



## City of Santa Monica Memorial Park Transit-Oriented Development

Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

June 2011

## ULI Los Angeles Mission Statement

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

## About the ULI Los Angeles Technical Assistance Panels

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

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

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## Executive Summary

Los Angeles Metro's Exposition Light Rail Line, expected to open in 2015, promises to be a game changer for communities like Santa Monica's Memorial Park neighborhood. Located in Santa Monica's mid-city area, Memorial Park is currently a poorly defined neighborhood. A jumble of residential, commercial and light industrial uses, the area is located north of coral tree-lined Olympic Blvd and the Santa Monica Freeway, a short distance from Santa Monica's medical area to the north, Santa Monica College to the south, Bergamot Station to the east and downtown Santa Monica to the west. With few significant landmarks of its own, the specific plan area is home to Memorial Park, athletic fields, a Skate Park, gym and PAL youth center and the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's offices. Nearby is the private Crossroads Elementary School. When it opens at 17th Street and Colorado Avenue, the Memorial Park station on the Exposition Light Rail Line will become an important anchor for this community. The line, which will run through the area at grade along Colorado Avenue, will connect up with ten to twelve bus lines, including shuttles to the nearby hospitals and to Santa Monica College. The arrival of Expo is expected to support the area's mix of affordable and market rate housing and to improve public transit access to the park itself.

The City of Santa Monica has already taken great strides in the neighborhood's redevelopment in anticipation of the new station. The City acquired the former Fisher Lumber site for park expansion in 2004. The City's planners have also worked with the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority on the station design and amenities. The City completed a Land Use and Circulation Element for the General Plan adopted in July 2010 in which they defined Memorial Park as an integral activity center.





Santa Monica aspires to make the Memorial Park Activity Center, one of a small number of strategically focused Activity Centers, a future “complete neighborhood” supporting integrated land use and transportation development. Together, the Santa Monica Activity Centers will help the city achieve increased sustainability through reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas emissions. The least studied of Santa Monica’s three light rail station areas, the Memorial Park Activity Center presents Santa Monica and ULI with an exciting opportunity to present a new vision of urban living in a mixed use, mixed income southern California community.

### Background

Santa Monica’s Memorial Park neighborhood is one of a small number of strategically focused Activity Centers identified in the City’s recently adopted Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE). The City of Santa Monica aspires to make the mid-city community, envisioned as a future “complete neighborhood,” one that:

- Successfully engages with the future Expo Light Rail station at 17th Street and Colorado Avenue as well as with the Expo regional bicycle path terminus at 17th Street and a potential transit plaza,
- Creates new transit-oriented development that is compatible with the surrounding dense residential neighborhood and provides community benefits consistent with the LUCE requirements,
- Introduces a healthy mix of affordable and market rate housing and local commercial and institutional uses,
- Integrates with the future expansion of Memorial Park and other area institutions,
- Optimizes parking efficiency through innovative sharing or district programs,
- Provides walking, bicycling and transit linkages to key destinations and area uses,
- Addresses public infrastructure needs and deficiencies, and
- Supports integrated land use and transportation development to achieve increased sustainability through reduced vehicle trips and greenhouse gas emissions.

# Executive Summary



## Assignment

As a city with high property values and more than its share of small scale developers, Santa Monica has sought to define the Memorial Park community in a way that will preserve and support the area's fine-grained mixed use and affordable character. Significantly invested as a city in thoughtful redevelopment, Santa Monica asked the ULI panel for its help in identifying effective and innovative approaches that will implement the community goals for the planning area as envisioned in the LUCE.

## Summary of Recommendations

The Technical Assistance Panel believes Santa Monica residents and City staff can leverage the new Expo Light Rail Station to transform Memorial Park into a new modern/sustainable/complete/transit-oriented neighborhood that provides much needed housing for employees working in Santa Monica. The panel believes the station and rail line will ultimately mitigate traffic by providing residents and commuters with several transit alternatives. Following is a short summary of the City's questions and recommendations provided by the panel.

*THE LUCE designation for the project area is for low mixed-use with an activity center overlay that, when activated through adoption of an area plan, will allow additional height and FAR to ensure the creation of neighborhood scale community benefits. With this in mind, what are some of the planning tools that can be used to achieve the smaller scale, fine grained transit-oriented development goals?*

### 1) Stakeholder Group

The formation of a stakeholder group comprised of the larger property owners in the Memorial Park area is essential for development and implementation of a successful revitalization program.

