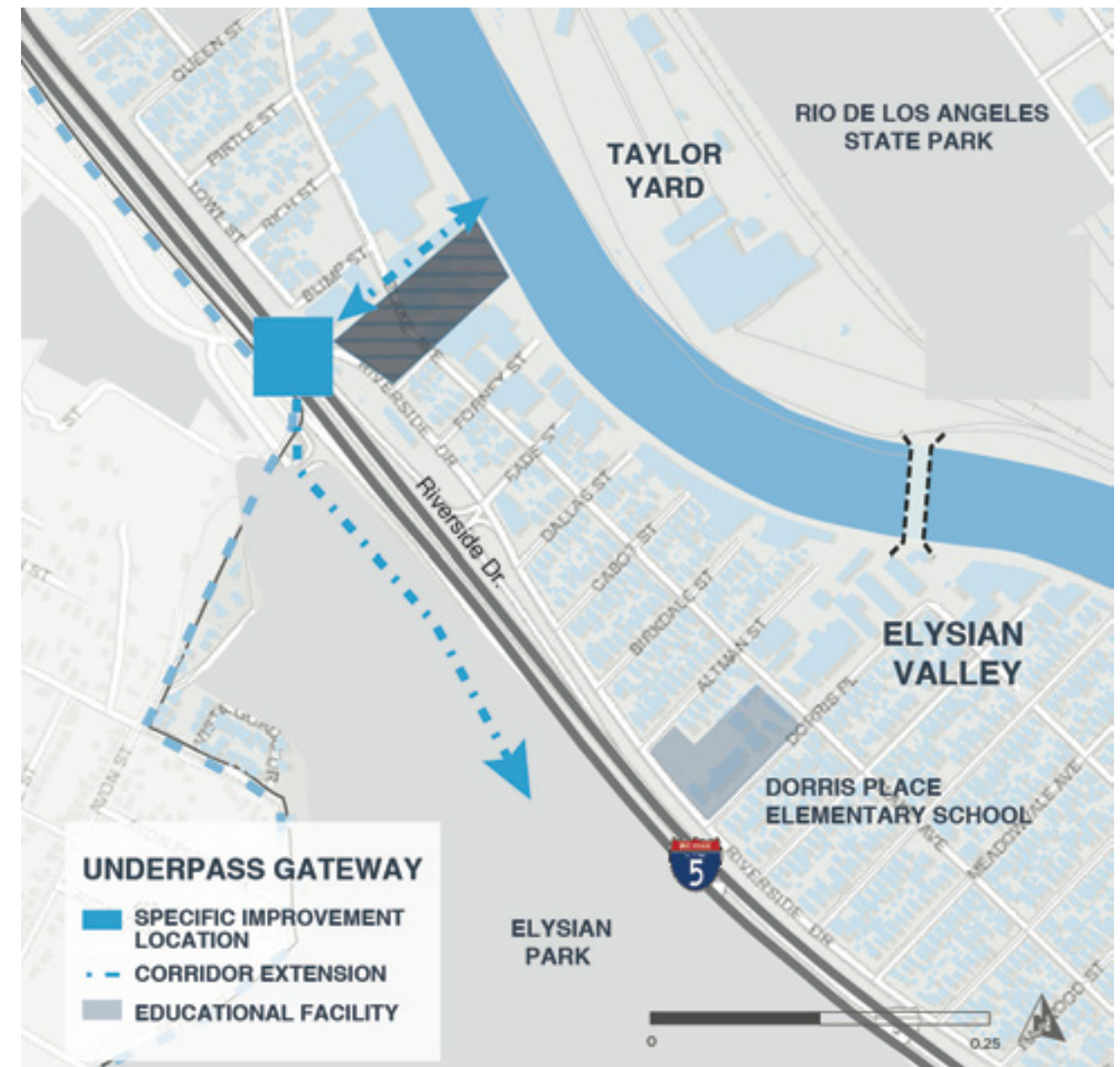


Fig. 76

CONCEPT DESIGN:

OVERALL EXTENT: 1/2 Mile Area

SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT LOCATION:

Rverside Drive Underpass between Gail / Blimp Streets.

BENEFITS:

Improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility & safety providing a well-identified and accessible route and convenient connection between Elysian Valley and Riverside Drive/Elysian Park.

Enhance identity of neighborhood via signage, way-finding elements and amenities including art, plantings and distinctive paving.

Create opportunity for commercial/retail development.

Create opportunity for community art project beneath the underpass.

LOGISTICS:

*Establishing Easements:* Acquire Access to Adjacent Properties Easements (city and private owned lands, extending ROWS, initiating public/private partnerships)

*Integrating with other Street Improvements:* Coordinate with other Planning efforts that affect Trails, Streets and Open Spaces.

*Connect with Adjacent and Nearby Public Spaces:* Extend the trail along streets and sidewalks to connect to open spaces.

*Expand Existing and Proposed Access Routes:* Link to existing trail networks in Elysian Park as well as the Los Angeles Rievr Trail.

*Signage Way-finding Effort:* Incorporate way-finding and interpretive signage along the corridor. Expand and increase current efforts to identify access points and trails along the river.

*Health and Safety:* Provide Amenities that promote accessibility throughout the day and night.

GENERAL COST:

Small < 1 Mil  
Medium 1 - 5 Mil  
Large >5 Mil

TOTAL PROJECT: Medium

PHASE I: Small  
PHASE II: Medium  
PHASE III: Medium

PHASE I:  
Acquire permits, implement gateway art project on Riverside Drive within underpass space.

PHASE II:  
Acquire permits and/or conditional use of vacant parcel (owned by Public Storage) to utilize site for temporary structures to provide community uses/facilities.

PHASE III:  
Improve greater extent of Riverside Drive by installing street elements (lighting, seating, garden plots, planting) and acquire conditional easements through properties fronting the Los Angeles River furnished with signage and improved pathways.

RELATED RESOURCES:

PLANNING POLICY, FUNDING, & ADDITIONAL STUDIES

METRO  
Great Streets Los Angeles Action Plan  
Green Streets Initiatives  
Green Infrastructure City Initiatives  
People Streets

PRECEDENTS IN LA:

West Side Los Angeles River Trail

PRECEDENTS OUTSIDE LA:

Underpass Park in downtown Toronto, Cumbernauld Underpass  
Seart Park (Mt Wellington, NZ), Jose Marti Park, Miami

Gateway

The underpass junction near Riverside Drive and the I-5 freeway is a currently underutilized and relatively unannounced route between Elysian Park and the Elysian Valley neighborhood.



Vacant Site

Land that is currently not utilized exists throughout Elysian Valley, associated with industrial facilities in the area.



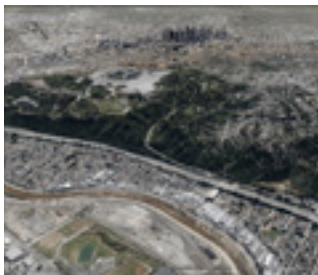
River Access

Numerous streets in the Elysian Valley neighborhood deadend into the Los Angeles River, however, many of these potential access points remain inaccessible due to private land, industrial uses, gates, and walls.



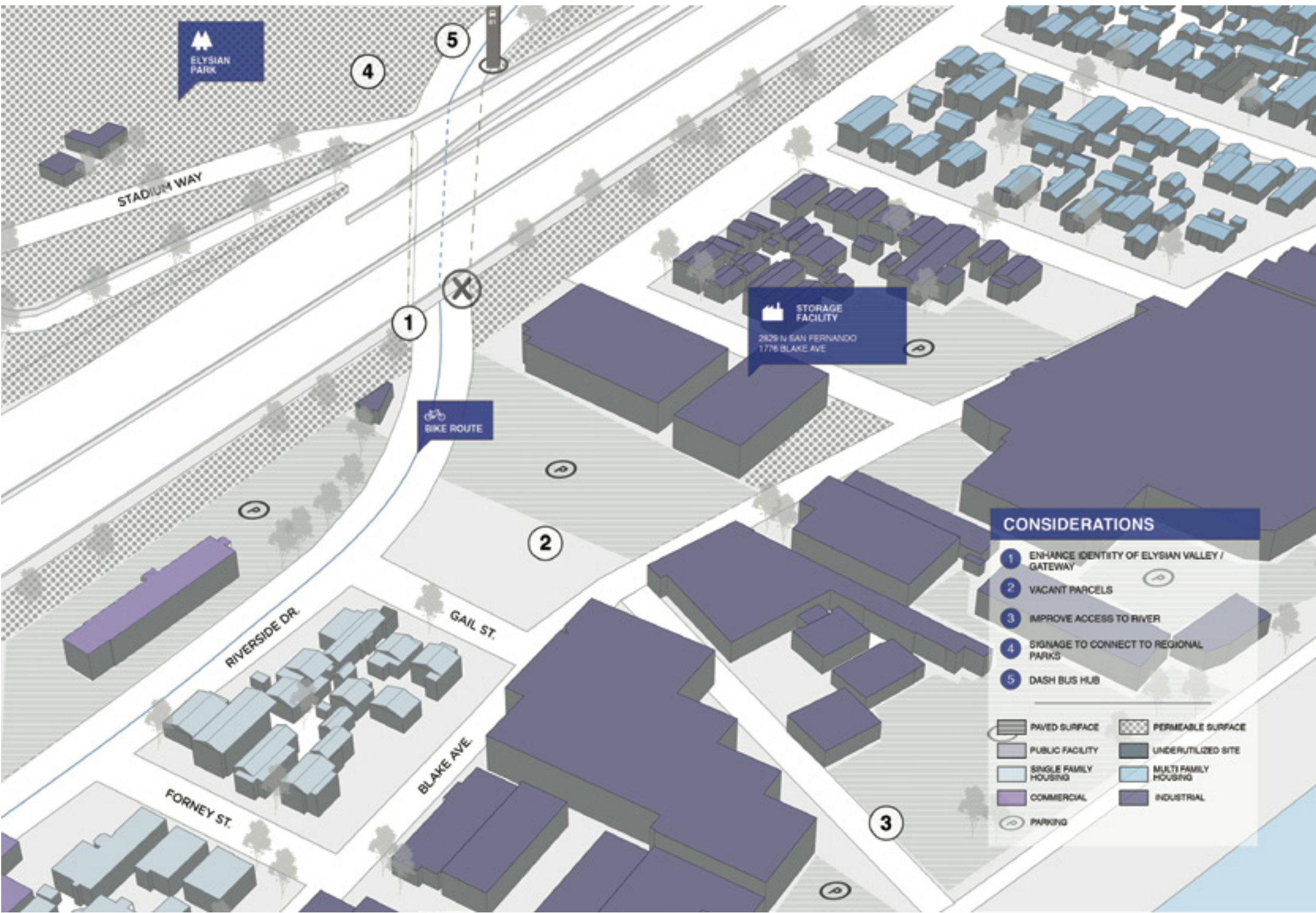
Regional Parks

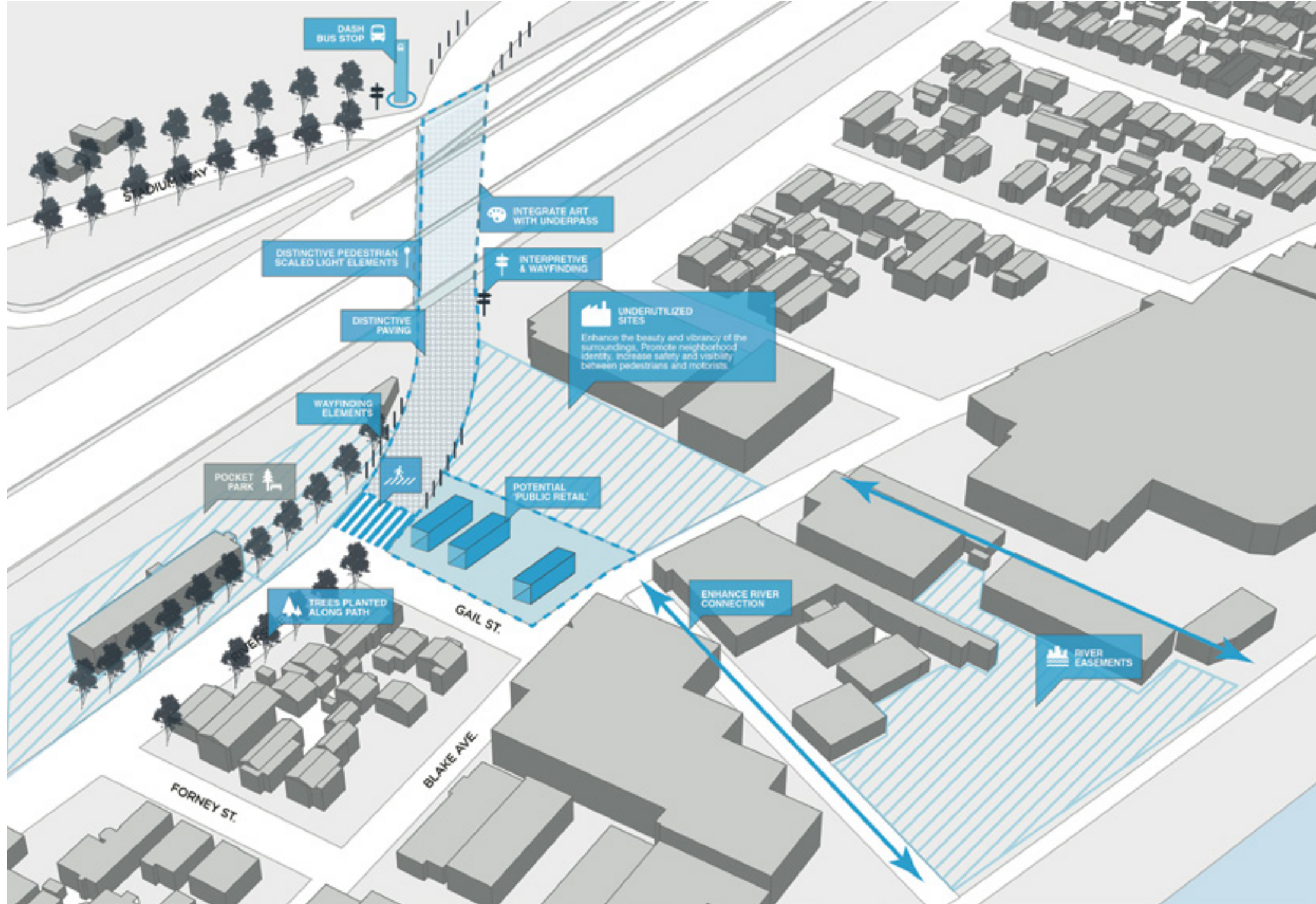
The Elysian Valley neighborhood is home to one of the largest parks in Los Angeles: Elysian Park. Access to this outdoor space from the residential neighborhoods, however, is challenging due to the I-5 freeway and other major



Riverside Identity

Riverside Drive runs parallel to the Los Angeles River (hence its name), although from the current condition of it, this close proximity is hidden from those driving by.





### Elysian Landing

The Riverside Drive underpass will be transformed into a creative space with lighting, public art, and landscaping enhancements that establish a gateway to the neighborhood and reinforce a sense of arrival to Elysian Valley.



### Interim Place(s)

Underutilized sites in Elysian Valley, such as vacant land and parking lots, can be converted into interim places for the community through the use of temporary and moveable structures like shipping containers.



### River Connection

Developing a clear connection route to the river via a community open space and paths will help to provide residents in and around Elysian Valley with an opportunity to connect with and bring more life to the Los Angeles River.



### More Fun Ahead

Providing clear way-finding and interpretive signage that illuminates the proximity to and interests points in Elysian Park is an essential part of creating a more enhanced connection across the neighborhood of Elysian Valley.



### Riverside Redeaux

Improving Riverside Drive through site amenities and stormwater strategies will serve as an extension of the underpass gateway, connection to the Los Angeles River and symbol for the Elysian Valley community.

## Cypress Park Plaza/Park Space

Situated on the south side of N. Figueroa Street, the one block length of Cypress Avenue is exceptionally wide – measuring approximately 90 feet curb to curb and 112 feet within the right-of-way. As this section of the Avenue only serves vehicles accessing adjacent properties and limited through-traffic connecting to the small neighborhood street of Arroyo Secco Avenue, it is exceptionally oversized from a traffic capacity perspective. By redesigning the street section, the project proposes to convert this additional space to be utilized for events and eventually become a permanent public park space.

The site of the proposed plaza/park serves as a gateway to the neighborhood commercial corridor along Figueroa Street, demarcating the transition from the double-sided commercial corridor to a more informal mixed commercial residential area. The site is also positioned between two educational institutions, Nightingale Middle School directly across on Figueroa and Loreto Street Elementary School at the end of Loreto Street. Two additional existing features play a nimportant role in the convergence of pedestrians into this site – the pedestrian bridge that crosses the Arroyo Seco Highway (110) and the pedestrian tunnel, one block east on Figueroa, which has recently reopened as a cultural exhibition space with the support of local community.

The new plaza/park space would provide immediate access to open space, creating a flexible space for events, and an opportunity to link together the commercial corridor with the residential neighborhood. In the initial phase, the space can be transformed almost immediately with basic improvements that could include repainting the asphalt to distinguish it as a pedestrian space, protect it from traffic with planter elements as a separation barrier and populate the space with moveable

street furniture to offer an outdoor setting for eating, gathering and weekend events like a neighborhood Farmer’s Market. With time and community input, a more formative installation can envision the space to be transformed into a simple raised median plaza/park, defined by canopy trees that shade more permanent plaza elements, play features and permeable spaces to gather and recreate. Furthering the local pulse of creative talent, distinctive site furniture and art installations could be solicited by artisans within the neighborhood, further distinguishing the community’s cultural expression.

Heightening the experience for pedestrians and cyclists through the inclusion of clearly placed bike paths and signage, increased seating, lighting, planting and multiple access points to the district including the pedestrian bridge that crosses Highway 110 would foster improved access to the space and support enhanced community activity of the new plaza; bolstering improved business to the commercial and retail properties along Figueroa Street.

Offering an open and flexible space for various events and capitalizing on the location of the already existing art underpass will increase the Cypress Park community’s sense of the commons, shared assets, and civic engagement. Different scales of events including a farmer’s market, art walk, food vendors, and bike ride launch point, the park would serve a variety of different users and needs from children and seniors to bicyclists. In addition the new defined space and subsequent programming could cull visitors for the other NELA neighborhoods as well as greater Los Angeles.



Fig. 77

CONCEPT DESIGN:

**OVERALL EXTENT:**  
West Avenue 26 from San Fernando to Pasadena. The right-of-way (ROW) condition south end of Cypress Avenue.

**BENEFITS:**  
Create a safe and vibrant walkable destination that promotes mobility and connections between neighborhoods.  
  
Provide access to healthy produce and food products.

Foster community interaction and encourage public activities.  
  
Promote commercial activities such as dining and vending when they do not interfere with safety and accessibility.

LOGISTICS:

*Establishing Easements:* Acquire Access and permits to property.  
  
*Integrating with other Street Improvements:* Coordinate with other planning efforts that affect streets, mobility, healthy living, and open spaces.

*Signage Way-finding Effort:* Expand and increase current wayfinding efforts and identify access points to the river.  
  
*Connect with Adjacent and Nearby Public Spaces:* Spur a corridor connection across overpass to Lincoln Heights

*Expand Existing and Proposed Access Routes:* Link Act as a gateway to the Los Angeles River East Side Trail.  
  
*Health and Safety:* Provide Amenities that promote increased outdoor activity and safe access to site.

Small < 1 Mil  
**GENERAL COST:**  
Large >5 Mil

**TOTAL PROJECT: SMALL - MEDIUM**  
PHASE I: Small  
PHASE II: Small  
PHASE III: Medium

**PHASE I:**  
Temporarily close down the street and setup weekend events like a Neighborhood Farmer’s Market or Cultural/Art’s Event.  
  
**PHASE II:**  
Demarcate street space with paint coat or other surface treatment, protect area with planter barriers and container trees.

**PHASE III:**  
Install permanent park space as raised central median, fully installed trees, and plaza elements (lighting, seating, planting.)

RELATED RESOURCES:

**PLANNING POLICY, FUNDING, & ADDITIONAL STUDIES**  
Great Streets Los Angeles Action Plan  
Green Streets Initiatives  
Green Infrastructure City Initiatives  
Greenway 2020

**PRECEDENTS IN LA:**  
Silverlake Plaza  
Hollywood  
Outdoor Living Rooms

**PRECEDENTS OUTSIDE LA:**  
Général de Gaulle Square and Saint Vaast Square  
Vancouver Farmers Market

## Lost Space

The size of main streets running through the Cypress Park neighborhood, such as Cypress Avenue and San Fernando Road, are extremely wide. Such streets lack center medians, bike lanes, and extensive vegetation along the sidewalk areas.