### 2) Area Plan and Park Master Plan

The panel believes that after the formation of the Neighborhood Stakeholder Group, the next step is to develop an Area Plan and Park Master Plan, both of which the City will begin to work on in the next year.

### 3) Parking Strategies and Revised Parking Codes

In addition to the typical elements of an area plan, land use plan and design standards, the panel suggests a parking demand analysis which can lead to the development of a shared parking strategy and alleviate pressure for developers to provide all required on-site parking. To jump start reinvestment, the City should also offer incentive packages for first projects. The package could include significantly reduced or eliminated parking requirements and/or additional floor area rates beyond what is already offered. The package should be similar to what the City implemented for its downtown area.

### 4) Infrastructure Finance District

The City should look into creating an infrastructure finance district if funding from redevelopment agencies are restricted or eliminated altogether at the state level. The panel also recommends the city provide incentives for major employers and institutions in the area to develop workforce housing in the Memorial Park neighborhood.

### 5) Workforce Housing Policy and Incentive Plan

The Memorial Park neighborhood is a great location for future workforce housing. The City was a part of the “Westside Workforce Housing Study” and assessed the challenges and opportunities for workforce housing. The City has started to facilitate a solution with a consortium of major employers and stakeholders. To realize their goals, the City should craft policy, financing mechanisms, and incentives for the development of workforce housing. Incentives could include expedited processing and greater densities. Creative funding can be sought from HUD, Prop 1C Housing Bonds, and creating a housing fund.

*Is this type of development approach feasible, and if so, are there opportune sites and programs that can act as catalysts for the organic development of the Memorial Park neighborhood?*

The prospect for future redevelopment is currently restrained by high land values, high construction costs, and the area’s location between better-defined neighborhoods. Therefore, organic development will need to be facilitated, at least at first, by the City of Santa Monica. The panel suggests a number of catalytic projects that can encourage private development in the area:

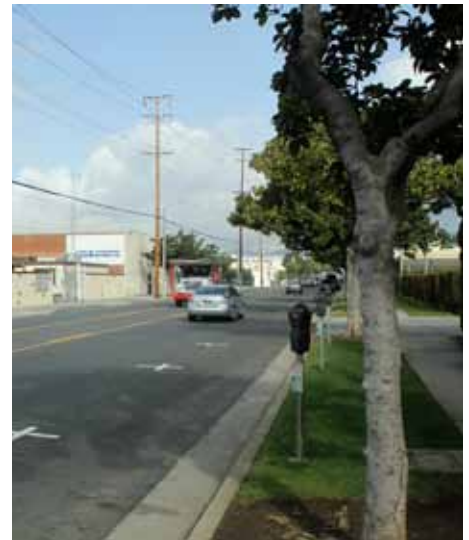
#### 1) Station Design and Integration

Access to transit is a critical feature that will attract private development. The panel introduced designing the area immediately around the station into a complete place or “piazza” where street, sidewalk, and rail tracks co-mingle in the space. The station should be an activity generator.

#### 2) Urban Walkable Environment

Physical improvements to the landscape should be made to enhance the pedestrian and retail environment. Some of the recommended items that can be completed that will be beneficial to the community include:

- Concrete pavers at crossings
- Infiltration planters and curb extensions
- Additional decorative street lights
- Granite cobble banding
- Residential stoops and steps along streets





# Executive Summary



- Retail frontage improvements
- Implementation of blanket design rules for the community to create the piazza since a majority of development projects and renovations will be adaptive reuse

## 3) Memorial Park Athletic Fields

The former Fisher Lumber site offers an opportunity to improve the visibility of Memorial Park, frame the piazza and share parking underground. The panel suggests building a community building, such as a relocated Police Athletic League facility or new gymnasium, in addition to creating a grand entrance and added open space into Memorial Park from Colorado Avenue. In addition, the City should focus on greening the park edge and eliminating fencing around the park.

## 4) Metro-owned Land

Currently Metro owns land adjacent to the station that is slated for use as 70 free park and ride spaces. This is prime real estate and should be used for a potential catalytic project with a mixed-use component with retail on the ground level. The required parking spaces would be better located in the underground lot recommended for the former Fisher Lumber site.