## Local Business

Street corridors throughout Cypress Park, such as N. Figueroa Street, are populated with local businesses that cater to the local community. From skate shops and bars to coffee shops and taco stands, the main streets are populated with local



## Art Movement

Exterior building walls and underground walkways have been transformed around Loreto Street into murals and art gallery spaces. Such community-led initiatives increase the aesthetic value and invitingness of such typically



credit: Nathan Solis

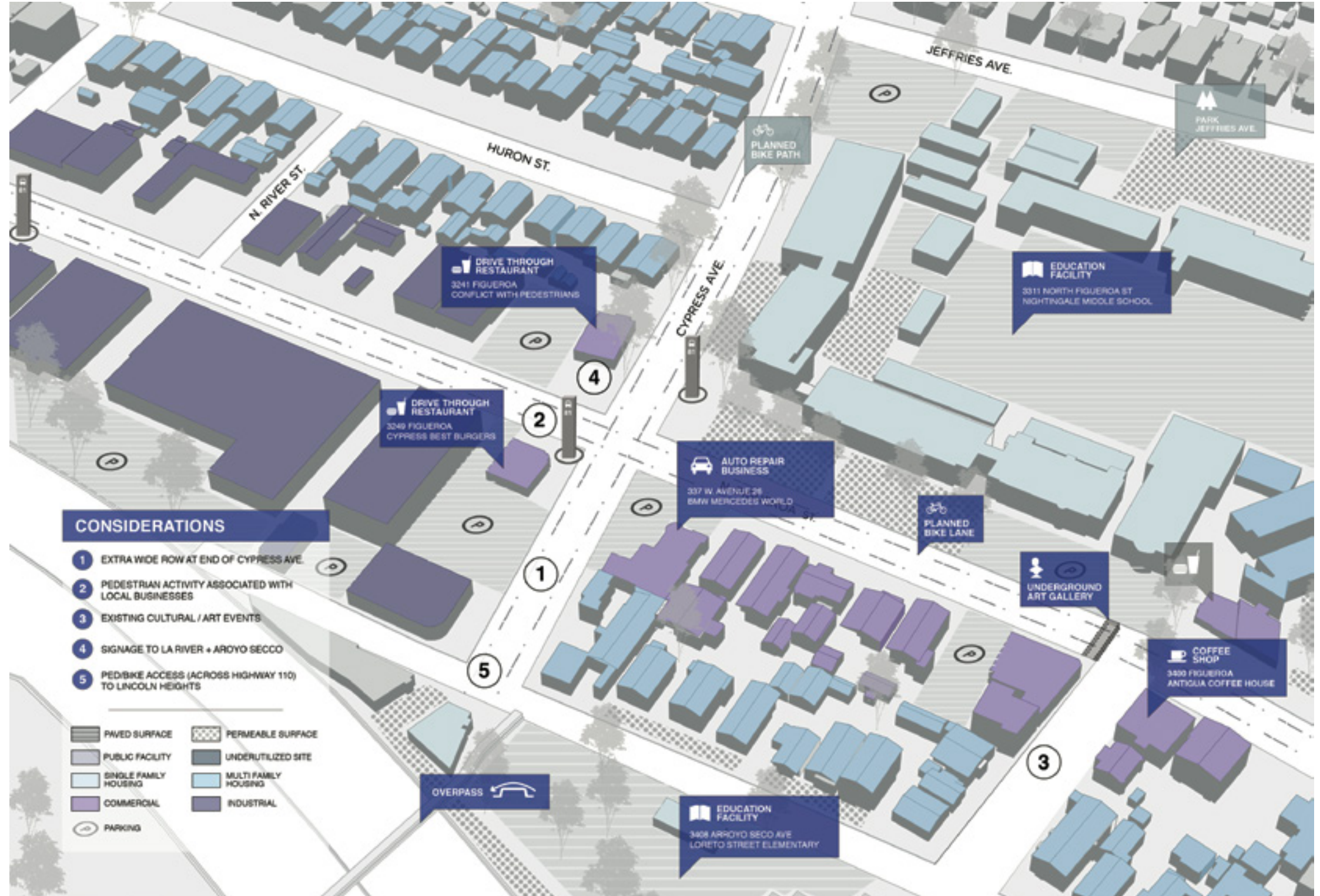
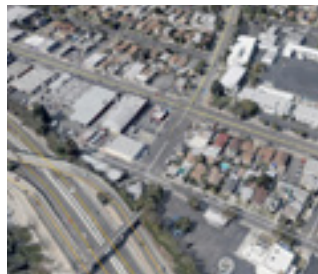
## River Connection

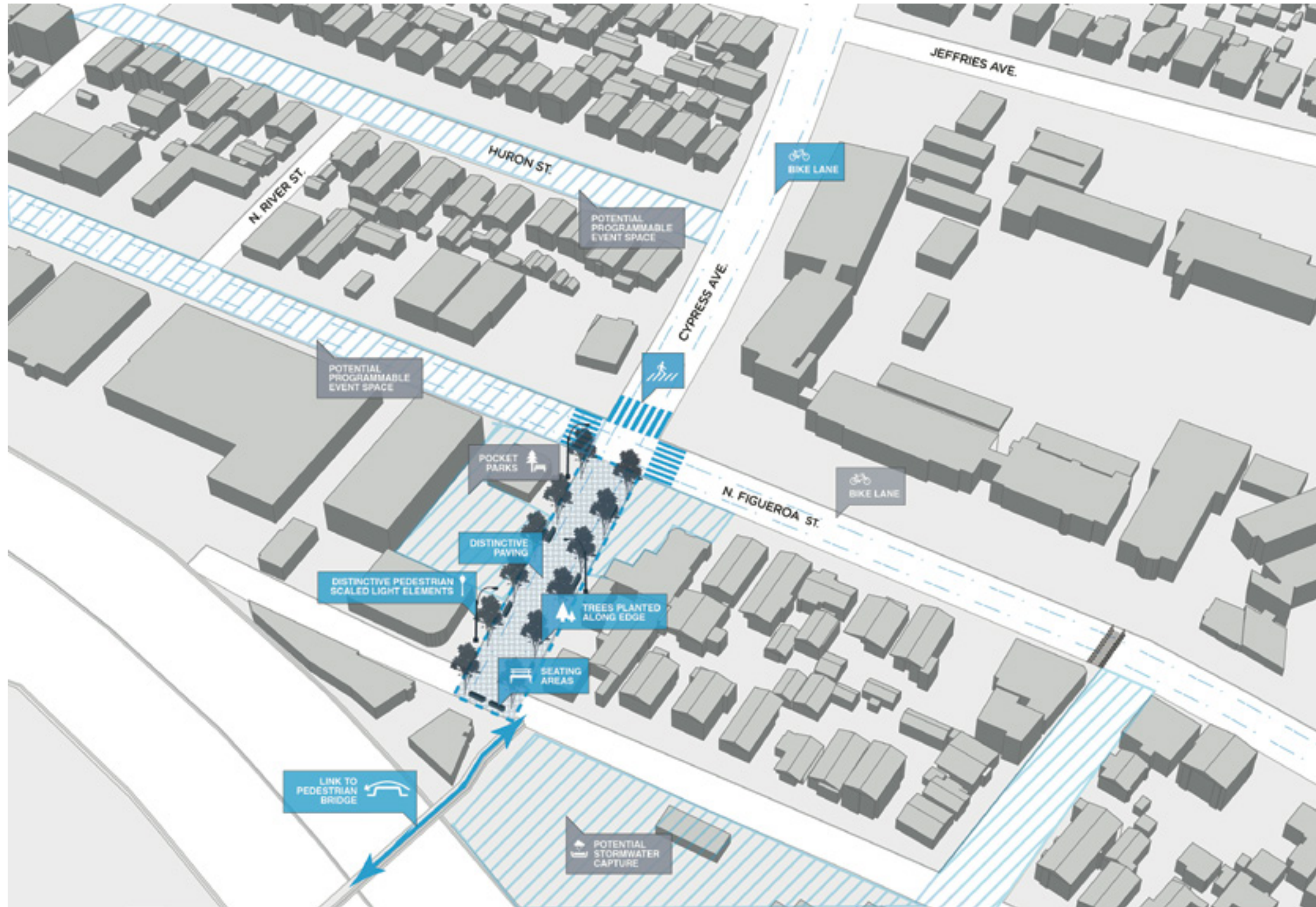
Formal signage orients and directs passers to nearby Metro Stations in Cypress Park. Additional way-finding signage, such as directional signage to the L.A. River and Arroyo Seco Streamway and associated trails is currently lacking.



## Neighborhood Center

This particular site is located at the core of the Cypress Park neighborhood, in close proximity to local businesses, schools, and the Arroyo Seco Streamway.





### Found Space

Portions of streets and other underutilized sites in the Cypress Park neighborhood can be converted into usable outdoor spaces, such as plazas and seating areas.



### Locally Represented

Continuing to populate street corridors in the area with local and neighborhood-oriented businesses will strengthen the Cypress Park community, and continue to make it a more desirable place for pedestrians and cyclists, as well.



### Event Place

Converting underutilized streets and sites into temporary gathering spaces will promote a more vibrant community in Cypress Park. Such places can be delineated with distinctive paving, lighting, plantings, and other pedestrian-scaled



### Proceed to River

Clear, formal way-finding signage should be incorporated throughout the Cypress Park community to direct passersby to the Los Angeles River and Arroyo Seco Parkways and the associated trails and recreational opportunities.



### Making Connections

Providing safe and accessible routes for a diverse range of transportation types throughout the Cypress Park neighborhood, via bike lanes and walking trails, will encourage a more active and connected community.

## Lincoln Heights Improve Access to Gold Line

In an effort to increase connectivity and improve the livability of the community, the transportation corridor must be integrated with transportation facilities and acknowledged as a major component of the public realm. The Lincoln Heights transportation corridor to the Gold Line can play an integral role in furthering the urban form of the neighborhood, future development patterns, and a sense of place.

The West Avenue 26 thoroughfare provides an opportunity to enhance multi-modal transportation and increase interconnections, particularly for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people with disabilities, while preserving the inherent natural and cultural characteristics of the neighborhood contributing to the character of neighborhood and business districts, strengthening their identity. In addition, this thoroughfare also offers the opportunity to balance transportation, community, and environmental needs.

The 4-block focus area around the Cypress/Lincoln Gold Line Station looks to improve the pedestrian experience and build from the areas recent patterns of growth as a livable street. Future enhancement look to improve identity of the neighborhood through a continuous streetscape efforts including street tree planting to provide shaded walkway, clearly designated bike lanes, safe crosswalks, and space for both permanent and temporary art/cultural installations.

While West Avenue 26 serves a large volume of traffic

connecting north and south through the neighborhood as well as access to Interstate 5 Freeway and the 110 Freeway, it has the capacity to become a livable street as well as continue to serve this capacity as a connector street. Presently, a few instances of life and vibrancy occur in an impromptu manner. A local food vendor sets up an impromptu roadside grill on Humboldt Street at Ave 26 serving tacos. On the weekend the corner is utilized as a neighborhood “yard sale” selling used household wares. Both of these unplanned uses greatly aid to bringing life to this particular stretch of the street; drawing passerbyers on foot, bike and car furthering the day and night activity, and consequently safety, throughout the week.

The identified opportunity areas, and in particular the large site across the Lincoln/Cypress Gold Line Station, could fulfill community resources that do not currently exist, offer employment opportunities accessible by Metro or can provide a an opportunity for mixed-use with residential above community serving retail, food and beverage, professional office, childcare and family health related services.

Extending further north, the connection to Figuerora Street is challenged by the underpass beneath the Gold Line as well as the series of fly-overs interconnecting the freeways, and finally the viaduct/overpass that connects over the Arroyo Seco Streamway and 110 Highway. Heading south, Avenue 26 connects in a five-point intersection with Pasadena Avenue and Daly Street;

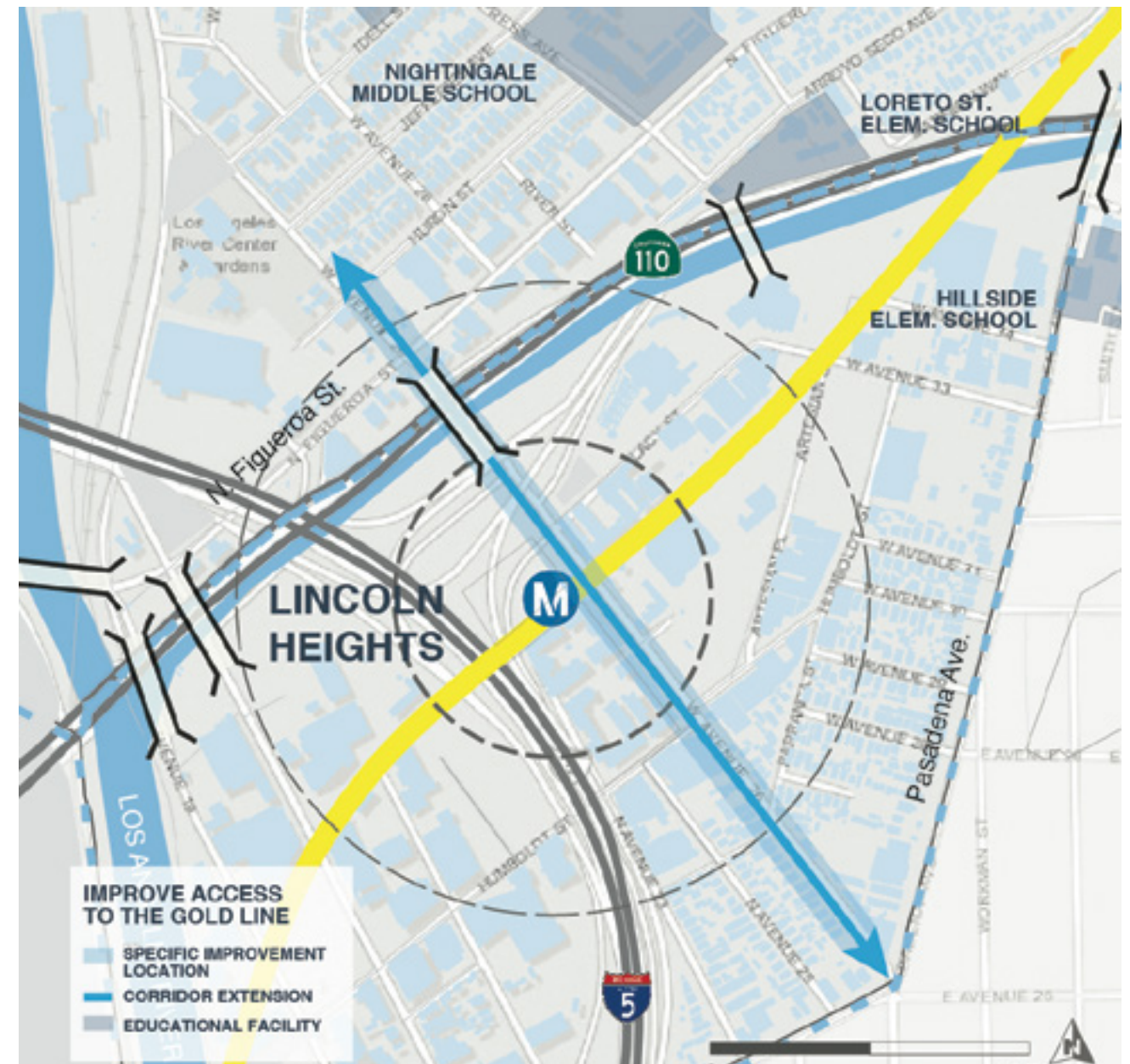


Fig. 78

a geographically significant location for the Eastside community as well as a central node for the Lincoln Heights neighborhood itself. As a whole, the value of improvements made to the entire stretch of Avenue 26 would greatly foster vibrancy within the community and support safer pedestrian movement and a potentially

culturally significant experience for the neighborhood.

CONCEPT DESIGN:

**OVERALL EXTENT:**  
West Avenue 26 from San Fernando to Pasadena.

**SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT LOCATION:**  
Location: 4-block buffer from Gold Line Station Figuerora to Humboldt.

LOGISTICS:

*Establishing Easements:* Acquire access to adjacent City-owned DWP.

*Integrating with other Street Improvements:* Coordinate with other planning efforts that affect streets, mobility, healthy living, and open spaces.

GENERAL COST:

Small < 1 Mil  
Medium 1 - 5 Mil  
Large >5 Mil

**TOTAL PROJECT:** Medium  
PHASE I: Medium  
PHASE II: Medium  
PHASE III: Medium

RELATED RESOURCES:

**PLANNING POLICY, FUNDING, & ADDITIONAL STUDIES**  
Great Streets Los Angeles Action Plan  
Green Streets Initiatives  
Green Infrastructure City Initiatives  
Greenway 2020  
Safe Routes to Shools  
NAtional Complete Streets Colaition  
Reconnecting America  
Re:Streets.org

**BENEFITS:**  
Improve mobility, safety and accessibility to all.

Enhance pedestrian and cycle environment / safety. Sidewalks, streets, pathways and crossings should be designed to support multiple modes of transportation.

Ensure continuity and promote a sense of identity creating visible and obvious connections.

*Signage Way-finding Effort:* Expand and increase current efforts to identify access points and trails along the river. Incorporate interpretive signage within and/or adjacent to the community garden with a focus on food, habitat and or stormwater.

*Connect with Adjacent and Nearby Public Spaces:* Spur a corridor connection through Atwater Village.

**PHASE I:**  
Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and crossings at the intersection of Avenue 26 and Humboldt Street.

**PHASE II:**  
Create Ave. 26 enhancements to improve connections to Figuerora Street and Five-Point Intersection (Pasadena/Daly)

**PRECEDENTS IN LA:**  
Silverlake Plaza  
Hollywood  
Outdoor Living Rooms

Create a sense of community via an active street frontage enhancing the look and feel of the pedestrian environment.

Support economic vitality as well as environmental quality.

*Expand Existing and Proposed Access Routes:* Link Act as a gateway to the Los Angeles River East Side Trail.

*Health and Safety:* Provide Amenities that promote increased outdoor activity and environmental awareness.

**PHASE III:**  
Install Community driven art installation for under/over crossings on Avenue 26 at Metro Goldline, Highway 110, and Arroyo Seco.

**PRECEDENTS OUTSIDE LA:**  
Powell St. Promenade,  
Portland Mall Revitalization,  
South Grand Boulevard  
Fan Pier Public Green & Streetscape  
Denver’s 16th Street

### Local Identity

Within the past decade, residential development has encouraged more people to live in historically industrial portions of Lincoln Heights.



### River Access

The newly constructed Ed P. Reyes Greenway project offers space to learn about stormwater and its relationship to the L.A. River and Arroyo Seco Streamway - all essential components of the revitalization of the City of Los Angeles and its waterways.



### Unsafe Crossing

The combination of unaddressed streetscape, unbalanced street frontage, and the unaligned and unsignalized intersection at Humboldt Street create a challenged intersection to cross for pedestrians, bicyclists and even vehicles.



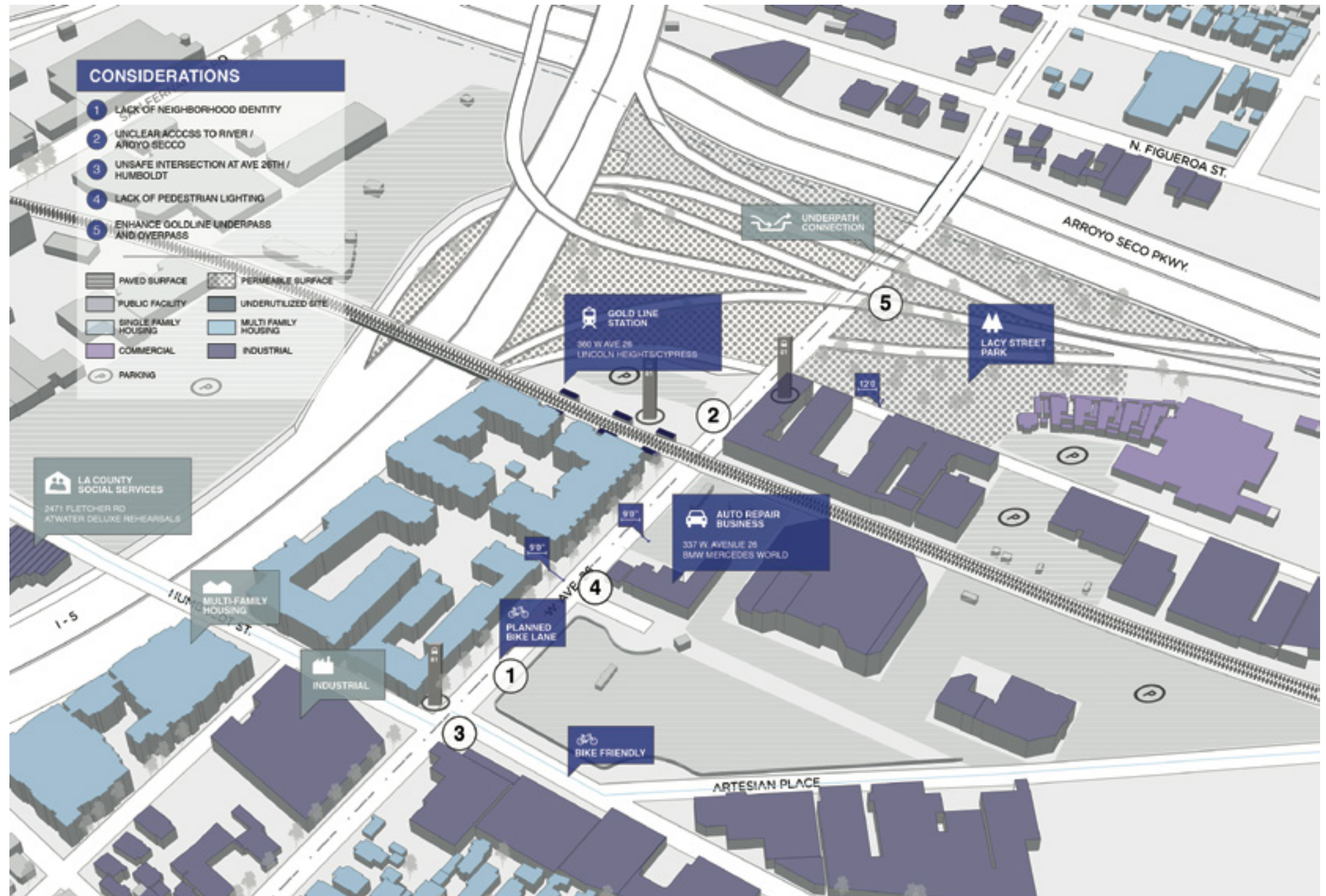
### Eyes on the Street

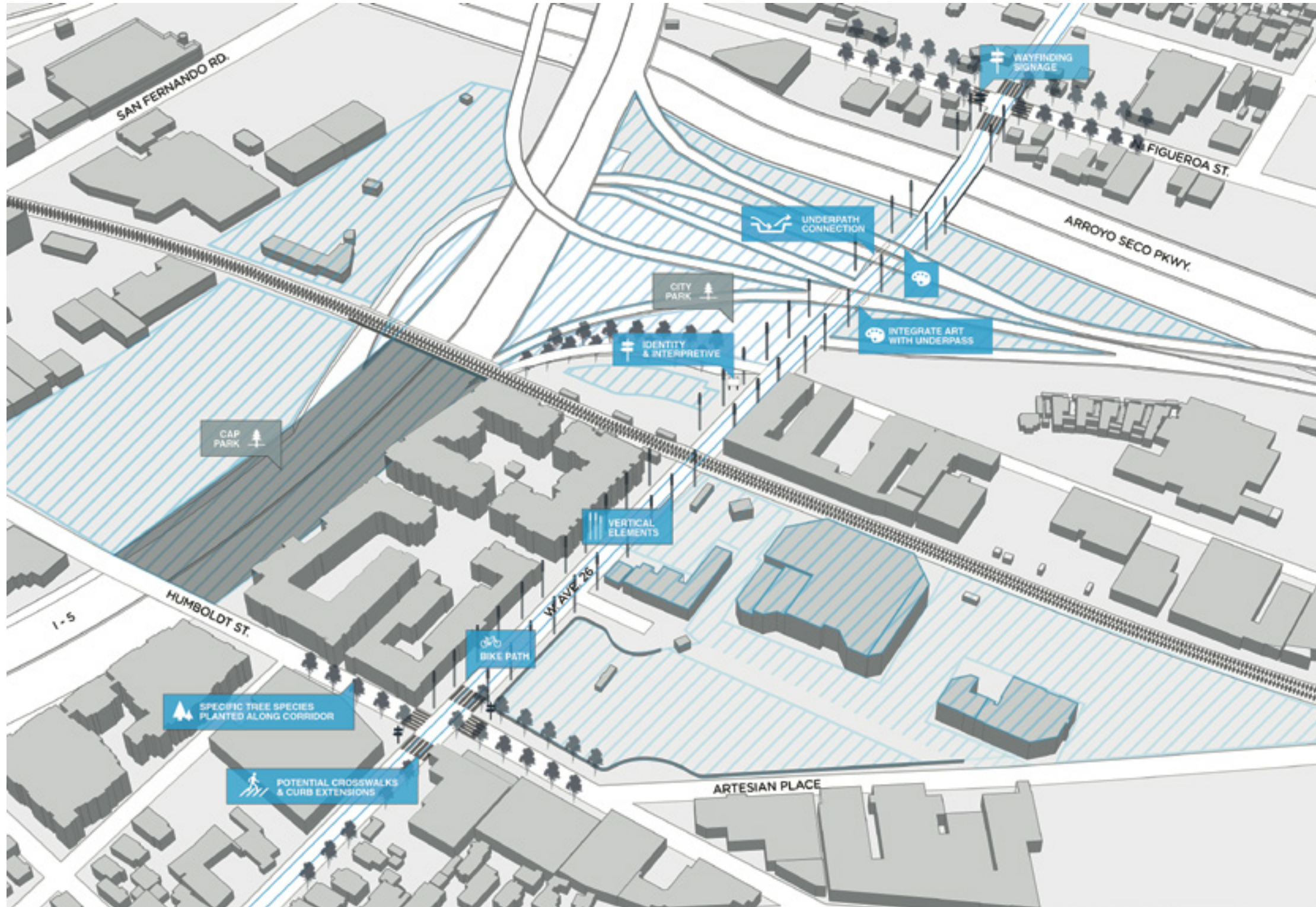
While not all industrial properties are prepared to create a more comfortable pedestrian condition, some as exist today aggravate the condition through fortress like perimeters baring no offering for a feeling of basic safety to passerbys.



### Under/Over Passing

The approximate two block stretch from the Metro Station to Figueroa Street feels much longer as one must navigate beneath and over the freeways. Along the journey, one does have the chance to admire the Arroyo Seco which offers a moment of respite amidst the journey.





### Street Life

Creating urban forms that support an active street forrage and encourage the use of the sidewalk (via vendors, art installations, seating, lighting) greatly enhance the experience as a Metro commuter and/or pedestrian. (Denver, CO)



### River Ways

Through the use of porous paving, signage, planting and other simple street improvements, the opportunity to create a visually interesting and performative landscape is possible to help lead people to Los Angeles's historic waterways.



### Clear Crossing

Crosswalks and curb extensions increase safety and visibility between pedestrians and motorists, enhance the beauty and vibrancy of the surroundings, and promote an increased sense of neighborhood identity.



### Vibrant Spaces

Creating destinations that reflect an open atmosphere that attracts people to gather with one another, allows room for community expression, and the formulation of civic culture.



### Illuminated Interest

Taking an artistic approach to creating an underpass lighting solution can contribute to overall identity, interest and vibrancy of the community while remaining sensitive to the needs of the road user. Bill FitzGibbons's Technicolor Underpass Installation)

# NELA Riverfront District Project References

## Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan

City of Los Angeles's adopted Master Plan (2007) to revitalize the Los Angeles River and improve access and environmental quality of the surrounding neighborhoods. (<http://www.lariver.org/index.htm>)

## Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study (ARBOR)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Feasibility Plan to restore ecological function and create riparian habitat conditions within the Los Angeles River from Burbank to Downtown. (<http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/Portals/17/docs/publicnotices/DraftIntegratedReport.pdf>)

## Great Streets Initiative

Focuses on developing Great Streets that activate the public realm, provide economic revitalization, and support great neighborhoods. ([http://www.lacity.org/stellent/groups/Lacity/@lacity/documents/Contributor\\_Web\\_Content/LACITYP\\_027271.pdf](http://www.lacity.org/stellent/groups/Lacity/@lacity/documents/Contributor_Web_Content/LACITYP_027271.pdf))

## Green Streets/Green Infrastructure City Initiatives

Focuses on new designs for sidewalks and other landscape areas that capture, clean, and store stormwater runoff. ([http://environmentla.com/sustainability/sust\\_executive\\_directive.htm](http://environmentla.com/sustainability/sust_executive_directive.htm))

## Greenway 2020

L.A. River Revitalization Corporation public awareness campaign to work with public and private partners to complete a continuous 51-mile Greenway adjacent to the LA River by the year 2020. (<http://www.larivercorp.com/greenway2020>)

## People Streets

A new program within the City of Los Angeles designed to facilitate partnerships between the community and the City to implement projects that transform under-used areas of street into high-quality public space. (<http://www.livingstreetsla.org/streets-for-people/>)

## Los Angeles Equity Atlas

With a \$40 billion voter-approved transit investment being deployed over the next 20 years, along with other critical investments, Los Angeles County residents have decided to chart a path to a new future, redefining how we live, how we move, and how the rest of the world sees and experiences Los Angeles County. (<http://reconnectingamerica.org/laequityatlas/index.php>)

## Stormwater Capture Master Plan

During the next two years, a Stormwater Capture Master Plan will be developed for LADWP that quantifies and characterizes the role that increased distributed and centralized stormwater capture can play in the city's long-term water supply portfolio.

(<http://water.assembly.ca.gov/sites/water.assembly.ca.gov/files/LADWP-Pettijohn%205-18-12.pdf>)

## Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS)

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs is an effort to improve health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school. (<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>)

## National Complete Streets Coalition

States, cities, and towns across the United States are building road networks that are safer, more livable, and welcoming to everyone. (<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>)

## Reconnecting America

Reconnecting America advises civic and community leaders on how to overcome community development challenges to create better communities for all. (<http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/>)

## Re:Streets

A multi-disciplinary collaboration focused on the planning, design and construction of streets as a method for improving the built environment. (<http://www.restreets.org/>)

## Federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>)

# 2

## PLANNING AND OPPORTUNITY SITES

### 2.1 Establish a NELA Riverfront District

The designation of the NELA Riverfront study area as a Riverfront District will build a regional NELA riverfront identity that connects the River and the adjacent neighborhoods. The designation will also spur on the City departments and NELA Riverfront stakeholders to implement the visions and recommendations within the Vision Plan and Economic Development Implementation Strategy. This identity can bring in economic development opportunities and recreational tourism activities for the City of Los Angeles.

### 2.2 Implement Neighborhood Placemaking Projects

Fund and implement small-scale placemaking projects, such as neighborhood kiosks at parks, community centers, and major business corridors. The installations can present the history of the neighborhoods and L.A. River in order to create a stronger sense of place.

### 2.3 Establish Artists and Maker Communities

Designate Elysian Valley as an “artists and maker

community” within the NELA Riverfront District to reinforce the maker community in the industrial area, and to establish the Frogtown Artwalk as an event and place to highlight in Los Angeles. The artist and maker community in Elysian Valley is a strong character of the neighborhood and can serve as an asset that not only draws attention to the River, but also promotes the local maker products in order to create local revenue.

### 2.4 Establish a local urban design committee

Create a local urban design committee made up of the neighborhood councils and community organizations that will create and review design opportunities for visual art or structures that highlight the character of the neighborhoods. This can include river and neighborhood themed visual art on public structures such as light boxes, garbage cans, and walls for public murals.

### 2.5 Elysian Valley Revitalization Plan

**History:** Elysian Valley “manufacturing core” is a unique set of buildings and lands adjacent to the Los Angeles River. Most of these properties were built on lands prior occupied by residential uses. Riverfront residences had been subject of takings for flood control easement from 1934 on. The process of industrial conversion mostly occurred in the late 1950s and 1960’s in the absence of zoning and planning ordinances and during the expansion of the freeways (5 and 2) that would island Elysian Valley from its “main street” (Riverside Drive) and its connection to Echo/ Elysian Parks. The set of properties as a whole are marked by odd and inconsistent boundaries at the river (due to a variety of easements, takings and jurisdictions) as well as substandard streets and access from the main commercial street, Blake Ave. Some large riverfront ownerships that have completely closed access to the interior the community.

**Present:** Shooting forward to the present, the Elysian Valley Manufacturing Core is a mix of small creative and artisan business alongside some remaining industrial manufacturing and some environmentally problematic automotive uses.

These buildings have created a thriving artistic culture that is home to internationally recognized artists, emerging artists, artisan enterprises, design and architecture studios, as well as still-thriving small manufacturers who provide many local jobs. The area is marked by a close proximity of small bungalow type residences adjacent to the manufacturing core. In addition, it is also home to the recent and successful Recreation Zone in the Los Angeles River.

**Changes and pressures:** Manufacturing core property within Elysian Valley is undergoing a real estate frenzy. In nearly all cases, the intended “highest and best use” for the properties is “residential conversion.” We are concerned that such overtake of the vibrant manufacturing core by large scale residential conversion:

1. Is not in keeping with the scale of the local residences.
2. Will displace a vibrant and growing creative economy.
3. Does not provide lacking services in the area, including markets and basic health services.
4. Will stress substandard sewer, street and grid.
5. May result in loss of jobs for local community.
6. May displace long term family ownership.
7. May destroy the unique social and artistic life of the community, thereby failing to develop the long term economic opportunities of this situation.

General Suggestions:

1. Recognize the valuable asset of mixed use creative space in Los Angeles as an international destination.
2. Protect wholesale loss of unique small manufacturing building types that are uniquely suited to be adaptive reuse.
3. Protect the village quality of the area.
4. Emphasize breathability between river-zone and interior of community.
5. Promote the continuance of small manufacturing that provides jobs alongside new commercial and limited residential.
6. Eliminate all forms of abusive industry that have contributed to degrading the living experience.
7. Support recreational and commercial use by planning transport nodes.
8. Provide parking incentives for owners who create river service businesses.



Shown above are ideas generated by the Elysian Valley Neighborhood Council and designed by RAC Designs. These drawings show possible placement of a variety of uses aimed to improve the community, turning it into a “hub” with community serving uses, retail, and density, sized and scaled to be sensitive of the adjacent riverfront and surrounding neighborhoods.



"Shown here is a submission for the Placemaking Design Competition by Robert Garcia. The conceptual plan includes a balanced park with active and passive recreation, in place of the existing city service yard and water plant, along prime riverfront parkland. Scenic pathways and trails would allow for exercise and relaxing for individuals and families. Playing fields, interpretive learning spaces and public art would enhance the park. Many people and groups have contributed to the conceptual plan to ensure it takes into account the needs of all users in the community."

## Goals:

1. Immediate rewrite of Q's with emphasis on incentivizing adaptive mixed use.
2. Initiate Community Plan Update or Specific Plan to protect the character allow for new growth potential within Elysian Valley.
3. Investigate mechanism for local development entity, possible assessment districts, when possible tax increment financing opportunities.

## 2.6 Griffith Park Central Service Yard

The Area shown in blue is called the Griffith Park Recreation and Parks Central Service Yard. This area is owned by the City of Los Angeles and is currently being used for storage of equipment used to maintain Griffith Park. While physically adjacent, this site is not conveniently located to provide quick vehicular access to Griffith Park. There have been discussions by Recreation and Parks to find a new site, allowing for this 28 acre site to be used for River Recreational Purposes.

Per the Griffith Park Draft Vision Plan, released by the Department of Recreation and Parks, the rediscovery of Central Service Yard (CSY) as dedicated parkland presents an extraordinary opportunity to expand both active and passive recreational enjoyment of Griffith Park and the Los Angeles River without the prohibitively expensive purchase of new parkland and without displacing current users.

Through analysis of boundary maps and other records, the Real Estate Division of the Recreation and Parks Department determined in the Fall of 2006 that the approximately 28-acre riverfront parcel of land contiguous to the North Atwater Park section of Griffith Park is and always has been dedicated parkland. Additionally, 2012 saw the completion of the North Atwater Expansion Project, which added approximately three acres of parkland to that location.

Today, the CSY parcel is not used for recreation and is

inaccessible to park-goers. It is the site of a permanent building housing Recreation and Parks regional offices and several maintenance sheds and workshops serving the Recreation and Parks Department as well as other City departments. The site also has several portable buildings that function as offices for the recreation division, a large employee parking lot, fleet vehicle parking and storage areas, and other non-recreational uses.

By eliminating the non-park-specific functions currently in Central Service Yard, while at the same time consolidating its park-specific administrative and maintenance functions into a smaller, more economical footprint, a significant portion of the parkland can be reclaimed to serve both active and passive uses.

On the active side, given that the acreage is flat, surrounded by a residential neighborhood of working families, close to a regularly scheduled bus line and only a short walk from Chevy Chase Recreation Center, it provides an excellent opportunity for expansion to park users.

On the passive side, since it is contiguous to the Los Angeles River and the Atwater Creek Stream restoration in the North Atwater section of Griffith Park, its reclaimed river-frontage can be converted to a picnic and wildlife viewing area that will complement the pedestrian/equestrian corridor currently along its bank.

All of these uses can be accomplished with sensitive planning that takes into account the needs of all users, including the existing Atwater horse-keeping community and the Recreation and Parks departmental functions that will remain at the site.

The Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy recommends this site be used in a way to connect the adjacent river community to the River, while creating a beautiful place for recreation near to the River which connects to Griffith Park. The site can also allow for some sort of use that allows for recreational and commercial uses along the River, such as a Riverfront Café.



Fig. 79 Griffith Parks Recreation and Parks Central Service Yard.

## 2.7-2.8 Remediating Contaminated Sites

The NELA study area has several acres of brownfields—vacant or under-utilized sites where redevelopment is impeded due to the presence, or perceived presence, of contamination by hazardous materials. Along the riverfront, contaminants are commonly found on properties with a history of heavy industrial use. Brownfields can remain underutilized or abandoned for years or decades, in part because of the significant potential for liability and financial risk for brownfield property owners and financiers. There is a substantial cost of site remediation and ensuring that the public

or workers on the site are not exposed to contaminants and that contaminants are not released through site disturbance. Nevertheless, it is possible to surmount these obstacles when the value offered by new uses is sufficient to provide incentive for investment.

Due to its industrial history, the River Corridor includes many sites that are listed as brownfields, including the G2 Parcel. Where possible, new development and open space should occur on brownfield sites. These sites offer opportunities for onsite remediation, environmental education, and site healing, in the creation of open space. Recent precedents for brownfield acquisition

and conversion to open space include the Los Angeles State Historic Park (The Cornfields) and the Rio de Los Angeles State Park at Taylor Yard.

The NELA RC has focused on 3 main areas containing potential Opportunity Sites for future revitalization. These Opportunity Sites take into consideration the parcel's zoning type, vacancy, existing guidelines and regulations, relation to the River and communal best-use.

## 2.7 RIVER GLEN

River Glen, at the northern tip of the NELA Study Area, is currently characterized by industrial, biomedical, and entertainment/studio-related land uses. It is bound by the Los Angeles River, the confluence of Verdugo Wash to the north, San Fernando Road to the east, and Colorado Street to the south. The existing uses flood the particular area with unsightly barbed-wire fencing, and contain no clear communal access points to the River. Although the North Atwater Village portion of the Study Area is located at the intersection of two freeways (the I-5 and 134), and directly adjacent to Griffith Park, there is currently no connection or public benefit being gained from the River whatsoever. Once an area occupied by low-rent businesses, it has the potential to become the premier eco-industrial park in the City of Los Angeles. There exists a great opportunity to provide safe and compatible public access to Riverfront, connecting it with Griffith Park and establishing parklands, walking/biking trails and other public amenities.

Three sub-areas can be defined in the River Glen Opportunity Area, based on the quality of building stock and stability of current land use. The most stable of the areas is between Colorado Boulevard and one block south of Brazil Street, and is occupied by large employers such as Baxter, Huntsman Advanced Materials Americas Inc., Quixote Studios, and Kaiser Permanente – all long-term and stable job creators for the area.

The second area, between Brazil Street and one block

south of Doran Street, contains land uses comprising light industrial and warehouse facilities including Levitz Furniture, car dealerships, and the Priority Pak Shipping Facility. Within this area, the prevalent pattern is consolidation of multiple parcels into single ownership, resulting in large warehouse buildings that wall off the River on its eastern edge.

The third and most intriguing area of possible development is the area's northern boundary, which includes various metal recycling facilities, and a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) maintenance facility located below Interstate 134. Although functional and environmentally beneficial in intent, these facilities produce surface runoff and trash accumulation at the confluence of Verdugo Wash and the River. Relocation of these uses to another site with less environmental and physical impacts should be seriously considered.