*Characterize real estate development potentials on these opportune sites. Describe roughly the economic feasibility, i.e., improved land value created by the hypothetical real estate projects versus estimates of land acquisition cost (assuming private sector responsibility for land acquisition). Will the real estate economics generate the desired organic development of the Memorial Park neighborhood as envisioned?*

Currently, there is little-to-no incentive for redevelopment. Given high construction costs, high land costs, small and shallow lots, and high demand for the current uses, developing non-subsidized rental housing is unprofitable. In addition, developers perceive Santa Monica as a tough area to build in especially when it is necessary to assemble land. In the next section, the panel suggests some ideas for encouraging development.

*What are the priority community benefits that should be considered to not only achieve these goals, but also incentivize development, i.e. shared parking, joint use opportunities with private and non-private partners, cultural benefits and physical improvements? What development incentives are important to foster organic change?*

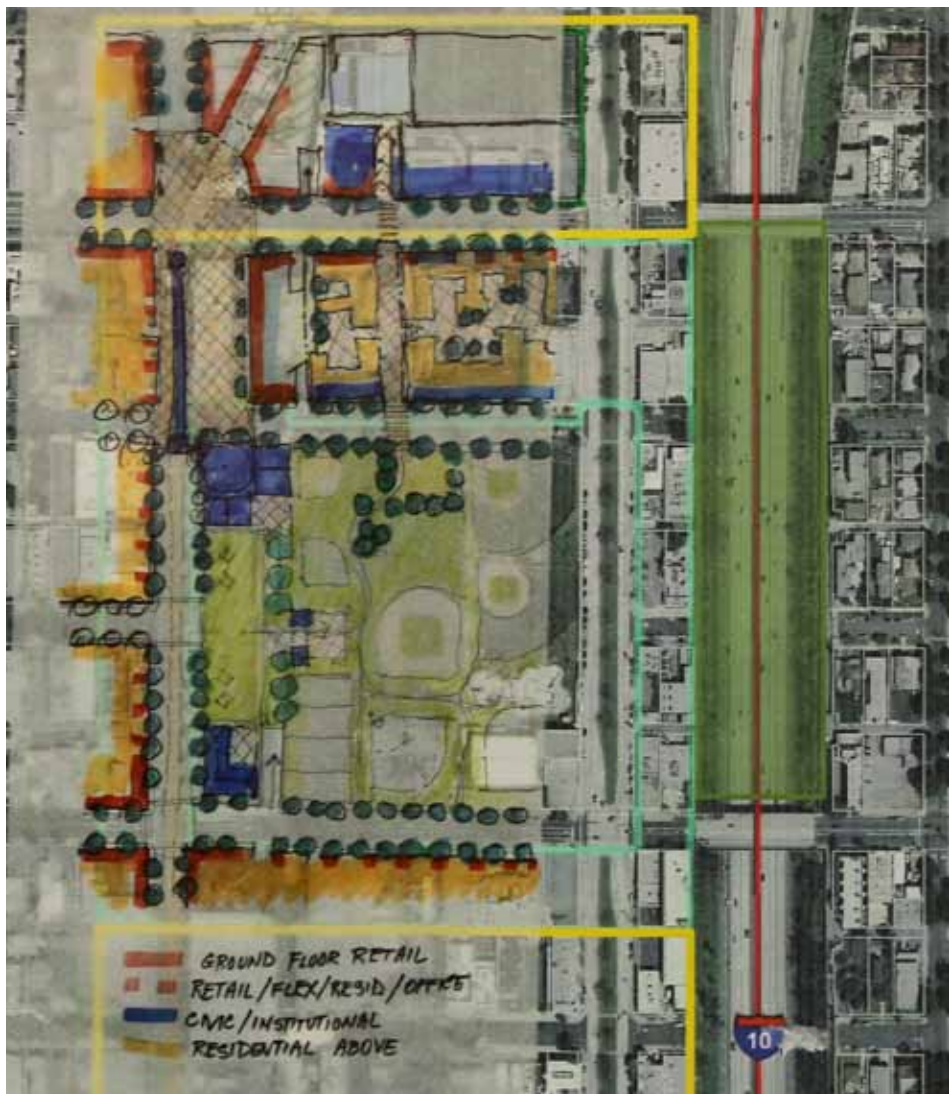
To minimize barriers to redevelopment the TAP identified the following incentives:

- Decouple parking and align parking requirements to decrease construction cost.
- Determine a suitable FAR policy that will incentivize development
- Provide greater certainty of execution and accelerated processing
- Create a Community Benefits package including clearly defined categories of benefits and levels of contributions required at each scale of development. The community benefits package could include: physical improvements, station design enhancements, a shared parking facility under Memorial Park, a local hire program for construction, and a job training fund.