### Recommendations:

- Acquisition of 15 acres of metal-recycling facilities for better use
- Provide safe public access point and connection to Griffith Park
- Create more visually appealing access point at the 134 and 5, one of the major vehicle visibility portions of the River
- A possible water treatment facility at a major tributary confluence
- Connectivity: Increase amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists : San Fernando Rd, a major thoroughfare, only has 3 access points to River and is unsafe for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- Industrial uses need improved circulation and more parking
- Establish a new street network within the industrial area to open up access and facilitate connections
- Establish river design guidelines through the RIO or a revised specific plan



Fig. 80 & 81 River Glen in the north Atwater Village can be optimized to provide access to the River, connect to Griffith Park, and a potential space for parklands, walking/ biking trails, and other public amenities.

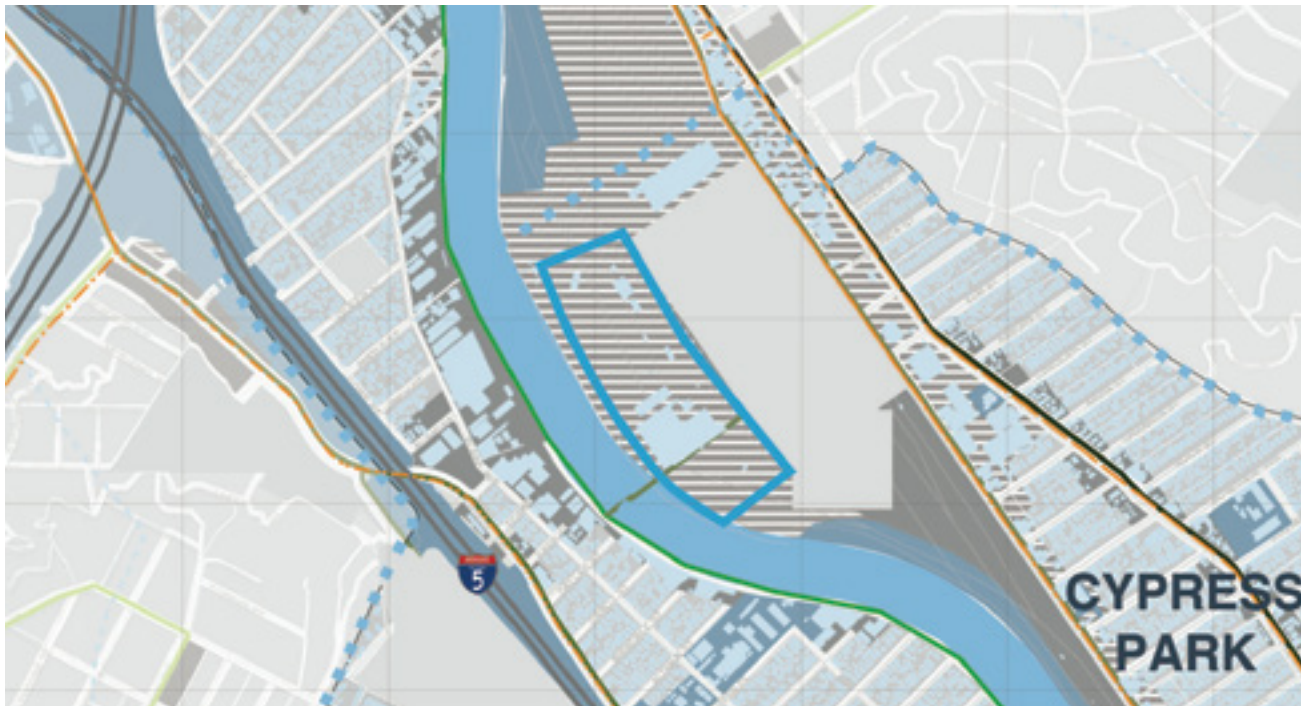


Fig. 82 & 83 Taylor Yard area in Elysian Valley becomes a great opportunity to restore the River's edge and provide a restored riparian corridor.



Et ut que voluptae non por aut pro verspe venis ratem que officur.

## 2.8 TAYLOR YARDS

Another Opportunity Site exists in the Taylor Yard area in Elysian Valley, which is framed by Elysian Park on the west and Mt Washington on the east, extending from Fletcher Drive to the confluence with the Arroyo Seco. Freight, Metrolink railroad tracks, and industrial sites currently limit access to the River in this area, while the many industrial sites along North San Fernando Road physically divide the suburban communities of Glassell Park and Cypress Park from accessing the River. The River Center, located within Cypress Park, is separated from the River by railroad yards.

Taylor Yard was one of many former rail transportation nodes along the River, and its dilapidation illustrates just how much the River had been viewed as a forgotten backyard of the City. With the opening of the new Río de Los Angeles State Park and the potential acquisition of the G2 parcel, there is a great opportunity to restore the river's edge and provide a restored riparian corridor.

Together, the Arroyo Seco and the Los Angeles River connect the three largest parks in the City of Los Angeles—Griffith, Elysian, and Debs—all of which have significant natural habitat areas. There are several publically owned facilities at the Arroyo Seco



Fig. 84 & 85 Remediation of the contaminated sites in southern part of NELA Study Area, within the CASP zone, can help boost land values and allow the sites to be used to its full potential.

confluence that could provide new communal benefit to Riverfront neighborhoods if re-purposed.

#### Recommendations:

- Taylor Yard needs to connect itself to the new Rio de Los Angeles State Park, bolstering public access and enjoyment of the River.
- Connectivity: Increase amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists
  - San Fernando Rd, a major thoroughfare, only has 3 access points to River and is unsafe for vehicular and pedestrian traffic
  - Fletcher Drive would benefit greatly from pedestrian and bicycle amenities to connect communities to the west
- Potential to acquire land for open space
  - Acquisition of the G2 parcel
    - Reuse of a contaminated site
  - Metro Rail yard in Elysian Valley
  - Midway Yards temporary site
  - Publically owned parcels near Arroyo Seco Confluence
- Remove concrete and naturalize a stretch of the River's edge
- Remove barriers to Glassell Park and Cypress Park communities for River enjoyment
- Link Arroyo Seco, Elysian Park, and the Red Car Corridor trails
- Create east-west connections to Elysian Park and Echo Park

## 2.9 CASP Boundary

The final Opportunity Area exists around the southern portion of the Study Area, located in the Cornfield/ Arroyo Seco Specific Plan (CASP). Within the boundaries of the NELA Study Area, the CASP zone is bound by the River on the west, Main Street in the south, Interstate 5 on the east and the Los Angeles River Center and 110 Freeway in the north.

The CASP approved flexible zoning to facilitate the clustering of industries and supporting new uses, focusing

on mixed commercial/residential uses, neighborhood-oriented retail, employment opportunities, and civic and quasi-public uses around urban transit stations. Future development in this area could transform this large stretch of mostly industrial land into a mixed-use, high-density neighborhood; creating a more active street life around the River and adding bike lanes, unbundled parking and improved public transportation access.

The CASP Specific plan outlines a 15 percent open space requirement and even increases that requirement to 50 percent within 300 feet of the Los Angeles River or Arroyo Seco. The CASP encourages a more active street life by orienting buildings to pedestrians instead of parking lots, providing for retail uses on the ground floor and limiting block lengths. The plan also puts more emphasis on alternative forms of transportation by adding bike lines, providing car share and unbundled parking, and access to bus and Metro stations. Overall, the plan builds up to a denser, greener, more transit-oriented location.

Remediation of contaminated sites within the CASP boundary can help boost land values and allow for the sites within the plan to be utilized for its full potential. One of the growing sectors within this region is Urban Agriculture, an industrial sector that is not only poised for growth but is sensitive of the ecological value of the River. Several "Food Hub" industries have already made their way to the CASP and remediation of contaminated lands will help encourage more of the same type of growth.

#### Recommendations:

Take advantage of innovative CASP provisions, including:

- **Affordable Housing:** The CASP provides for a Density Bonus Program that allows for increased Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") above the base FAR for projects that agree to include an affordable housing component. The CASP also includes "on- and off-menu" incentives for projects that participate in the Density Bonus Program. The on-menu incentives include increases in the amount of residential FAR permitted in a project and an increase in the maximum height. The off-menu incentives permit an applicant to request a waiver from



Counterclockwise top to bottom: Elysian Park with Arroyo Seco Parkway, Griffith Park

development standards set forth in the CASP or the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

- **Transfer of Floor Area:** The CASP allows unused FAR to be transferred between properties within the CASP area. Both residential and non-residential projects can purchase unused FAR from other eligible properties to maximize FAR.
- **Streamlined Project Approval:** Projects complying with CASP standards are eligible for an “Administrative Clearance” approval procedure. The environmental impact report prepared for the CASP fully assessed environmental impacts for projects that comply with the CASP’s standards, allowing projects approved via the Administrative Clearance to avoid additional CEQA review.
- **New Zones:** The CASP contains four new zones: a Greenway Zone, Urban Village Zone, Urban Center Zone and an Urban Innovation Zone. The Greenway Zone provides for open space along the Los Angeles River. The Urban Village, Urban Center and Urban Innovation Zones all allow for mixed-use developments and are intended to promote a robust mix of light industrial, residential and commercial uses.
- **Parking:** Because the CASP area is well served by public transit, there are no minimum parking requirements. This is a first of its kind strategy for the City of Los Angeles.
- **Reduced Lot Area:** The number of dwelling units permitted in residential developments is not limited by the minimum unit size provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code. With an eye toward increasing the supply of affordable housing, the CASP allows projects to build smaller residential units that can be rented at lower rates.

### 2.10-2.14 Utilizing and Connecting to Historic Properties

The Los Angeles River Waterfront is home to many historic structures and archaeological sites connected to various threads of Los Angeles’ rich and vibrant history. Preserving these sites not only promote an understanding of Los Angeles’ history but they also provide a sense of

identity and uniqueness of place along the Los Angeles River. Protecting these resources safeguards the city’s historical, aesthetic, and cultural heritage for the benefit of current and future residents and visitors. Preservation can also have economic benefits, improving property values and enhancing Los Angeles’ attractiveness for tourism. Rehabilitating and utilizing these Historic Properties, and connecting them to the network of open public space will enliven the open space experience, giving it a historical point of intrigue and reference.

Utilizing and connecting these historic sites to the riverfront promotes an understanding of Los Angeles’ colorful history, providing a sense of identity and uniqueness of place in the process. Protecting these resources ensures that the City’s historical, aesthetic and cultural heritage is preserved for the benefit of current and future residents and visitors. Such preservation not only has vast economic benefits for the City, but also encourages visitors of the River and these historic sites to develop an understanding and appreciation of the diversity and history of the City of Los Angeles.

Some examples of historical opportunity sites within the NELA Study Area are listed below and should be considered for uses that will support the existing communities, public services and economy of the communities surrounding the River:

#### 2.10 VAN DE KAMP’S HOLLAND DUTCH BAKERY

Built in 1930 in Glassell Park at 2930 Fletcher Drive, the Van de Kamp’s Bakery’s building served as headquarters for the chain of bakeries and coffee shops whose trademark “windmill” buildings and neon signs prevailed throughout mid 20th century Los Angeles. The building was designed by New York architect J. Edward Hopkins to resemble a Dutch 16th century farmhouse, reflecting the company’s corporate image. The building remains the only example of an industrial plant in the Dutch Renaissance Revival style.” In 1992, the building was listed as Los Angeles Historical-Cultural Monument Number 569.

The recent history of the Van De Kamp Bakery is a vivid tale of loss, rebirth and “reuse”. Since the factory closed in 1999, local residents had been fighting to save the historic structure and reuse it as a community space. The then developers had decided that that the space would be better fit as a Burger King and Home Base. Over time and through negotiations, the Los Angeles Community College District agreed to take the property and adaptively reuse the facade to create a new Community College for Northeast Los Angeles. Over time, however the site has not been used for its full potential and remains 90% vacant. An opportunity for growth, reuse, community education, and revival of tradition, the Van De Kamp Site should be considered for use as a workforce center.

### 2.11 SAN ANTONIO WINERY

Located at 737 Lamar Street, within the Lincoln Heights area, the San Antonio Winery currently operates a wine shop, restaurant and banquet hall on site. Built in 1917, the site was originally utilized as a large grape vineyard that utilized the rich nutrients from the then unpaved Los Angeles River to grow sweet wine grapes.

Although still in operation today, the site is no longer utilized for vineyards but remains in business as a wine shop and tasting room, restaurant and banquet hall. The site is located in close proximity to 750 Lamar, Union Pacific’s Los Angeles Transportation Center, which has been slated by the Arbor Study to be restored with approximately 113 acres of riparian habitat. Micro-grading would slope the site to restore the historical wash that once ran through this area. The restored historical wash would meander through the property and would be connected to the existing river channel through a wide culvert or designed confluence.

### 2.12 LINCOLN HEIGHTS JAIL

The Lincoln Heights Jail, overlooking the Los Angeles River and railroad tracks, is situated on the 400 block at North Avenue 19. The site where the Lincoln Heights Jail is located has been a spot for prisoners to be incarcerated

since the historic days of the Gold Rush in California. In 1931, the old jail buildings were demolished to make room for the new Lincoln Heights Jail and a central police station. The new jail, constructed in Art Deco architectural style, could hold 625 prisoners. It was open for business in December 1931. By the early 1950s, it expanded with another Bauhaus addition. At its peak, it crammed about 2,800 inmates at a time. Infamous and notable alike saw the inside of the Gray Bar Motel including the likes of Al Capone (who spent the night before being released from Prison) Zoot Suit rioters, and finally Watts rioters, who clocked in jail time right before Lincoln Heights Jail was decommissioned in 1965.

Dark and dingy have been so ingrained in the site that it’s played a lockup facility even on the big screen. A number of movies, television shows, and stage productions have had the Lincoln Heights Jail as a location. The first was a small part in the Judy Garland film *A Star Is Born* in 1954. In 1973, Raymond Chandler’s “The Long Goodbye” was made into a movie with Elliott Gould as Philip Marlowe and had the jail as a setting for some of the scenes. *Caged Heat*, a women-in-prison film, in 1974 and *Penitentiary* in 1979 utilized the jail interior for their location. The boiler room scene of 1984’s *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is in the basement of the jail. In the 90’s, the mystery/drama *Dead Again* (1991) and *Out of Sight* (1998) took place in either the cell block or a room made to look like a prison library.

The Lincoln Heights Jail was designated a historic-cultural monument in November 30, 1993, by Los Angeles. The site is located within a very strategic location along the Los Angeles River. The site is within the Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan, provides easy access to the Los Angeles River, adjacent to the Metro Gold and provides an opportunity for cultural open public space, enriched with a thrilling story of Los Angeles’ past.

It is now time to consider the Lincoln Heights Jail for its most important role in its long history. Suggestions for use include making the structure a historical museum for the Lincoln Heights neighborhood, a community college campus, a rock climbing facility, rooftop garden or loft apartments for east Los Angeles residents.





Glendale Hyperion Bridge



Built in 1904, Villa Rafael then and now.

2.13 GLENDALE HYPERION BRIDGE

The 56-ft. wide, 1,370-ft. long bridge crosses over the Los Angeles River, Golden State Freeway and Riverside Drive, between Ettrick Street and Glenfeliz Boulevard. Completed in 1929, it features a series of reinforced concrete arches.

The Bridge is currently undergoing a public benefit project aimed at improving public safety, improve mobility and access and build community pride. With Regards to Public Safety, the City is addressing seismic vulnerabilities by strengthening improvements to the substructure elements of the viaduct complex and bringing it up to current standards, adding a median barrier along on the Hyperion Avenue viaduct roadway, and improving pedestrian and bicycle facilities, including wider sidewalks, signalized pedestrian crossings, a new pedestrian bridge, and a more convenient connection between the viaduct and the LA River bikeway. With Regards to mobility and access, the City is improving car, bike, and pedestrian travel by updating the design of the bridge’s roadway, intersections and on-and off-ramps, re-aligning the I-5 northbound off-ramp to allow left turns onto southbound Glendale Boulevard and restriping roadways to current standards while not adding additional traffic lanes. With regard to community pride, the City will be reconstructing the

existing deteriorated railings with historic replicas and rehabilitate other historic decorative elements, including bridge lighting and building a pedestrian/bicycle bridge on top of the pylons formerly used for the Red Car, connecting both sides of the river.

2.14 VILLA RAFAEL

The original portion of this house was built in 1904. In 1923 Giovanni and Tranquilla Vai acquired the property. On March 25, 1929 Mr. Vai secured a permit to modify the structure, listing J. A. Wilson as the architect for the modification. Its architecture is described as Spanish Colonial Revival exterior with an Italian Renaissance-influenced interior.

This property is zoned for residential use but can be used as a boutique hotel, cultural center or River history Museum.

# 3

## TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

### 3.1 NELA Mobility Plan

Recent studies have shown that poor accessibility within a community is directly correlated with a child's chances of upward class mobility. The reasoning behind that is Children raised in the poorer economic conditions have less access to private transportation and their mobility and consequently their access to jobs, education and healthcare depends largely on public transit.

Within the NELA study area, not only are there physical boundaries preventing access to transportation, like the freeways, rail lines, and sometimes the River (or lack of

access over and across the river), but the transportation lines themselves seem to lack connections between the area's common nodes, Neighborhood Centers, Community Resource Centers, Employment Centers and Main Retail Streets.

During a preliminary study, it was found that connections between these nodes can occur through DASH lines, Pedestrian and Bicyclist Linkages and Transit Plazas. Below is a map layering the Nodes with the options for connections.

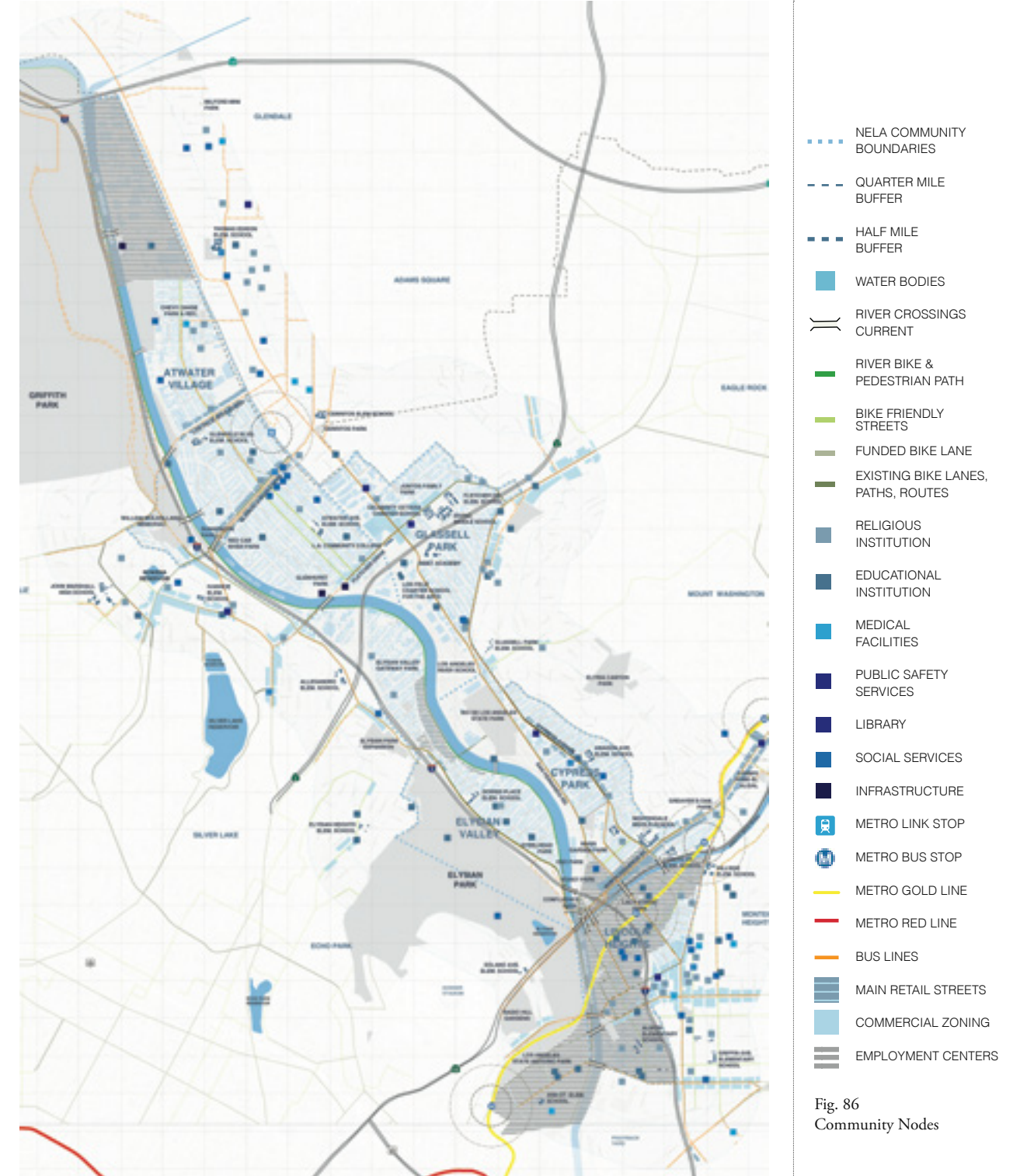


Fig. 86  
Community Nodes

This Preliminary map shows potential areas where linkages are necessary, and should be studied in more detail for implementation of the specific modifications. As shown in this Map, three DASH lines are proposed. One that connects the work centers within NELA to Downtown Los Angeles, one that connects Elysian Valley to other parts of NELA as well as adjacent communities and resources and one that is considered a “tourist” dash that travels along Glendale Blvd, and provides tourists access to the River, Red car River Park, City of Glendale, Glendale Amtrak station and other commercial opportunities along Glendale. This DASH should be designed like the historical Atwater Redcar, and serve for entertainment and tourist purposes.