*Does the proposed light rail station configuration effectively integrate into the existing community and support and foster the small scale development approach to achieve the City's "complete neighborhood" vision?*

The TAP believes the current station design plans will essentially create a barrier between the two sides of the street and is detrimental to the City's vision for a complete neighborhood. Barriers the panel discussed were the planned fencing and how the lack of locations to cross the street defers movement around the area and access to the station and park. If station design is done right, the station could increase property values and attract uses that will improve the neighborhood, such as restaurants, coffee shops, retail and even a grocery store. The panel recommends extensive station improvements to create a "piazza" type place, where street, sidewalk, and rail tracks co-mingle in a space defined by buildings and landscape edges. The goal is to make the station into a central focus and activity generator of the space with retail. There is still an opportunity for the City to influence the station design and better integrate the station into the neighborhood.



2035 RIDERSHIP - LUCE

Station	Parking	Riders/Day
Downtown	225	2,392
Memorial*	70	2,536
Berganot	0	3,406
Bundy	250	3,035

\* Total jobs w/m 1/2 mile: 25,800  
 Total pop. w/m 1/2 mile: 16,100  
 Metro 2003 average LRT = 2,042 riders/day





Panelists interview [need name] to better understand issues related to the Memorial Park Study Area.

# Assignment & Process

## Background

Santa Monica's Memorial Park neighborhood is one of a small number of strategically focused Activity Centers identified in the City's recently adopted Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE). The City of Santa Monica aspires to make the mid-city community, envisioned as a future "complete neighborhood," one that:

- Successfully engages with the future Expo Light Rail station at 17th Street and Colorado Avenue as well as with the Expo regional bicycle path terminus at 17th Street and a potential transit plaza,
- Creates new transit-oriented development that is compatible with the surrounding dense residential neighborhood and provides community benefits consistent with the LUCE requirements,
- Introduces a healthy mix of affordable and market rate housing and local commercial and institutional uses,
- Integrates with the future expansion of Memorial Park and other area institutions,
- Optimizes parking efficiency through innovative sharing or district programs,
- Provides walking, bicycling and transit linkages to key destinations and area uses,
- Addresses public infrastructure needs and deficiencies, and
- Supports integrated land use and transportation development to achieve increased sustainability through reduced vehicle trips and greenhouse gas emissions.

## Key Questions/Considerations

As a city with high property values and more than its share of small scale developers, Santa Monica has sought to define the Memorial Park community in a way that will preserve and support the area's fine-grained mixed use and affordable character. Significantly invested as a city in thoughtful redevelopment, Santa Monica asked the ULI panel for its help in identifying effective and innovative approaches that will implement the community goals for the planning area as envisioned in the LUCE. The major issues and questions that the City asked the TAP to address included:

1. The LUCE designation for the project area is for low mixed-use with an activity center overlay that, when activated through adoption of an area plan, will allow additional height and FAR to ensure the creation of neighborhood scale community benefits. With this in mind, what are some of the planning tools that can be used to achieve the smaller scale, fine grained transit-oriented development goals?
2. Is this type of development approach feasible, and if so, are there opportune sites and programs that can act as catalysts for the organic development of the Memorial Park neighborhood?



3. Characterize real estate development potentials on these opportune sites. Describe roughly the economic feasibility, i.e., improved land value created by the hypothetical real estate projects versus estimates of land acquisition cost (assuming private sector responsibility for land acquisition). Will the real estate economics generate the desired organic development of the Memorial Park neighborhood as envisioned?
4. What are the priority community benefits that should be considered to not only achieve these goals, but also incentivize development, i.e. shared parking, joint use opportunities with private and non-private partners, cultural benefits and physical improvements? What development incentives are important to foster organic change?
5. Does the proposed light rail station configuration effectively integrate into the existing community and support and foster the small scale development approach to achieve the City's "complete neighborhood" vision?



Panelist Neal Payton points out his initial thoughts for the Memorial Park Study Area



TAP Chair Brian Jones leads the SWOT brainstorming discussion.

### Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Process

As part of the TAP selection process, ULI representatives met with the City of Santa Monica's Planning & Community Development Department staff to determine the scope of the panel assignment. Panel members were selected based on their ability to address Santa Monica's stated objectives and familiarity with projects of this sort elsewhere. Prior to the day-long TAP exercise, TAP panel members reviewed background materials prepared by the City. On the day of the TAP, the group toured the study area with representatives from the City and met with key stakeholders. The rest of the day was dedicated to intensive analysis of the site and its specified issues. The TAP concluded with a presentation of the panel's findings to City officials, ULI guests, and members of the public who participated in the process.

### TAP Panel of Experts

The Memorial Park panel convened by ULI represented a variety of disciplines connected with land use, transportation and transit-oriented development. The panelists' diverse backgrounds in architecture and design, planning, real estate development, economic analysis, transportation, and development financing made them ideal for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas about Memorial Park's redevelopment. Panelists also brought to the project local working knowledge of the Santa Monica community and market. None of the all-volunteer panel members were compensated for their time.



[NEED NAME & TITLE OF PRESENTER] briefs the panelists about the details for the future Memorial Park Station along Phase II of the Expo Line

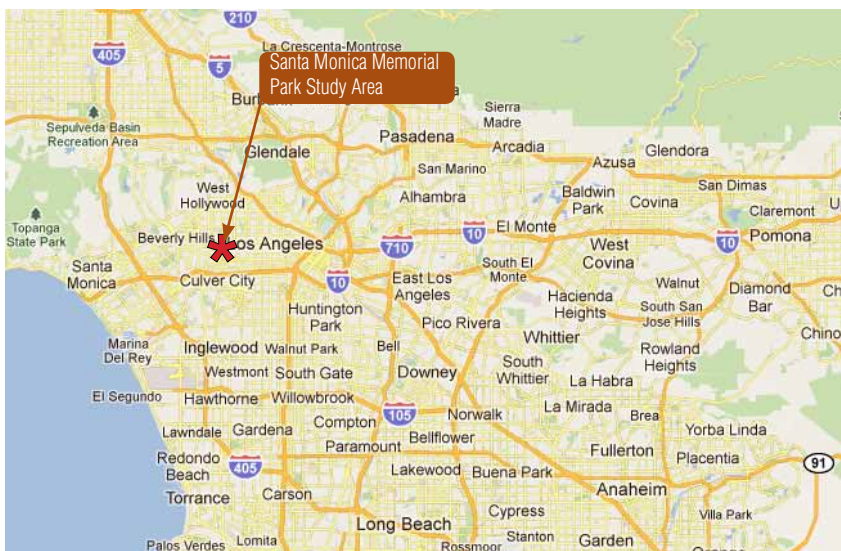


Memorial Park Activity Center project area.

## Background

### Overview

Santa Monica's Memorial Park Activity Center project area includes nearly 40 acres of mixed industrial, commercial and residential land surrounding a city park. Adjacent to a Santa Monica Freeway on the south and a planned light rail line on 17th Street and Colorado Avenue to the northeast, preserving the area's character and making it a "complete neighborhood" will mean preserving and enhancing its stock of affordable, workforce and market-rate housing and expanding small business opportunities and



Regional location of the Santa Monica Memorial Park study area.



The existing urban fabric along Colorado is comprised of mainly 1 & 2 story buildings.

existing community amenities. The City also hopes that the realized project will foster the concept of shared parking and promote bicycling, pedestrian activity and strong linkages to the light rail and bus transit systems. The community around the study area is a rich source of jobs for Santa Monica and the region. According to ESRI, there are an estimated 18,000 employees. Most of the local employers are located to the north and east of Memorial Park; however, SMC to the south, with more than 2,100 employees and 30,000 students, is expected to be a strong user of the Expo Line.

Residentially defined by its small parcel size, the neighborhood's typical lot is 7,500 square feet. Many of the larger developments around the park occupy double parcels of 15,000 sq. ft. The park at 447,000 sq. ft. is the area's largest parcel followed by the school district at 228,000 sq. ft. The parcel that Metro is planning to purchase for a Park & Ride lot, and the City alternatively envisions as a multi-modal Transit Plaza, is 47,500 sq. ft.