### 3.2 Rio Vistas Plan

Street ends by the LA River are public rights-of-way that can be transformed for aesthetic, recreational and environmental benefit. As outlined by the LA River Revitalization Masterplan, more than 300 streets intersect with the LA River. Many of these *cul de sacs* are unmarked, derelict or have unauthorized private encroachments. In the Northeast LA study area of 90039, there are over two dozen residential streets that actually block access to the LA River.

Many river-adjacent neighborhoods are communities of color, largely underemployed, who are seeking better opportunities and improvements in their neighborhood. In the Elysian Valley, 30% of households have an income of \$20,000 or less (*LA Times*). One of the major challenges facing communities is poor environmental quality, poor public health indicators, and a blighted and unsafe urban development.

The Rio Vistas Program was created to address some of these issues of access and safety along a 2.5 mile stretch of the LA River in Elysian Valley. The NELA Collaborative worked with students, community members, and industry professionals to design and develop ‘shovel-ready’ projects in Elysian Valley, where 27 streets dead-end into the LA River.

Improving these street ends will help re-orient neighborhoods towards the LA River, open up access to the existing bike path, and allow for enjoyment of waterfront open space. We believe increased access and beautification of the LA River can bring significant social, environmental and economic benefits to the NELA area.

#### Goals

The goals of the Río Vistas project are to:

- Expand student knowledge, participation, stewardship and civic responsibility in their community
- Increase student & community input on projects & issues relating to the LA River – open space, water quality and healthy urban communities
- Foster youth leadership development within diverse & underserved communities surrounding the LA River corridor
- Enhance green infrastructure for water quality, clean streets, and habitat improvements
- Improve public access to and enjoyment of the LA River, encouraging safe routes and healthy recreation

#### Participants

The NELA Collaborative worked at LA River High School on the Sonia Sotomayor Learning Academies *campus*, with a mixed class of sophomores, juniors and seniors, ages 15-18, over the course of 20 weeks from January to June of 2013.

The cohort, comprised of 20 students, was to act like real world developers looking to do work in their community. Assuming that role, they had three major tasks to accomplish: prototype design, data collection and community outreach. To assist them in achieving the ultimate goal of a “shovel ready” design, they were led by Duke Luna, in partnership with an LA River High teacher and two residents of Elysian Valley who provided community outreach and design guidance.

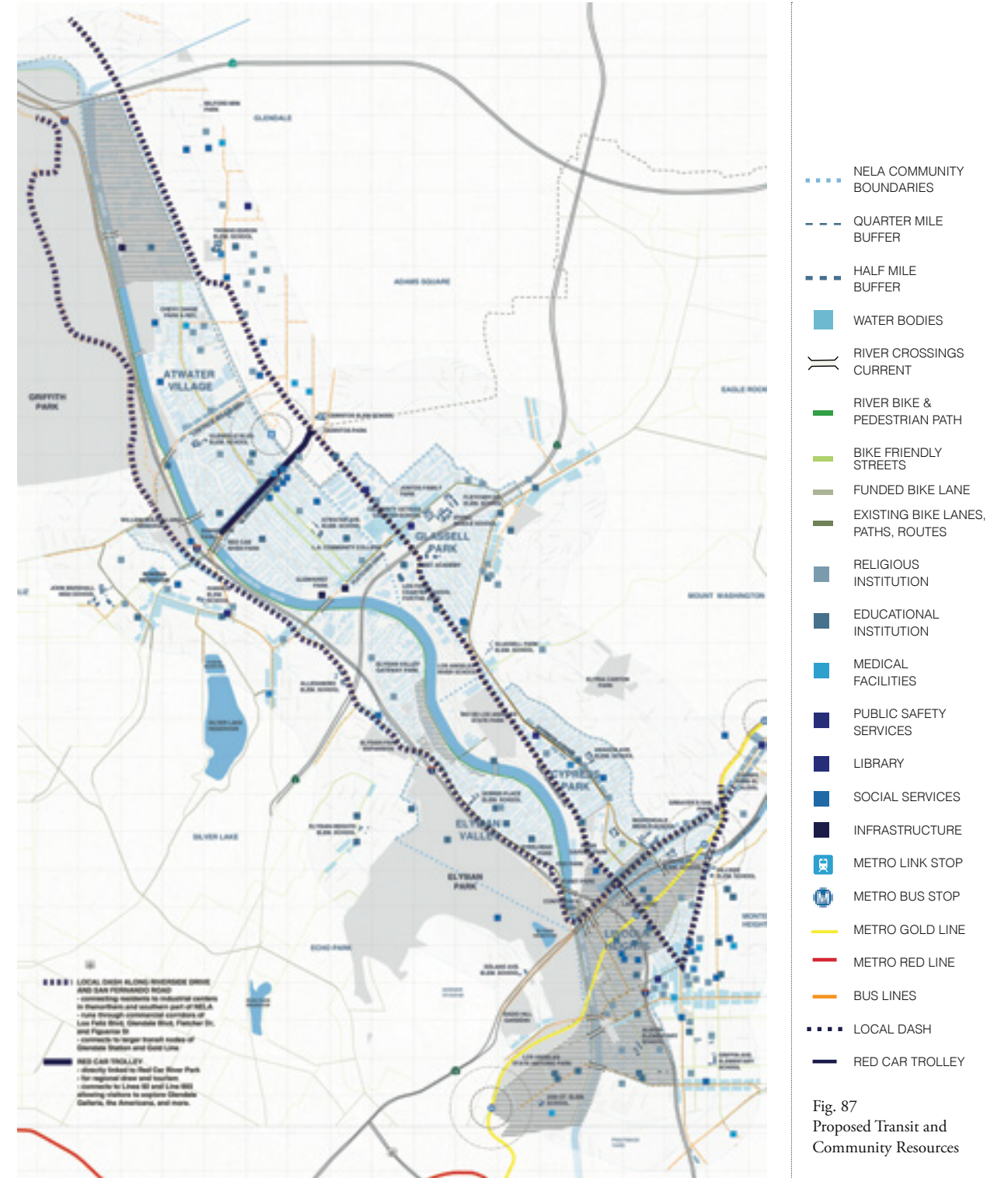


Fig. 87  
Proposed Transit and  
Community Resources



The historical Red Car in Atwater Village.

Students also heard from 5 different industry professionals who were guest lecturers in the classroom. These individuals reviewed and critiqued their designs before they took them out to the public workshops they hosted in April and May of 2013.

The first two workshops were held in Elysian Valley and the students were able to collect data from over 100 residents about what elements they would like to see at the street ends. The students used creative and interactive data collection techniques to engage community member in the work (See Collateral Materials).

### Methodology

Students were tasked with designing 3 'shovel-ready' prototypes that meet low-impact development standards. They were expected to document the design process, capture community input, and develop project designs. Working to re-imagine local streets, students learned about sustainable design, project planning and engaged in mapping exercises and civic participation to improve their neighborhood. (See Collateral Materials).

The project culminated with students presenting their designs and collecting final input for the proposed Río



The Río Vistas Program address issues of access and safety along a 2.5 mile stretch of the River in Elysian Valley..

Vistas prototypes to a panel of experts and potential funders. The panel consisted of a landscape architect, local artist, community leader, LA City hydrologist, LA City civil engineer, and the Councilman of District 13. Dake Luna translated the resulting student designs into a "shovel ready" prototype with both construction and graphic drawings (See Collateral Materials\*).

The program uses the internationally recognized Human-Centered Design (HCD) approach, developed by IDEO with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to work with teachers and high school students from the LA River School. The HCD

approach allowed us to create these Río Vistas in a way that is collaborative, youth-led, technically supported, and expert validated.

In addition, this can serve as a pilot project that has the potential to be replicated and scaled to achieve significant impact along the entire 51 miles of the LA River. The 2.5 miles and 27 street ends in the study area of Elysian Valley (90039) comprise just 10% of the overall 305 streets that dead end into the LA River.

The student choose Coolidge Drive and created the following rendering, with the help of DakeLuna and associates.



Elysian Valley Parking District zoning map.



Approximate location for Taylor Yard Bikeway and Pedestrian Bridge.

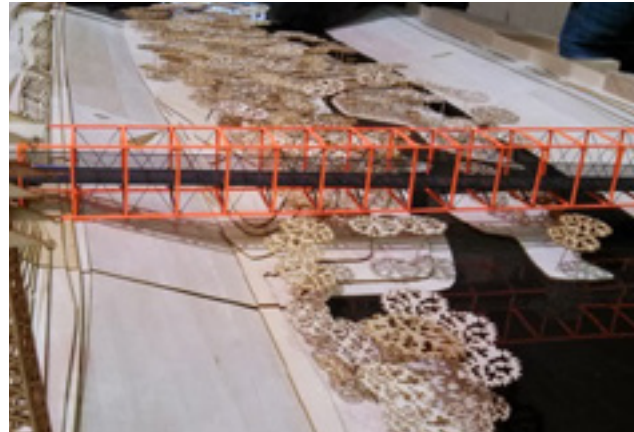
### 3.3 Elysian Valley Parking District

Creating a system for multi-modal non-vehicular traffic as well as preparing for users arriving by vehicular modes of transportation are ways in which mobility within the NE LA community can be improved. Below are renderings created by Council District 13, Elysian Valley Neighborhood Council and RAC Design (an architecture firm within the community) proposing new parking areas within Elysian Valley. They also made some recommendation's regarding zoning refinements that will help improve the economic development of their neighborhood, such as areas for redevelopment and mixed use zoning.

### 3.4 Taylor Yards Bridge

Expected Duration - 2 years  
Design Cost - 5.3 Million to 8 Million

Project Title is "Taylor Yard Bikeway and Pedestrian Bridge over LA River". The scope of work consists of the design and construction of a new landmark/iconic pedestrian bridge with a bikeway connecting the existing bikeway along the west bank of the LA River to an existing road on the eastside of the LA River. It shall be approximately 400 ft. long with a 17 ft clear bikeway. The new bridge design will focus on visual aesthetics and include a DWP



Taylor Yard Bridge design.

recycled water line. Also, the project will include an ongrade railroad crossing. The overall intent of building this new bridge is to eventually connect the bike path at San Fernando Road to the LA River bikeway.

### 3.5 NELA Riverfront District Bicycle Racks Implementation

The City's Planning and Transportation department should conduct a study of opportunity sites for Bicycle Racks in the NELA Riverfront neighborhoods where access to the River is heavily used. The racks should be

designed to reflect the identity of the L.A. River and the NELA neighborhoods. The proposed NELA urban design committee can assist in the review and recommendation of the visual look and implementation of the bicycle racks.

### 3.6 Great Streets

In October of 2013, Mayor Eric Garcetti launched the "Great Streets Initiative" calling for interdepartmental cooperation between LADOT, Engineering, Planning, Cultural Affairs, Public Works, and Street Services to work together to create a unified calendar for street

planning and programs. According to Mayor Garcetti, "There are two essential elements to a strong city: a thriving economy that creates opportunity and pays the bills and a city government that delivers the core services that improve the quality of our life – safe streets, clean streets, and streets in good repair." The NELA Collaborative worked with the Community Members as well as assessed the landuses and urban landscape within the NELA Study Area and came up with 5 streets recommended to be added to the Mayor's Great Streets Initiative. The streets and justification are shown below.

**San Fernando Road** - (Stretch starting at the 134 Freeway and ending at Glendale and then another stretch starting at the 2-Freeway and ending at the 5 freeway) The first stretch starting at the 134 Freeway and ending at Glendale starts within North Atwater, adjacent to the Industrial center and the site of the future Verdugo Wash Ecological Treatment proposed by the USACE Arbor Study and travels down a commercial corridor which features jobs, shops and restaurants. The site features an interesting mix of retail but has very narrow sidewalks that could benefit from some widening and tree planting. The street is accessible to public transit and is a good connector within the Study Area and also to adjacent communities and cities outside of the Study Area. The second stretch runs adjacent to the future Taylor Yards Park and existing Rio De Los Angeles State park, which will feature connections to the River. This stretch is also adjacent to several neighborhood schools and community services, frequently travelled by foot and bike by young children getting to school and to the parks. The sidewalks along this stretch are also narrow and very dangerous and would benefit from sidewalk widening and tree planting. These improvements can dramatically change the pedestrian/bicycling experience along San Fernando thereby allowing more community members to use it and practice a healthy lifestyle.

**Glendale Blvd** - (Stretch starting at the Los Angeles River and ending at the City boundary): The stretch starts at the site of the future Glendale/Hyperion BOE project (<http://www.glendalehyperion.com/>). This Glendale Bridge improvement project looks to

upgrade the structure to withstand an earthquake event, restore the bridge's historical appearance and improve traffic and pedestrian circulation. Alongside that bridge is a small pocket park, Red Car River Park, which overlooks the Los Angeles River. The street is wide and includes a landscaped center median as well as diagonal street parking in some areas fronting "mom and pop" small business (restaurants, services, and shopping outlets). There is a potential to place a bike path along Glendale as well as modify the sidewalk to include better, drought resistant landscaping and public art that highlights the Los Angeles River. The street is public transit accessible, walkable and a good connector to the River, Silver Lake, Silver Lake Reservoir, Rowena Reservoir, Glendale Metrolink Station and Glendale Amtrak Station.

**Los Feliz** - (Stretch starting at the Los Angeles River and ending at the City boundary): The stretch starts with river access and decorative bike/pedestrian bridge over the River overlooking a publicly owned Golf Course and park. The properties fronting the streets are improved with interesting retail, commercial and office opportunities. The street has wide sidewalks and on-street parking and a frequently used street for public transit. The street would benefit from landscaping, pedestrian/transit amenities, and bike share program. The street is public transit accessible, walkable and a good connector street to the River, Griffith Park, Los Angeles Zoo, the Los Feliz Community and the City of Glendale.

### 3.7 People Streets

The People Streets program facilitates partnerships between the community and the City of Los Angeles. Projects initiated and driven by and for communities can be brought to life by working through People St. Community Partners are required to be active players in order to build neighborhood support for a project, identify an appropriate site, conduct outreach, raise funds required for materials and furnishings, install project elements (Parklets), and provide and fund long-term management, maintenance, and operations of the project.



Fig. 88 Potential Great Streets: San Fernando Ave, Los Feliz Boulevard, and Glendale Boulevard.

**Parklet** - A parklet is an expansion of the sidewalk into one or more street parking spaces to create people-oriented places. Parklets introduce new streetscape features such as seating, planting, bicycle parking, or elements of play. Parklets encourage pedestrian activity by offering these human-scale “eddies in the stream,” which is especially beneficial in areas that lack sufficient sidewalk width or access to public space.

**Plaza** - A Pedestrian Plaza creates accessible public open space by closing a portion of street to vehicular traffic. Paint or another treatment is applied to the

street surface; while large planters and other elements define the Plaza perimeter. The Community Partner maintains and operates the Plaza, providing movable tables and chairs, public programs, and ongoing neighborhood outreach. People Street Pedestrian Plazas must also remain publicly accessible at all times.

**Bicycle Corrals** - Bicycle Corrals are an on-street parking facility that accommodate up to 16 bicycles in the same area as a single vehicle parking space. Bicycle Corrals can be installed within vehicle parking lanes in areas with high levels of bicycling and demand for bicycle parking, and in People St Plazas.

The following is a list compiled through a series of public workshops and through staff research regarding the best location for Parklets, Plazas and Bicycle Corrals within the NELA area. These sites should be further studied for installation of the appropriate intervention necessary to improve the mobility of the community.

- **Figueroa Commercial District** – Plaza within the commercial District featuring river designs.
- **Cypress Blvd** – Parklets and Bicycle Corrals along the commercial Corridors. Place Bicycle Corrals along walking paths used by children getting to adjacent schools.
- **Broadway** – Bicycle Corrals near the proposed Broadway connector discussed in the Greenway 2020 recommendations and Parklets along the Commercial Corridor.
- **Glendale** – Parklets along the commercial corridor
- **Los Feliz** – Parklets along the commercial corridor

### 3.8 Bike Friendly District

A Bicycle Friendly Business District is a partnership between the City, neighborhood & business organizations, and local businesses that improves a business district’s bicycle friendliness through bicycle infrastructure and local business promotions to bicyclists as well as encourages and promotes local trips by bicycle, especially for shopping, dining, and recreation. These Districts not only support bicycling as a healthy, environmentally friendly and effective mode of transportation but also encourage local dining and shopping and free up parking for local businesses.

LADOT currently offers many bicycle amenities free of charge such as inverted- and meterhitch bike racks, bicycle corrals, fixit public work stations, maps, way finding signage and an enhanced Bikeway network.

Local Businesses are encouraged to do their part by participating in the following activities.

Below is a list of places where a Bicycle Friendly District would be useful to NELA Mobility and access as well as for placemaking efforts, connecting the streets to the River.

Below is a pilot program designed by LADOT for a Bicycle Friendly Business Program within Northeast Los Angeles.

### 3.9 Greenway 2020 Plan

Greenway 2020 is the LA River Revitalization Corporation’s campaign to work with public and private partners to complete a continuous 51-mile Greenway along the LA River by the year 2020. The LA River Greenway is the key to creating a regional non-motorized transportation corridor in Los Angeles County. Passing through 13 cities and numerous jurisdictions, the Greenway will make it possible for families in the San Fernando Valley to get on their bicycles and take a leisurely ride to Griffith Park, Dodgers Stadium and Downtown along the River with amenities, such as riverfront parks, cafes and equipment rentals to enjoy along the way. It will enable daily commuters throughout the city to ditch crowded roads and buses in favor of a beautiful and healthy daily bike ride along the River. Ultimately, the LA River Greenway has the potential to catalyze an unprecedented transformation of the LA River into a one-of-a-kind civic, ecological and recreational public realm amenity and mobility corridor for Los Angeles.

COST – \$50 to \$100 million per mile

#### Greenway 2020 Design Approach

The new LA River Greenway 2020 project endeavors not only build new bike and pedestrian paths connecting the intermittently existing bike paths along the river, but to introduce a new cohesive Greenway 2020 public realm amenity along all 51 miles of the LA River. In order for the Greenway to perform urbanistically as a civic, recreational and mobility spine for Los Angeles, Greenway 2020 aims to transform the existing LA Riverfront according to five strategic modes of operation:

Mission

Encourage local dining, shopping, leisure, and errands; and support bicycling as an active mode of transportation

Who

Services Bicycle-oriented businesses in Northeast LA, located within the Figueroa Commercial District , along Cypress Blvd, Broadway Blvd, Glendale Blvd and Los Feliz Blvd.