### The LUCE

LUCE, the City's Land Use and Circulation Element, is Santa Monica's award winning integrated General Plan element adopted in July 2010. Envisioning the existing city park as the neighborhood's centerpiece (575,000 square feet including the extension), the LUCE defined Memorial Park as one of its activity centers – featuring transit, retail and housing opportunities along the surrounding east-west boulevards and north-south streets. The Overlay provides for an increased height of one residential floor or 10 feet if step back and setback conditions are met and also a FAR increased by .75. For more information, the LUCE can be read at <http://www.shapethefuture2025.net/>.

The City Council supports the vision for transit-oriented boulevards and activity centers, particularly the whole concept of complete streets and mixed use neighborhoods. The aim is to become a city that



produces no net new future trips during the P.M. peak hours, and the arrival of the light rail line is a primary component of this policy. Consensus among the TAP members is that Santa Monica is one of the few southern California communities where this goal can be achieved.

The ability to redevelop on a smaller scale around Memorial Park is exciting to the stakeholders as it is an opportunity to weave together two distinct communities. Overcoming the divide between the Pico and Olympic communities created by the I-10 freeway is a longer term goal of the current mayor. Some on the TAP feel that perhaps creating bikeways across the freeway can help be a bridge between the areas. Memorial Park is already a heavily used amenity that Santa Monica can further enhance with the arrival of transit and a redesign that incorporates the Fisher Lumber site.

Comparing Memorial Park with Bergamot, one stakeholder opined that Memorial Park will likely be more residentially focused. Without question, Memorial Park will remain a community of lower density as political and practical realities will demand smaller structures around the 17th Street station. Perhaps some exceptions will be made in the case of sections of Olympic Blvd within a quarter mile of the transit stop as proximity is critical to the success of TOD development goals.

Any construction above 32 feet is going to trigger community benefits, which for the City and the Memorial Park community include affordable housing and workforce housing, with eligibility defined as households earning 150-200 percent of median income.



The ability to redevelop on a smaller scale around Memorial Park is exciting to the stakeholders .



A rendering of the proposed station design for the Metro Expo Line 17th Street Santa Monica Memorial Park Station. (Courtesy Expo Construction Authority)

### The Metro Expo Line & The 17th Street Santa Monica Memorial Park Station

The 17th/Colorado (or Santa Monica Memorial Park) Station is a planned at-grade light rail station that will be located in the middle of Colorado Avenue just west of the intersection of 17th Street and Colorado Avenue, in the mid-city community. The station is approved for design and construction as part of Expo Phase 2, expected to open in 2015. When complete, the 15.2 mile mostly at-grade line being built between downtown LA and downtown Santa Monica will make the trip in 46 minutes. All in all, the line will make stops at 19 stations including USC/Exposition Park, mid- city LA, the Crenshaw District, Culver City, West LA and Santa Monica's three stations.

The Expo Line is LA Metro's newest planned light rail project and the agency's first line to reach the busy Westside. Expo is therefore a critical addition to the regional transit agency's growing rail and bus network. When the project is completed it will connect downtown Los Angeles following an east-west route, primarily along Exposition Boulevard. With the completion of Expo, Los Angeles will have its second rail line with service to a station within walking distance of a Southern California beach. By 2030, it is estimated that the line will carry 64,000 passengers, making it one of the country's most heavily used light rail lines.

Expo Phase 2 through Santa Monica will travel along the old Exposition right-of-way until it reaches just east of 17th Street where it will cross over to the median of Colorado Avenue in the mid-city area. The line will then run down the median to its final western terminus in downtown Santa Monica. Travel along the Expo Phase 2 extension (between Culver City and Santa Monica) is expected to take just under 20 minutes. The Expo Construction Authority plans to locate the sole entrance to the station at 17th Street, east of the station platform. The west end of the station will be mid-block between 15th and 16th Streets along Colorado. Though current plans do not call for a second station entrance, the platform will be constructed in such a way that adding a western entrance may be possible. The City has been working tirelessly with the Expo Construction Authority to add the second entrance from the outset, along with a mid-block crosswalk to serve the expected surges of patrons to and from SMC and to promote connectivity, particularly to the Memorial Park Activity Center. Limited parking and bus stops are being planned to connect with the Expo station.



Utilizing Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus will provide greater connectivity for future riders of the Expo Line.

### **Park and Ride, Colorado Avenue & Bus and Bike Connections**

Expo's current plan for the property they will purchase adjacent to the 17th Street station is to provide a Park and Ride lot with space for 70 cars. Metro and the Expo Construction Authority envision the station being more of a commuter station with Santa Monica College students and staff commuting to the south and area residents and medical area commuters mostly drawn from the north. Unlike light rail lines elsewhere in the region, Metro is not currently envisioning the need to install gates at the street intersections consistent with its operating in a mixed flow of traffic instead of a dedicated right of way at this location. On Colorado Avenue, the trains will be only going as fast as the area's 25-30 mph posted speed limit. The line and platform will cut off north/south traffic on 16th Street. On 15th, Euclid, 10th and 9th there will be right in/right out turns permitted, with very limited opportunities for left turns remaining. As for pedestrian access, Metro is planning to construct fencing at T intersections, with crosswalks provided only at signalized crossings.

Among the bus lines expected to operate along 17th Street, plans are being made for shuttles to the hospitals and Santa Monica College, either provided by these institutions or through collaboration with Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus. The Expo Construction Authority is also required to provide some facilities for bicycles at the 17th Street station. The City's expectation is for very high bicycle usage at this station, and this is driving the City's efforts to feature superior bicycle parking facilities and safer, more defined access.

Regrettably, due to the train type that Metro uses throughout its system, the 17th Street Station platform, which will run 270 feet long from 17th Street to just west of 16th Street, will rest 3.5 feet above the track and roadway. Elsewhere, many cities are moving to a grade-level station less disruptive to the streetscape. The Expo Construction Authority estimates the cost of constructing a second entrance on the west side of the station at \$750,000. This amount includes the added entrance, ticket vending machines, Metro TAP card readers, a map case and related amenities. The City is negotiating over this feature with Metro and hopes to reach resolution in the near future. In addition, the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) would need to approve the additional crossing across Colorado Avenue.

### **Santa Monica-Malibu School Headquarters**

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) is one of the largest landowners in the study area. SMMUSD owns much of the property between 16th and 17th from Olympic to the Expo transit center property, with the exception of the Olympic frontage, which is privately owned. SMMUSD has tenants and occupies some of the space it owns for the district headquarters. Parking was mentioned as probably the most significant issue for the District and its tenants. SMMUSD allows after-hours and weekend parking on the site for the heavily used Memorial Park athletic fields. The SMMUSD site consists mostly of two story buildings, and the District has not maxed out the site's development capacity. As for the District itself, it has about 100 - 120 employees on the site including maintenance, operations and ground staff. SMMUSD's two-story building also contains the District's data center for which there are plans for an upgrade.

### **Crossroads School**

Crossroads School, a private K-12 school housed in a collection of buildings on the north and south sides of wide, tree-lined Olympic Blvd is another critical area stakeholder. The Crossroads middle and upper schools are east of and out of the study area at 20th Street and Olympic Boulevard. A strong presence in the community, Crossroads hopes it will be able to purchase a final parcel on the elementary school block between 17th and 18th Streets. Crossroads is currently using the Metro right of way (ROW) for parking; there is potentially an opportunity for a shared parking facility in the future here. If it can do so, then in the future Crossroads might build more athletic facilities on the elementary school block. These fields would primarily serve Crossroads' 1,100 students but would offer the added benefit of easing pressure on heavily-used Memorial Park.

Crossroads already offers its existing athletic facilities to local teams in the off-hours. Crossroads is likely to remain at its current student capacity. The school expects that once the light rail line is complete, many of Crossroads' employees will ride Metro Expo to the school. The school also has many employees who live close by and bike to work.

### **Expo Light Rail Right of Way**

As currently envisioned, Metro is probably leaving money on the table in not thinking about redeveloping unused parts of the Expo right of way. For example, Crossroads School anticipates that for now at least part of the right of way will remain available to the school for parking and other uses. Several community stakeholders expressed the opinion that access to parking is essential at the station, at the Park and at Crossroads.



## Fisher Lumber Site

The Fisher Lumber site, which runs from 14th to 16th Street and fronts along Colorado Blvd, will be a critical piece of the reworked streetscape. The site has been utilized for storage purposes by the City's Public Works Department since its purchase by the City for the park's expansion, and with the Expo Line coming, the time is right to realize the potential of this wisely made acquisition. By adjusting the existing public park and Fisher Lumber site layout, Santa Monica can make the park and surrounding area more inviting and useful to the community and to Santa Monica generally.