Partners: Council District 1 and 13, the Mayor’s Business Team, the Department of City Planning, LA Tourism Office (Shop LA, Car Free LA), Metrolink, Sweet Ride USA, C.I.C.L.E., Occidental College Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI), Neighborhood Councils (Eagle Rock NC, Arroyo Seco NC, Historic Highland Park NC), LACBC, Bicycle Doctor, Flying Pigeon LA

Focus

Short/local trips (errands, dining, shopping) and recreation, Business Improvement and District development, Complete Streets development, Pilot for Citywide Program

Capture area: 2-5 miles

LADOT Components

Bicycle Parking Facilities – allow business patrons, visitors, and tourists to park, stroll and visit multiple establishments, allow unlimited time to park, provide website directory to local Bicycle Friendly Businesses, diminish demand on local car parking

- Inverted-U and Meterhitch bike racks
- Bicycle corrals \*requires maintenance partner
- Bicycle Repair Facilities – provide DIY basic repair for the public, ease bicycle inconveniences in shopping and high traffic districts, increase bicycle repair and maintenance knowledge among the general public
- Fixit Public Work Stations \*requires maintenance partner

Bikeways – provide bikeway infrastructure, guides to access the Los Angeles Bikeway network, specialized wayfinding elements geared towards bicyclists and pedestrians

- Bikeway Maps, Signage, and Wayfinding
- Bikeway Network
- BOP Programs – information and outreach for the Bicycle Friendly Business Program
- Bicycle Friendly Business Program Website
- Bicycle Friendly Business Window Clings

Partner Components

Online Promotion – websites provide forum and tools for special offers and deals including check ins, businesses can promote Bicycle Friendly identity through blogosphere and web presence on social media via features on Bicycle Friendly Businesses

- Yelp (special offers and deals)
- Foursquare (check in offers and deals)
- Local blogs and Websites

Promotional Materials for District – provide branding and public recognition for Bicycle Friendly Businesses, direct bicyclists using city facilities to a Bicycle Friendly Business District guide, gather all program elements in one place for easy access by local bicyclists

- District Sticker with QR Code
- District Webpage
- District Map

Pilot Bicycles for District – available for lending amongst district participants, provide increased convenience for inner-district trips to be achieved via bicycle

- Loaner Bicycles with Racks, Baskets, and Panniers
- Folding Bicycles
- Electric Bicycles
- Cargo Bicycles
- Bikes with Trailers

Neighborhood Programming and Rides – build community, increase knowledge of local business and recreational offerings, provide tourist attractions to increase local spending in districts

- Thematic Neighborhood Rides
- Local Bike Tours
- Bike Saturdays Events, Programming, and Deals

Participation Criteria

- Infrastructure**

  - bike racks
  - bike corrals
  - work/repair stations
- Business Practices**

  - bicycle customer discounts/deals
  - provide loaner bicycle amenities
  - provide bicycle/bike culture service
  - bike couriers
- Employee Appreciation**

  - train employees in bicycle safety/practices
  - on-site showers
- encourage bike commuting

•bicycle toolkits available

bicycle friendly employee dress code

•parking cash-out incentives
- Community Involvement**

  - Sponsors or organizer of bike events/clubs/rides
  - local community bicycle advocate
  - adopt a bike lane/path
- Partnership**

  - club rides
  - bike path rangers

Community Benefits

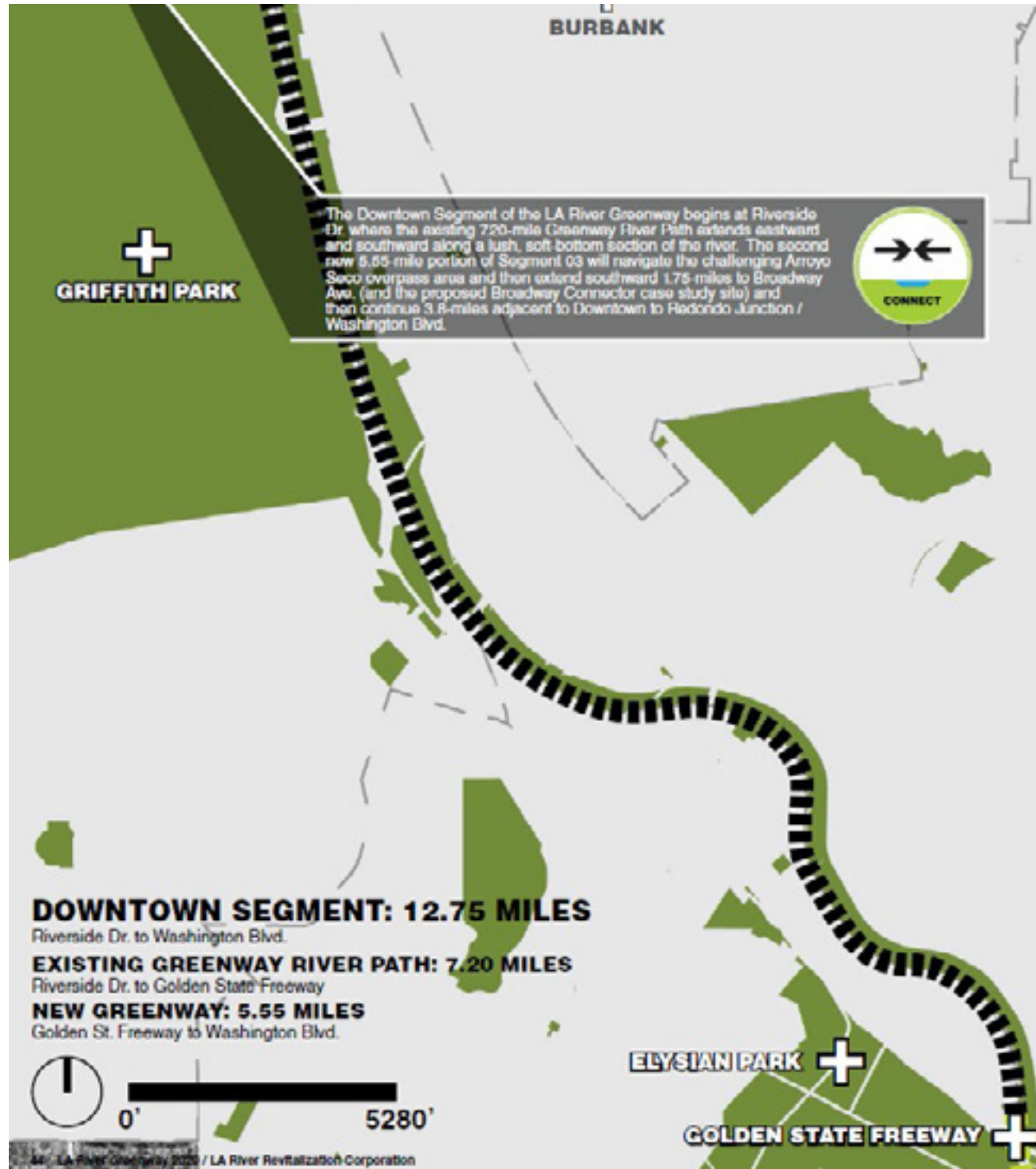
- Business and Economic Development**
- “bike local, buy local connection”
  - Increased car parking availability for local businesses (reduces parking issues associated with dense urban areas)
  - Makes neighborhoods more livable by making them safe, friendly and attractive to visitors/new arrivals
  - Very low cost
- Environmental and Health Incentives**
- Environmentally friendly
  - Improves air quality (reduces carbon emissions)
  - Reduces noise pollution
  - Exercise by active transportation reduces obesity and stress
  - Reduces impact on road infrastructure
- Quality of Life**
- Traveling by bike fosters a greater awareness of surrounding neighborhoods
  - Fun!
  - Increases mobility and access
  - Reduces congestion and travel time

Incentives for Participation

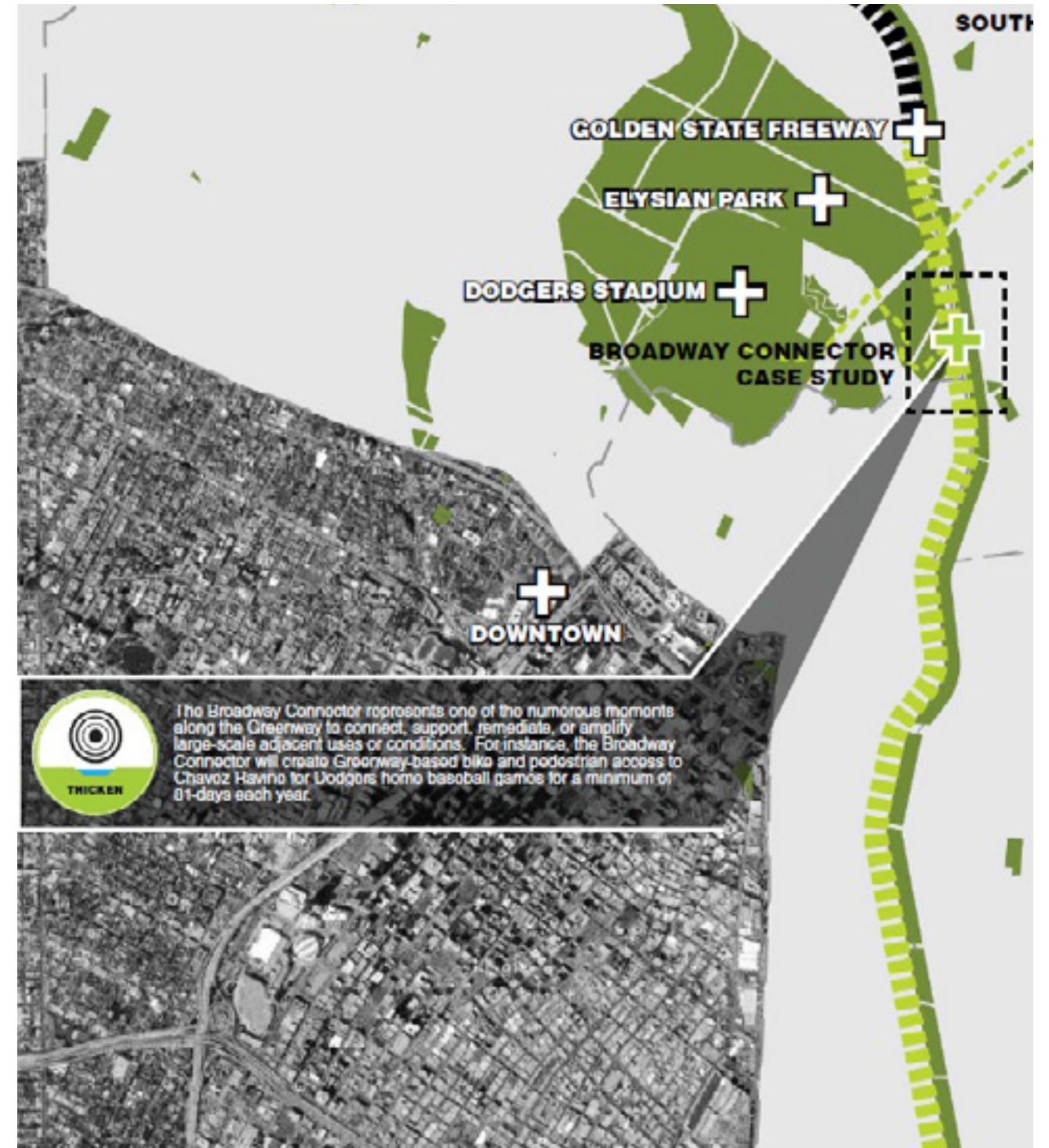
- Branded materials and consultation support for Bicycle Friendly Business
- Listing in map of district’s bicycle friendly businesses
- Public identification through Bicycle Friendly Business Window Cling
- Offers, deals, and check-in specials promotion via District website, Yelp and social media outlets
- Participant created BFBD event content posted to District website
- Community and Business District development and networking
- Prioritized LADOT Bike Program infrastructure installation (bike racks, bike corrals, Fixit Public Work Stations, Bikeshare stations)

Steps to Implementation

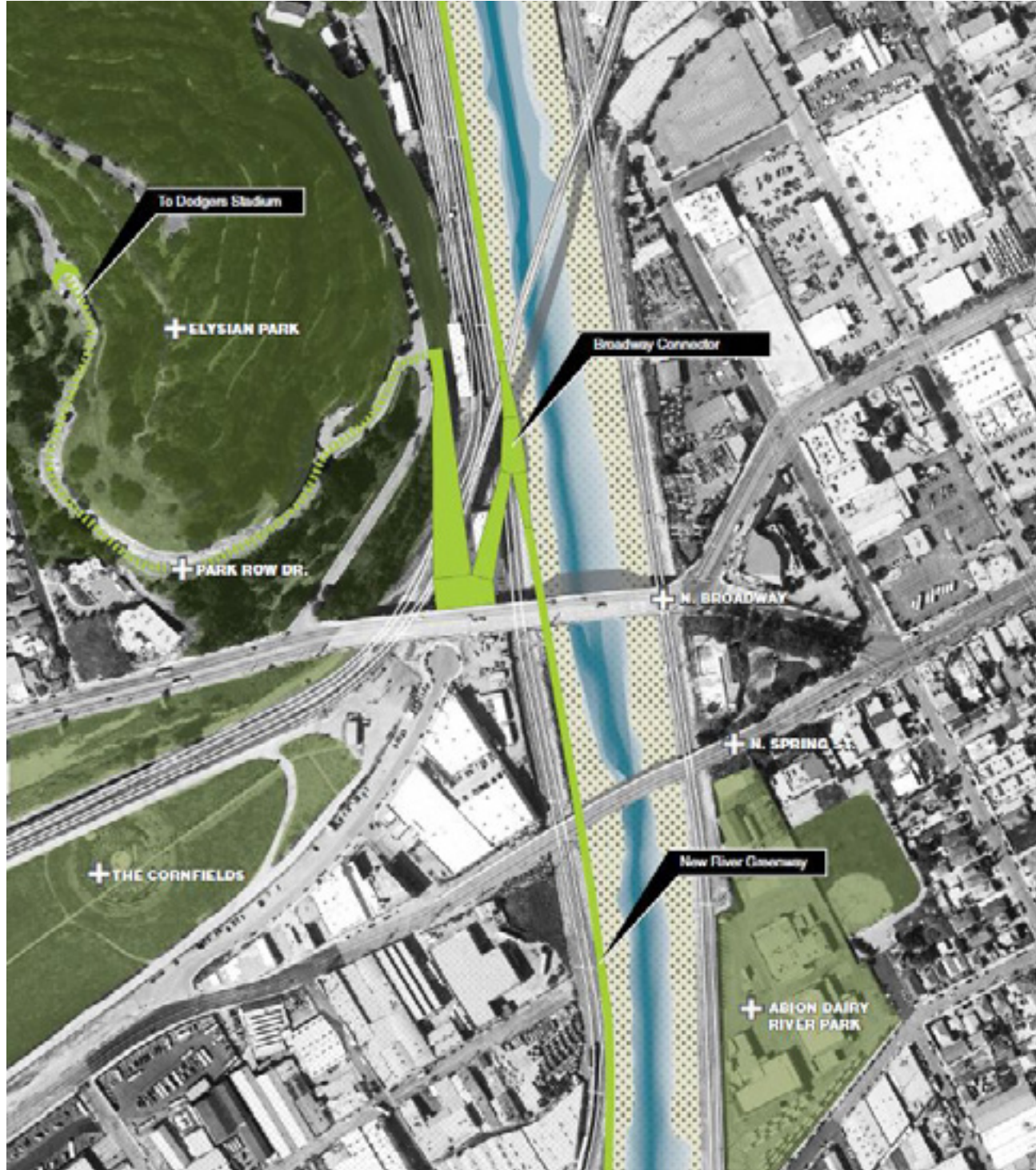
1. Program formalization
2. Website development/Materials/Branding
3. Identification of partners and outreach for NELA Program Pilot
4. NELA Partners seek funding for BFBD partner components
5. BFB Website launch
6. Businesses opt into BFB Program/District development
7. NELA Program Pilot launch
8. Pilot Program established
9. Review and analysis of Pilot Program
10. Program reworking for Citywide implementation
11. Mayor Endorsement of Citywide Program
12. Citywide Program Launch



Greenway 2020 plans to complete a continuous 51 mile greenway corridor along the L.A. River.



The Broadway Connector, located in the southern tip of the NELA Study Area.



The Broadway Connector proposes a pedestrian and bike ramp.



- **Connect:** At its most fundamental configuration, the LA River Greenway transforms the existing maintenance road right-of-ways running continuously along the South/West edges of the LA River into a new connective bicycle and pedestrian pathway accompanied by a custom suite of consistently specified vegetation types, edge conditions, bespoke urban furnishings and graphics. These new connective sections of the Greenway will serve to link between, or extend from, the existing LA River Bike Paths.
- **Capitalize:** Although the LA River Greenway project benefits greatly from the availability of existing LA River maintenance road right-of-ways, there are numerous obstacles that must be negotiated along the way that inevitably represent moments of greater capital investment. For instance, there are nearly 60 automobile or train bridge river crossings that would disrupt the continuity of the new Greenway if not negotiated by new at-grade crossings, underpasses and overpasses. These moments of increased investment represent opportunities to leverage

infrastructural necessity into new points of civic and artistic capital along the river.

- **Punctuate:** Moments of punctuation occur where opportunities are identified for the Greenway to connect, support, remediate, or amplify adjacent small-scale local uses or conditions. For instance, a residential street currently terminating in a fenced-off dead-end as it meets the river maintenance road could become a neighborhood-wide Greenway access point.
- **Thicken:** Moments of thickening occur where opportunities are identified for the Greenway to connect, support, remediate, or amplify large-scale adjacent uses or conditions. For instance, thickened zones of the Greenway can be proposed to expand the public realm of the river to meet nearby public parks or other civic amenities.
- **Expand:** The LA River Greenway will not only offer millions of Los Angeles area residents the opportunity to utilize this formerly inaccessible ecological and recreational resource, but will serve as the primary mobility circuit connecting residents



The Broadway Connector proposes a bike and pedestrian ramp that bridges the River and the proposed Cornfields Park.

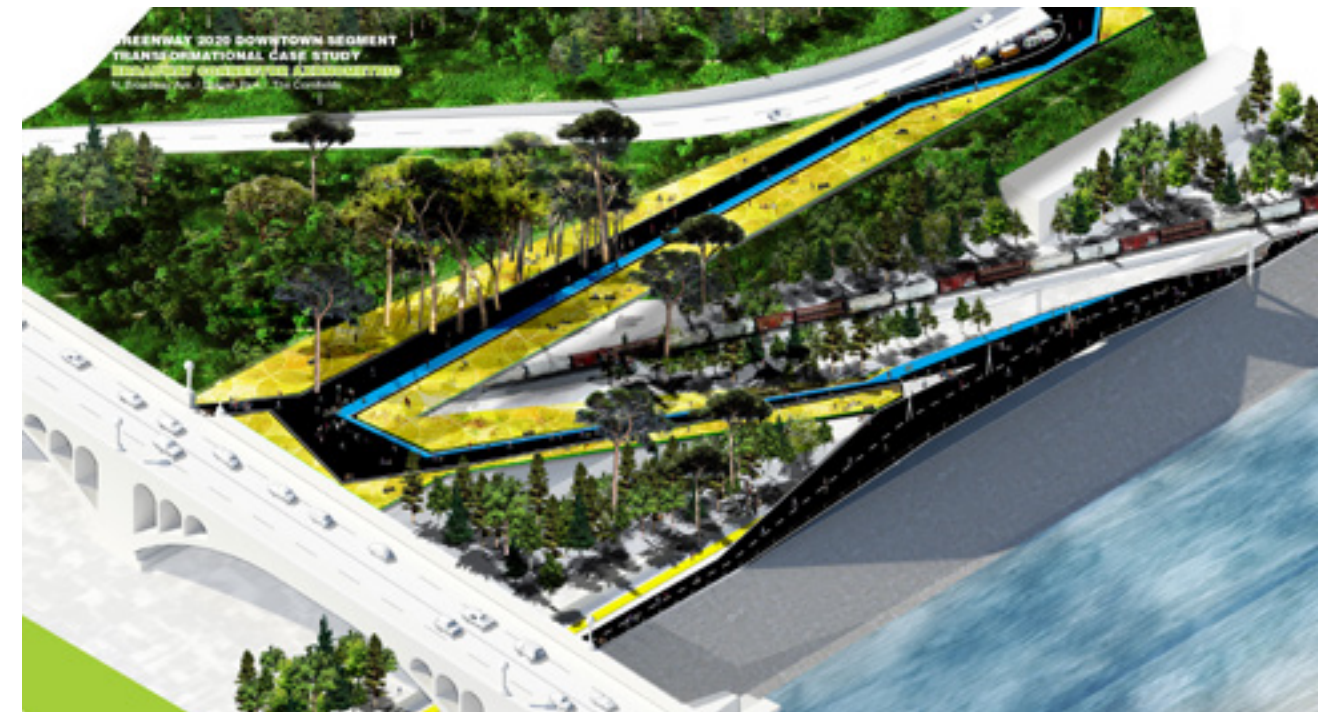
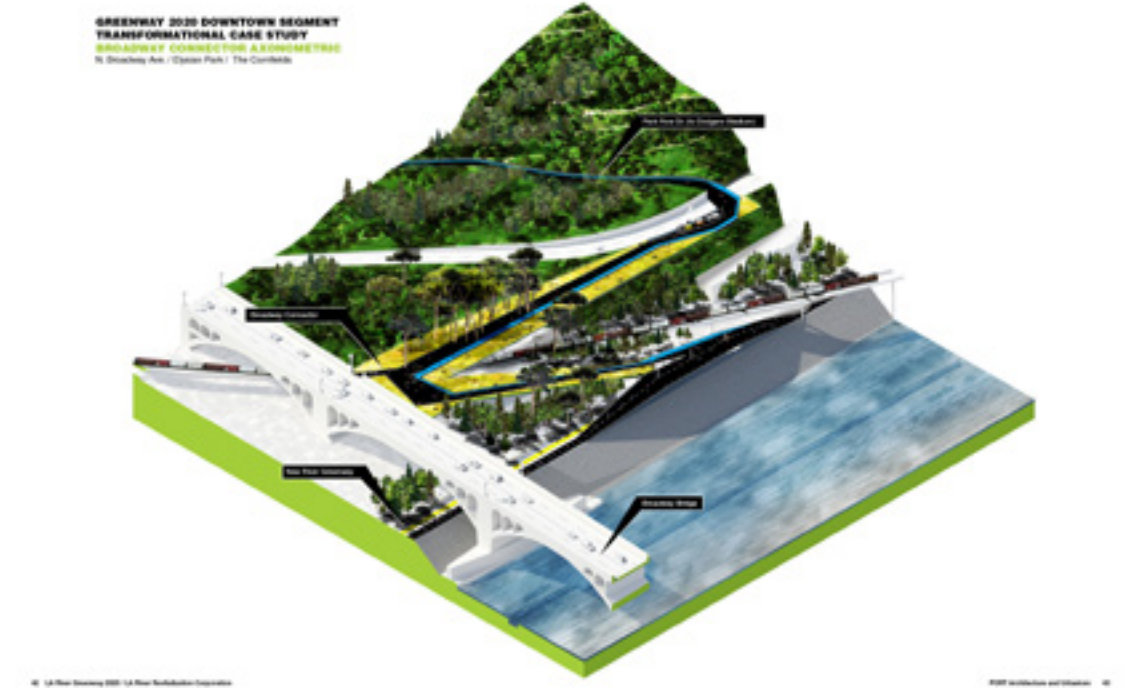
across LA to countless new neighborhoods and destinations by acting as the primary spine capable of synthesizing numerous existing and proposed sub-networks of street bike-lanes in cities and neighborhoods along the river.

#### Policy Recommendation

The City of Los Angeles shall support and forward with the Greenway 2020 vision by assisting in their effort to raise funds, entitle projects, allow for demonstration projects and help raise funding to connect the River to the City. The City should also assist the implementation of the Broadway Connector.

### 3.10 Broadway Connector

The NELA Vision Plan and Economic Development Implementation Strategy recommends that the City assist in this Greenway 2020 effort by providing support for the Broadway Connector, within the Southern portion of the NELA Study Area. The Broadway Connector, proposes a bike and pedestrian ramp connecting the riverfront Greenway over an existing railroad maintenance facility to a Broadway bridge access point, then over railroad tracks to Elysian Park hillside to meet Park Row Dr. The connector widens and thickens to become a signature elevated public realm that additionally serves to close the gap between the river and the proposed Cornfields park.



The project connects the riverfront Greenway over an existing railroad maintenance facility to a Broadway bridge access point, then over railroad tracks to Elysian Park hillside to meet Park Row Drive.

# 4

## ENVIRONMENTAL

The US Army Corps of Engineers has released the draft of their plan for restoring the Los Angeles River. Below are recommendations made in their draft report. The VPEDIS recommends each of these projects be implemented within the next 50 years for the ecological health and restoration of the Los Angeles River. The United States Army Corp of Engineers estimates the cost of these improvements to be approximately \$1 Billion dollars.

Below is a map showing all improvements followed by an explanation of each improvement and renderings showing the before and after pictures of the site.

### 4.1 Taylor Yards (Bow Tie Parcel)

Riparian corridors and widening of the soft bottom river bed by approximately 300 feet and gradual riparian slope to the overbank elevation along the reach length approximately 1,000 feet. At the upstream end of the reach, a back water wetland is developed on a setback bench and there is a small terraced area at the downstream end of the Bowtie parcel. Freshwater marsh dominates the new river bed. The banks of the river downstream of Taylor Yard and on the west bank are restructured to support overhanging vines and other riparian vegetation. Where west banks present a levee conditions around

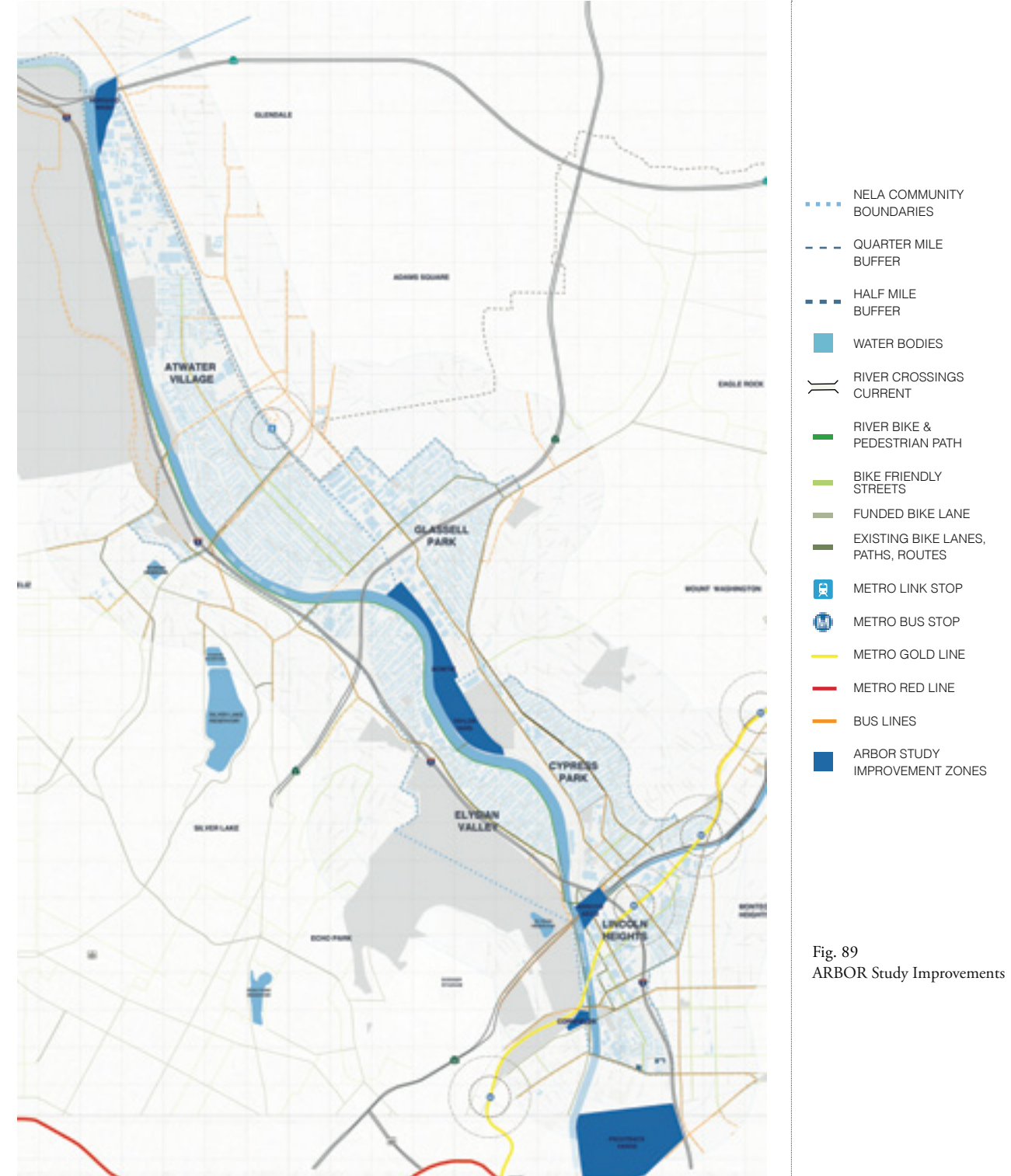


Fig. 89  
ARBOR Study Improvements



Top to Bottom: Taylor Yard's Bowtie Parcel with current state on the left and improved plans on the right. Taylor Yard's G1/G2 Parcel with current condition on the right and planned improvements on the left.

stormwater culverts, vegetation will comply with levee vegetation policies. Existing in-channel riparian and wetland areas would be maintained and restored through management of invasive vegetation.

#### 4.2 Taylor Yards (G1/G2)

The banks of the river downstream of Taylor Yard and on the west bank are restructured to support overhanging vines and other riparian vegetation. Where west banks present a levee conditions around stormwater culverts, vegetation will comply with levee vegetation policies. Existing in-

channel riparian and wetland areas would be maintained and restored through management of invasive vegetation. Elevated crossing of railroad tracks to provide access to/from Taylor Yard for pedestrians with a pedestrian tunnel beneath the railroad track on the east side of Taylor Yard.

#### 4.3 Arroyo Seco Confluence

The Arroyo Seco tributary will be restored with riparian habitat. The stream itself will have its banks and bed softened for approximately half a mile upstream. At the confluence of the Arroyo Seco and the River a backwater



Top: Arroyo Seco Confluence current state. Bottom: Arroyo Seco Confluence with a restored riparian habitat.



Top: Piggyback Yards current condition. Bottom: Piggyback Yards with restored 113 acres of riparian habitat.

riparian wetland will be established and restructuring of the banks of the river will occur in order to support vegetation on the banks.

4.4 Los Angeles Transportation Center / “Piggyback Yards”

Piggyback Yard would be restored with approximately 113 acres of riparian habitat. Micro-grading would slope the site to restore the historical wash that once ran through this area. The restored historical wash would meander through the property and would be connected to the existing river channel through a wide culvert or designed confluence, if possible.

The riparian corridor measure would involve planting riparian communities of cottonwood/willow, sycamore, mugwort, mulefat, and scarlet monkey flower with a buffer of sagebrush, buckwheat, and native herbaceous plants. It would include irrigation for establishment and water harvesting features to sustain plants, including micro-grading and/or swales to capture and infiltrate water. Water sources could include overflows from the restored historical wash, reclaimed water, harvesting of stormwater and street runoff (with small wetland features at the end of adjacent streets), and/or highway runoff. Soil amendments would be required. Establishment and drought management for this vegetation would utilize irrigation, which would be either through flood irrigation (simulating a natural riparian regime) or drip irrigation, dependent upon the availability of water. There are no channel modifications within this reach as water entering the River from the historical wash would be routed through existing storm drains in the channel wall.

4.5 Verdugo Wash

Verdugo Wash tributary, which provides a future connection between the LA River and the Verdugo Mountains, a connection that also historically supported a habitat corridor for movement of wildlife. Restoration at the Verdugo Wash confluence would restore opportunity for passage to the Verdugo Mountains, a 26 square mile area serving as a stepping stone to the

western San Gabriel Mountains. Additional habitat in the community of San Rafael Hills could also be incorporated into the movement corridor as a regional habitat node. Restoration of the Verdugo Wash confluence would also provide 34 acre habitat node in the Study Area, with connectivity to the Los Feliz Golf Course via existing habitat in the Glendale Narrows and connectivity through the downstream reaches.

4.6 Los Angeles State Historic Park / “Cornfield”

Restoration of hydrology and habitat at the Cornfields site, which provides a 9 acre riparian habitat node that decreases the distance between habitat nodes in the resource poor downtown area. Terracing the bank of the river at this location provides a hydrologic connection on the west bank of the river. Also, the river is widened for a length of 0.5 miles. This widening allows for expansion of in-channel river habitat and geomorphology, including riffle/pool complexes, which would support 5 acres of increased habitat for native fish.



Top: Verdugo Wash current state. Bottom: Verdugo Wash with restored passage to Verdugo mountains.



Top: Cornfields current state. Bottom: Cornfields with restored 9 acre riparian habitat.

## 5

## CREATING JOBS AND IMPROVING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Connecting North Atwater to the Sewer

During the NELA Riverfront Collaborative's research, it was discovered that there is an industrial community within the North Atwater area which utilizes Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems, or Septic Systems, for sewage disposal. After discussions with members of the Bureau of Sanitation Staff, the Collaborative was informed that while the City monitors septic systems of single family and duplexes within the City boundary, that the State of California Regional Water Quality Control Board monitors commercial, multifamily and industrial systems. However, due to recent and

continuing budget reductions, this monitoring may not be done as frequently as may be necessary. This is concerning for the following reasons: (1) The most common reason for failure within septic systems is improper monitoring and maintenance, (2) The proximity of these systems near to the River creates a potential environmental concern for the health of the Los Angeles River Watershed.

The most serious effect of a failing system is the potential for serious disease from the leaking and improperly treated

waste. Dysentery and hepatitis can be spread by these wastes. In addition to the diseases themselves, mosquitoes and flies that spread some illnesses can breed in areas where liquid waste reaches the surface. Chemical or nutrient poisoning can also be a problem as many of the synthetic products which may be used by industrial scale buildings can be poisonous to humans, pets and wildlife if they travel through soil and into the watershed. Thus it is important to closely monitor these systems to prevent failure.

This VPEDIS recommends that the City work with BOS in achieving the following goals with regards to this industrial community adjacent to the River:

- (1) Coordinate an effort to assume liability for monitoring of said OWTS facilities.
- (2) Create a program that monitors the health of the River and watershed within a 500 feet vicinity of any industrial septic tank within the North Atwater region (as was done near Humboldt further downstream).
- (3) Coordinate an effort or raise funds to incentivize/ supplement the cost of the transfer of sewage removal from septic systems to sewer systems by 2015. According to maps on Navigatela.lacity.org, there appears to be adjacent sewer access (as shown in Attachment C).

Below is a cost estimate produced by the bureau of Sanitation showing the cost of conversion for 47 sites within the North Atwater Industrial District.

### 5.2 Foster business attraction and retention in NELA

Attract new businesses to grow and diversify NELA's business sectors. Business attraction programs round out a local economic development strategy by providing jobs and goods/services that are important to the NELA riverfront communities. Anchor institutions (such as major organizations and corporations) should be the targeted for their stability and positive impact on the workforce.

Local governments can also help retain businesses by reducing development or operation costs with financial

incentives, waivers or fees or taxes, or in-kind services. Some common techniques would include:

- Surveys of local businesses to determine plans for changes or expansions and attitudes toward local governments
- Periodic business roundtables
- Regular personal visits by local elected officials to businesses
- Publication of newsletters to local businesses
- Active involvement by local elected officials in chambers of commerce and other business groups
- Appointment of local business owners or managers on local boards and commissions, even if they are not residents

### 5.3 Local Hiring Policy

Local hiring is often defined as an objective of hiring people who live close to the workplace. In the public sector, many local hiring programs require developers and contractors benefitting from public funds to target a percentage of the jobs created through construction or development of new businesses toward local residents. Local hiring ensures that residents benefit from the economic development and investment occurring in their community and supports sustainability goals by bringing residents closer to jobs, reducing commute time and encouraging use of transit, bicycling, and walking. Reducing commute times also gives residents more time with their families and communities, and may enhance civic engagement since residents live and work in the same community. Some local hiring programs also target particular local populations, such as youth groups.

Although local hire programs differ widely from city to city, first-source hiring procedures are consistently utilized as a best practice. The term "first-source hiring" refers to systems whereby an employer first looks to the local community to find employees. Such systems include a local advertising effort, participation in local job fairs, and a pre-determined period where locals are interviewed before jobs are opened more broadly.



Antonio Cornejo, Cypress Park

Providing unemployed NELA residents with sustainable employment will have an immediate effect on the regional riverfront economy. Putting people back to work will enable them to become active consumers in the local economy and contributors to the local tax base, which is one of the best ways to stimulate economic growth. In addition, reducing all levels of unemployment and underemployment in NELA will help reduce poverty levels across Los Angeles, which can ultimately spur economic development and lead to an increase in new business investment in the river – a benefit to everyone.

#### 5.4 Expand education opportunities and job training programs

Prioritize regional and local workforce development funding to prepare people for high-priority jobs and careers in major NELA sectors. Our recommendation is to adopt specific policies and make targeted investments in workforce education and training that prepare people for high-priority jobs and careers in major sectors. An emphasis should be made to create partnerships between local workforce investment boards (WIBs), community colleges, universities, economic development organizations,

and businesses. Work with social service providers to develop job assistance and training opportunities to assist the local population should also be pursued.

Lastly, it is recommended to support the State's commitment to Career Technical Education (CTE) investment, by adopting a "shared investment" approach to expanding CTE in high-priority fields within NELA.

#### 5.5 Create a more attractive regulatory environment to do business in NELA

Review and advocate potential regulatory reform options to make it easier to do business in NELA. Efforts to streamline the regulatory environment will make the NELA region more competitive in attracting businesses, bringing more prestigious anchor organizations to the riverfront area and cycling more dollars into the local economy.

An effort to create incentives for companies and industries that have voluntarily adopted best practices and exhibited good "corporate citizenship" should also be considered. There is a great opportunity to strengthen California's high environmental, worker-protection and public-standards safety and improve the regulatory systems' efficiency, costs, and service.

#### 5.6 NELA Food Hub Development effort

##### NELA Food Hub

Among economic development implementation strategies being advanced is a NELA Food Hub Development effort, examining how the NELA Study Area could respond to needs identified by the City of Los Angeles Food Policy Council for a Food Hub.

The NELA RC has identified a need for the city to establish an enterprise that would coordinate opportunities for small farmers to reach metro markets with fresh and farm processed foods, and for local food institutions to partner with local food producers. Food enterprises and service

organizations are fast-growing segments of the food industry, delivering a multitude of health, environmental and community development benefits to a region.

For the purposes of this VPEDIS, the NELA Food Hub shall be understood to be a cluster of enterprises that will be linked by their owner/operators' commitment to:

- Work with trusted local food suppliers who are transparent in their representation of growing practices,
- Be transparent in their representation of food sources in their labeling and promotional materials,
- Be willing to source at least 51 percent of their ingredients from local growers or food producers,
- A willingness to participate in a potential NELA Food Hub Operating Company that will provide economies and efficiencies of scale to the enterprises as a provider of management services including Human Resources, Finance/Accounting, Payroll, Risk Management, Serv-Safe Training, etc.

Food deserts are becoming all too common in dense urban neighborhoods like NELA. The lack of existing neighborhood markets can have profound social, health and environmental consequences. According to a report released by the University of California Los Angeles entitled, *Cultivate LA: An Assessment of Urban Agriculture in Los Angeles County*, there is approximately 587 square miles of land used for agricultural purposes. The average distance travelled by urban farmers to distribute their goods is 13.9 miles. This number quadruples to 46.8 miles as the average distance travelled by farmers' market vendors. This increase in miles travelled can be attributed to the long distance between rural farm operations and an urban farmers market.

#### The Meaning of the Term "Food Hub"

Since the start of 2012, USDA has been describing a Food Hub as "an organization that plays a key role in a local food system as a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products".

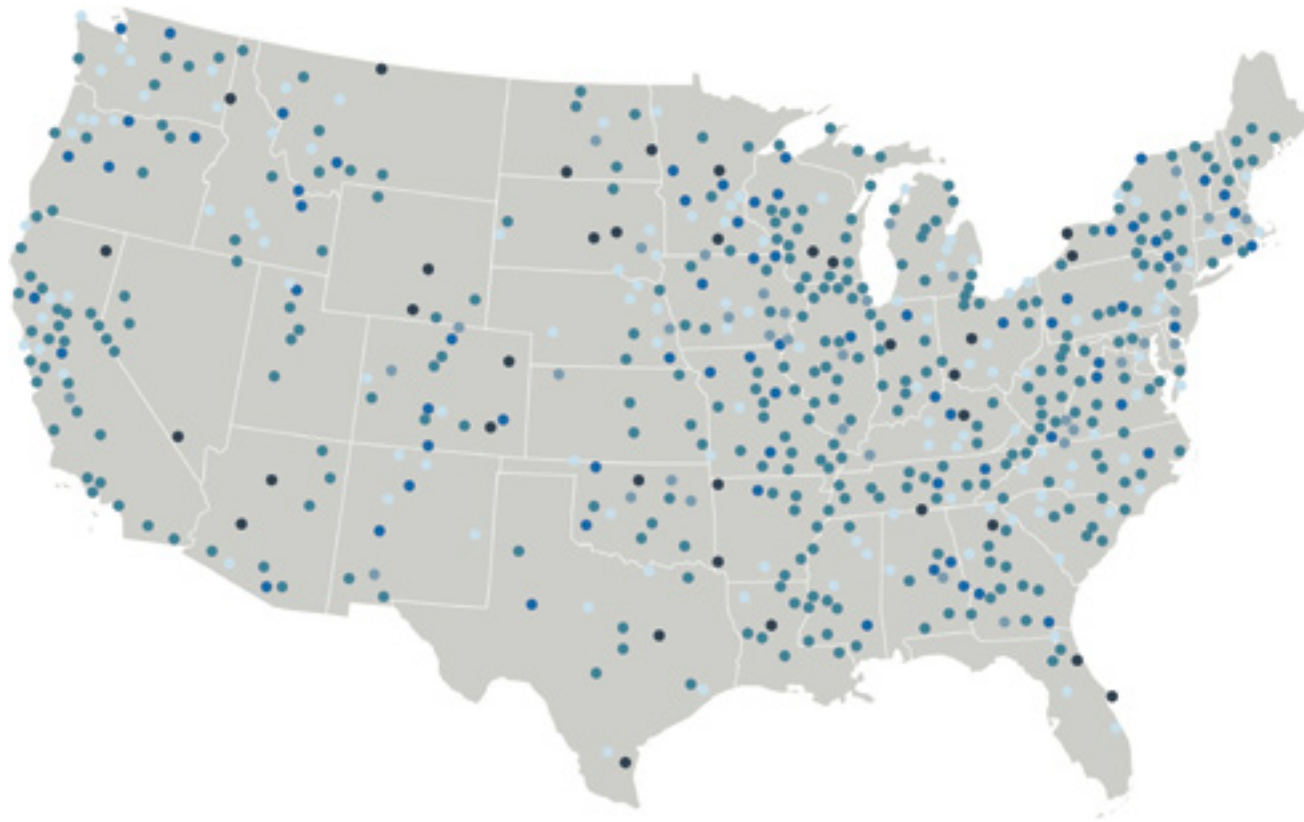


Fig. 90 US Food Hubs and Markets in 2013

Throughout the United States, locally operated Food Hubs are appearing as private or public sector enterprises with equipment, staff and logistics capacities to meet growing demands for local and regional food. As businesses, they aggregate, distribute and market “source-identified” foods that have been grown or processed by local and regional food producers. These Food Hubs make it possible for small and mid-sized farms to come together as suppliers for large-volume markets in their vicinities, such as schools, hospitals, grocery stores, restaurant chains and other institutions. Food Hubs are integral in helping residents access raw and value-added food products, while enabling farmers to deliver a larger

and more assured selections of locally grown fresh and farm-made products.

**Incidence of Food Hubs in the US**

As of the end of 2012, the USDA’s Agriculture Marketing Service had identified 220 Food Hubs operating in metro and rural communities throughout the United States.

Today, Food Hubs are operating as privately held businesses, as public ventures, as cooperatives or as nonprofit organizations. Though most cover costs



San Francisco’s Produce Market has had a long-standing reputation as a wholesale outlet and fresh farm grown food distributor.

through earnings from their aggregation, distribution, food handling, packing, processing and/or marketing services, a few such as Red Tomatoes and Appalachian Harvest rely on grants to offset losses.

Though the field is relatively new, some Food Hubs, such as Detroit’s Eastern Market, New York’s Fulton Fish Market, Hustontown PA’s Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative, Syracuse NY’s Central Regional Market, and San Francisco’s Produce Market have long-standing reputations as wholesale outlets and fresh farm grown food distributors. Like many similar programs, they formed to meet what their communities’

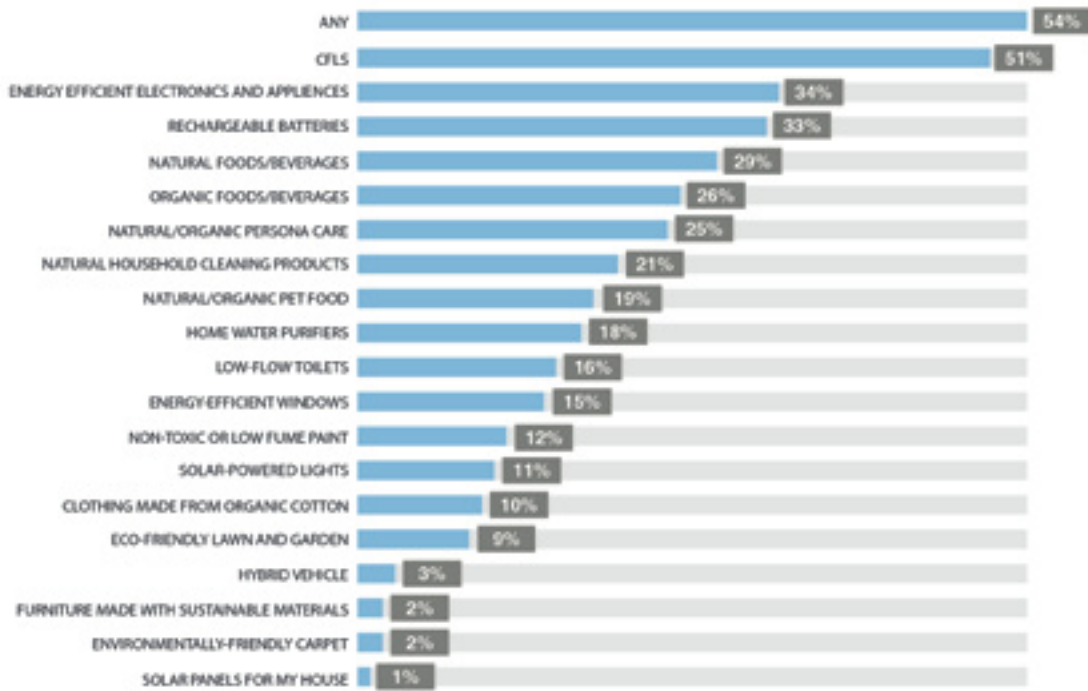
or owner/operators’ determined to be unmet needs for food collection, aggregation, distribution, packing, grading, processing, and marketing services.

**Links Between Food Hubs and Economic Development**

There are strong links between the emerging network of regional and community Food Hubs and the economy’s growing interest for local, “naturally” grown foods. Many Hubs are meeting purchasing preferences that Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) oriented



New York’s Fulton fish market and Detroit’s Eastern market are examples of successful food hubs.



# GREEN PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

Fig. 91

consumers are showing for foods, packaged goods and services provided by local farmers in their vicinities.

LOHAS is a demographic defining a particular market segment related to sustainable living, “green” ecological initiatives, and generally composed of a relatively upscale and well-educated population segment. The LOHAS market is proving to be an important driver for “green,” local, sustainable economies and the scale of its presence in a community is a good indicator for a Food Hub’s success. Despite recessionary trends, the 2010 LOHAS market had grown to \$290 billion dollars. LOHAS consumers are driving the growth of a mainstream

movement toward a “green” economy. Their beliefs, wants and desires are significant factors in the emergence of Food Hubs. They should not be overlooked, particularly because their presence is widespread and impervious to demographic factors such as age, earnings, socio-economic class, cultural backgrounds and geography.

The size and scope of the LOHAS market is illustrated in **Chart 1**, which depicts Green Purchasing Behavior in 2009, the year that marks the height of the current economic downturn. Despite economic adversity, 29% of consumers were still paying premium prices for natural and organic food and buying it with

frequency. Because of propensities these consumers have for products perceived to be healthy promoting and environmentally friendly, they are willing to pay premiums to support their values even during a period of spending constraint. During a four-year period between 2007 and 2011, local food purchasing by LOHAS minded consumers in the US grew from \$5 Billion to \$7.8 Billion. This market segment has also shown that its members attach greater value to local origination of foods offered for sale than they do to organic certification.

### Food Hub Conclusions

Prior to the NELA RC formation, the Urban Environmental Policy Institute of Occidental College had convened a group of food industry professionals and community food system stakeholders to examine the need for a metro region food hub in the LA metro region. This group determined niche areas where business and service groups were providing needed assistance in respect to help with:

- Affordable transportation of goods to market for small farmhold growers
- Support for an population of commercial growers in urban settings
- Assistance in promotion of Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) standards among growers, tradespeople and consumers
- Support for value added processing of locally grown foods
- Access to affordable organic produce and access to greater supplies of organic produce
- Support for vending food safety and for healthier vending food product choices
- Greater access to storage, particularly cold storage by small scale food distributors and CSA providers within the NELA region and within other areas of the city and region
- More support for artisan food producers and better links between artisan producers and specialty food growers
- Development of policies regarding sale and treatment of urban agriculture products within the city, county and region.

A recommendation to organize a Food Hub to provide help to local growers, food producers and institutions seeking efficient ways to purchase locally grown and produced foods was reached.

### Food Hub Objectives

- Improve access to “good food” for all community members as well as local retail businesses and institutions
  - TARGETS: schools, hospitals, restaurants, corner stores, bodegas, vendors
- Streamline access to local food purchasing and provide a way for customers of all sizes to purchase source verified local foods
- Create good quality green jobs throughout the regional food chain (specifically in food production/CEA cultivation, handling, sales and processing)
- Create a way to support and sustain the regional food system through public information, education and outreach programs, a NELA area meeting space and a commitment to dedicate some portion of profits toward food access resources for those in need
- Fill niche areas identified by the NELA Food Hub Advisory Board and complement kitchen incubator and local food distribution programs under development by LA Kitchen, Homeboy and HomeGirl Industries and by Angel City Food Works.
  - The NELA Advisory Board has determined that there are already a number of food distributors and stores in the NELA neighborhoods and in the City of Los Angeles that are able to meet the needs of be established that would provide infrastructure to get local food from farms to wholesale buyers.
  - Future recommended projects would aim to provide job training, food processing, portion control production for special needs (senior citizens) consumers and assistance to artisan food manufacturers in or near the NELA neighborhood corridor.

### 5.7 Provide additional support and resources for small NELA businesses to succeed

Provide additional support services to small NELA businesses, so that they can remain competitive. Some examples of such support services could include:

- Developing and adopting a program that encourages private and governmental entities in the study area to purchase goods and services from local businesses;
- Fostering entrepreneurial thinking by supporting and expanding entrepreneur-training programs, apprentice opportunities and business services;
- Forming a business improvement district (BID) to collectively market/brand distinctive NELA commercial areas, like the distinctive commercial corridors along Los Feliz Blvd, Glendale Blvd, San Fernando Rd, Fletcher Rd, Cypress Ave and Figueroa St;
- Improving outreach efforts of small business assistance programs and resources that target NELA small businesses that do not have the capacity to seek out such resources.

### 5.8 Explore various infrastructure enhancements around the riverfront

Most NELA riverfront infrastructure is not adequate to meet the needs of a 21st century economy; various enhancements would go a long way in promoting global competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and equal employment opportunity.

Adaptive reuse should be expanded throughout the NELA communities. The Adaptive Reuse Ordinance has become one of the most significant incentives related to historic preservation in Los Angeles, facilitating the conversion of dozens of historic and under-utilized structures into new multi-benefit uses. The Ordinance provides for an expedited approval process and ensures that older and historic buildings are not subjected to the same zoning and code requirements that apply to new construction. The result has been the creation of several thousand new housing units,

with thousands more in the development pipeline, demonstrating that historic preservation can serve as a powerful engine for economic revitalization and the enhancement of infrastructure.

Within the NELA study area communities, a review of specific sites with the potential for higher density projects is highly recommended. With ecological restoration along the river’s corridor in mind, these higher density projects would be pursued in the *surrounding* Riverfront communities, but not along the river itself. Selective higher density projects could enliven surrounding NELA communities by introducing new housing options, employment, businesses and public amenities.

Finally, the ability to transfer Floor Area Ratio from certain parcels to others should be explored. Current density in the NELA study area is approximately a .5 FAR, that could be increased to 3.0-5.0 in selective nodes. Far too many areas in the study simply are being underutilized, with the communal highest-and-best-use left unfulfilled.

### 5.9 Encourage higher-technology industries that maintain existing industrial uses

Encouraging higher-technology industries that maintain existing industrial uses in NELA would be enormously beneficial to the riverfront community. Creating a biotech and technology overlay zones within NELA could vastly improve the regional workforce and wage-rate.

Along with Eaton and Baxter, two of the biggest employers in the NELA area, there are already many additional biotech/tech companies with 75 or more employees, including:

- Nelson-Miller Inc. – 200 employees
- Stadco – 160 employees
- Hehr International Inc. – 150 employees
- Huntsman Advanced Materials – 150 employees
- The Garvey Group – 125 employees
- Huntsman Advanced Materials – 120 employees
- Viva Vina Inc. – 100 employees

- Active Supply Co. – 100 employees
- Storybrook Production Inc. – 100 employees
- Salvem Communications – 100 employees
- Heiland Sinoc Automotive – 80 employees
- Mintie Corp. – 80 employees
- Homeboy Industries – 75 employees
- Elevator Equipment Corp. – 75 employees
- 43 Backwards Inc. – 75 employees

A Biotech and technology overlay would mean exploring specific planning and zoning ordinances that encourage technology and Bioscience research, Bioscience industry, Innovation activity, Bioscience workforce generation, and Biotechnology research. Targeted incentives, recruitment, and coordinated regulatory policies specific to industrial zonings could also be explored.

Lastly, consider permitting a FAR greater than 1.5:1 in targeted higher density areas such as those located in or near planned Transit-Oriented Districts (TODs), Specific Plans or Design for Development Areas, especially where such additional density can assist in producing more jobs or job-producing space.

5.10 Strengthen regional coordination and partnerships

Cooperate with regional LA River stakeholders where opportunities exist to share information, advocate joint-benefit projects, or jointly seek federal funding for the NELA area. This objective is critical because disinvestment and deterioration of core areas can affect the vitality of an entire region, and we must collectively address economic, environmental, and social opportunities.

There is a necessity to continue promoting a collaborative spirit through the NELA study area communities, and other LA River regional partners as well. Many of the recommendations in this VPEDIS have funding needs, large and small. The continued vitality of the NELA riverfront depends on the availability of resources and revenues to support a wide range of public and private activities.

By enhancing and providing incentives for local, regional, and state cooperation, cities and counties can craft sustained partnerships to effectively respond to future challenges and opportunities in economic development, affordable housing, and building sustainable communities.

5.11 Expand use of Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs)

Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs) are an alternative way to fund community economic development. The loss of community redevelopment has deprived local, regional and state governments of the ability to respond to the economic and environmental challenges facing California, including:

- Investing in infrastructure and sustainable development;
- Cleaning up and reusing brownfield properties;
- Preserving and developing affordable housing the serve the needs of a diverse population;
- Encouraging investment in underutilized areas;
- Protecting the environment and enhancing open space and other public amenities; and
- Supporting industries and businesses that provide living wage jobs.

It is recommended that the NELA RC support and advocate the guiding principles behind California Senate Bill 690, which focuses primarily on expanding the general framework of the existing Infrastructure Financing District statute, while extending IFD activity to apply to public private transactions that produce private sector jobs.

Across the state, nearly 220 cities are grappling with jobless rates over 9% and 1.8 million Californians are on the jobless rolls. AB 690 is designed to expressly create jobs in California by allowing cities and counties to establish Jobs and Infrastructure Districts, which will provide incentives to the private sector to create new jobs and provide workforce training.

AB 690 will not only maximize private investment, but will help the state regain its competitive footing for business. California is one of only three states in the nation that does not currently utilize tax increment financing – broadly recognized as the standard financing tool for economic development.

5.12 Strengthen role of the state Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (I-Bank)

Position the California I-Bank to more effectively facilitate private sector investment through public-private partnerships. The mission of the I-Bank is to finance public infrastructure and private development that promote a healthy climate for jobs, contribute to a strong economy and improve the quality of life in California communities. The I-Bank has extremely broad statutory powers to issue revenue bonds, make loans and provide credit enhancements for a wide variety of infrastructure and economic development projects and other government purposes.

Utilizing I-Bank programs would enhance the NELA river community’s ability to attract private capital, and implement revitalization projects more effectively.

5.13 Build Neighborhood Sit-Down Restaurants

The City should establish a business and marketing strategy that attracts anchor neighborhood sit-down restaurants that build on and identify with the neighborhoods. The neighborhoods of Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Lincoln Heights can benefit from anchor family sit-down restaurants as not only an amenity, but also a place of gathering and source of local revenue.

5.14 Build a local movie theatre

Build a local neighborhood movie theatre in one of the major NELA Riverfront business corridors. The inclusion of a local movie theatre can increase the local

entertainment choices of the local residents and create sources of revenue for the local neighborhoods.

5.15 Leverage the county Healthy Design Ordinance

Leverage the county Healthy Design Ordinance to strategically identify and fund community gardens and farmer’s markets in NELA. The healthy design ordinance should not only be considered as a tool for a healthy built environment that increases healthy food and activity choices—but should also be leveraged as a tool that can study and fund the implementation of local community gardens and farmer’s markets in NELA that can increase local work opportunities and revenue.

5.16 NELA Riverfront District Local Tourism Maps

Create NELA LA Riverfront District maps that delineate recreational areas and also highlight local neighborhood points of interests, such as unique businesses and restaurants to support while enjoying the River. The maps can serve to promote local tourism in Los Angeles that not only creates a stronger sense of place, but markets ‘buy NELA Riverfront District’ initiatives at local businesses in the area.

# 6

## POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

### 6.1 Establish an EWDD NELA Riverfront District Implementation Position

Create a position within the city’s EWDD that will continue the coordination of NELA Riverfront District collaboration and implementation of the VPEDIS. It has been a fruitful form of departmental leadership and collaboration on behalf of the EWDD to administer the Partnership for Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant. The next logical step for implementation of the planning ideas would be the EWDD to create a position within the department to continue collaborative efforts in NELA and the River, and follow up through

coordinating implementation efforts across different public-private funding and partnerships.

### 6.2 Create a HUD field local liaison position

The Federal investment through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant has been not only a source for community planning funding but also a vital connection to federal grants and information on other national efforts that work on sustainable economic development. To this continue collaboration, a local HUD field position should be created in Los Angeles

that will serve as a liaison between HUD’s Office of Economic Resilience that can continue partnership efforts within the NELA Riverfront District and spur on similar place-based economic development efforts that coordinate Federal resources for the neighborhoods along the 51 miles of the L.A. River.

### 6.3 Affording Housing Policy

Create a housing policy that ensures a sensible percentage of new housing developments subsidized and approved by the City on major corridors and development nodes are affordable. The NELA Riverfront District area will most likely grow because of its attractive assets. This growth will increase the demand for housing. If housing along major corridors and development nodes are built, the City should institute a housing policy that supports the creation of affordable units for working families.

### 6.4 Renter to Buyer Program

To mitigate gentrification, create a ‘renter to buyer program’ in which the city and/or local community organizations partner up with a bank to educate and prepare current renters to become owners of their housing in vulnerable sections of NELA such as Cypress Park, Elysian Valley, Glassell Park, and Lincoln Heights.

### 6.5 Homeless Belonging Storage Hub

The homeless population will continue to be citizens who access the River, especially the NELA area since it is adjacent to downtown. The homeless population should not be restricted from use of the River as a public asset. To make room for homeless access to the River and mitigate any beautification concerns—the City should study the construction of a homeless belongings storage hub in the section of NELA closest to Downtown. Along with the construction, a program that can support the temporary storage of homeless belongings in the storage hub while the homeless population accesses the River should be explored.

### 6.6 Land Trust Initiative

To further mitigate gentrification in vulnerable areas of NELA, an existing or new community organization should implement a land trust model that will promote community ownership of land. Such models have been developed in other areas of the city that are experiencing rates of gentrification and land speculation. Land trusts led by the Eco Village in East Hollywood or T.R.U.S.T. South LA should be consulted for the future development of a NELA land trust.

### 6.7 Local High School Workforce Development Policy

Working alongside workforce development policy makers and the local education sector (LAUSD and Private), identify high-growth and living wage sectors in order to develop a school to work technical pathway program that connects local youth to local high quality jobs developed in the region.

### 6.8 LAUSD Partnership on Local Planning and Development

The City and LAUSD should create a memorandum of understanding and partnership in which programs that directly involve their local students and parents toward the education and participation in local planning and development issues in NELA. The schools continue to be vital community resources and assets that can be strategically leveraged for the purposes of increasing community participation in local planning and development issues.

### 6.9 Community Organizing Initiative

A community organizing platform should be created by an existing local non-profit or community organization that should educate and build local leaders to inform and shape future economic development in the NELA region

focused on equity. At the current moment, community organizing is fragmented in NELA and there should be a broader effort that focuses on the Riverfront District area and possibly the entire 51 miles of the L.A. River for the future.

6.10 Direct local Communication Infrastructure toward Equitable Economic Development

Following the creation of a local community organizing initiative focused on the NELA Riverfront area, one of the strategic activities of the initiative should be to access and activate the local communication infrastructure of residents, community organizations, and local media toward a discourse that will encourage equitable economic development for the NELA Riverfront District. This communication and community organizing strategy can create a local, regional, and citywide awareness about local NELA Riverfront issues that can imagine and implement policies focused on equitable economic development versus inequitable gentrification practices.

6.11 NELA Riverfront District public events programming

Program public festivals and events that celebrate the neighborhood’s identity, ethnic make-up (especially the larger Latino and Asian populations), and sustain dialogue that preserves the memory of the change-makers, community organizations, and history that has led to the revitalization of the L.A. River.

6.12 Get local support to allow 55% voter approval for financing mechanisms

While currently a voter approval rate of 2/3rds is required for specific local issues such as bonds and tax increases, a proposal has been gaining momentum at the State level that would lower that threshold to a 55% percent majority approval for local governments to issue bonds

for public works projects (also known as infrastructure financing districts).

Although statewide Redevelopment Agencies were eliminated in 2012, expanding and enhancing infrastructure financing districts may provide more options to local communities to focus on pressing issues like transportation development and providing affordable housing. Lowering the voter threshold for issuing bonds to specific projects would be the first step in giving cities more options to jumpstart catalytic public works endeavors in the NELA area.