## Santa Monica Freeway Cap Park

One of Santa Monica's more ambitious ideas for the Memorial Park area is to cap the portion of the Santa Monica Freeway between 14th Street and 17th Streets. The freeway creates an unfortunate and seemingly impenetrable barrier between the Pico neighborhood on the south and Olympic Blvd and Memorial Park on the north. The Pico neighborhood, Santa Monica's most ethnically and racially diverse community, was divided from properties that used to be part of the neighborhood when the freeway was constructed during the 1950s. Capping the freeway would permit Santa Monica to significantly grow its open space and parkland for the Pico neighborhood. A freeway cap park would also improve economic development and employment opportunities for the area's residents by rendering the area considerably more attractive to investors. Unfortunately, the cost of capping the entire freeway between 14th and 17th Street appears to be cost prohibitive at this time. Still, the panel believes there may be other opportunities to reintegrate the Pico community back into the city. Some ideas include bridging, a phased capping of the freeway, or widening the existing bridges over the freeway and creating more inviting corridors between the Pico and Memorial Park communities.



The Santa Monica-Malibu School District headquarters seen from 17th Street.



There are already some projects seeking approvals such as this tentative tract map filing for 91 artist lofts in the study area.



The City of Santa Monica Community Maintenance Department Colorado Yards are also within the Study Area.



According to ESRI, the Memorial Park Activity Center Overlay and Adjacent Areas host approximately 1,000 jobs and only 60 residents.

# Analysis

## Market Overview

Two market areas describe the opportunities and constraints faced by the Memorial Park area’s redevelopment: the City of Santa Monica, and the immediate area, defined by the Activity Center Overlay and Adjacent Affected Areas. The Memorial Park area’s location in the City of Santa Monica means that it occupies highly desirable real estate for both residents and businesses seeking the city’s high quality of life and strong economic base. Though Santa Monica was hardly immune from the recent economic recession, the city’s desirability made it less prone to the downturn than other cities in the region. The intense demand shown by developers and residents to be located “here” has helped Santa Monica sustain its high property values.

The Memorial Park area has experienced some of Santa Monica’s well-known development pressures as well but its location in between more defined neighborhoods and economic drivers has caused change to occur more slowly. Some refer to Memorial Park as a no man’s land with no active constituency to advocate either for or against change. Economic information data source ESRI estimates, for example, that the Memorial Park Activity Center Overlay and Adjacent Affected Areas host approximately 1,000 jobs and only 60 residents.

The introduction of the Activity Center Overlay and arrival of the Exposition Light Rail line will likely serve to accelerate the area’s transformation by bringing to bear many of the drivers of change common in other parts of Santa Monica. Current demographic and market conditions therefore likely describe a baseline, rather than a final answer, for what may occur in the area in coming decades.

## Neighborhood Demographics

The demographic characteristics of the neighborhoods surrounding Memorial Park reflect the area’s traditional character as a relatively less affluent, more diverse workforce neighborhood in Santa Monica. As Table 1 demonstrates, median household incomes in zip code 90404 are approximately 18 percent lower than in the city overall. There is an even greater gap between average incomes, reflecting much greater affluence in other parts of the city. Memorial Park-adjacent households are also relatively younger, more likely to rent their homes, and significantly more diverse. Both African American and Hispanic households’ share of the demographic total is twice as high as their share in Santa Monica overall.

Table 1: Neighborhood Demographics

	90404	Santa Monica
Population	22,500	89,500
Households	10,300	47,000
Median / Average Household Income	\$53,000 / \$69,000	\$64,900 / \$96,000
% Owner	22%	30%
Average Age	39	42
Ethnicity		
White	59%	74%
Black	8%	4%
Asian	10%	9%
Other	23%	13%
Hispanic Origin	33%	17%

Source: ESRI

## Market Analysis

### Non-Residential Market Conditions

A critical part of the TAP analysis was consideration of the job market. The area’s jobs are generally located in older, smaller-scale industrial buildings on small parcels that reflect the early platting for Santa Monica. The area’s major employers include Santa Monica College, with more than 2,100 employees, UCLA Medical Center with 1,950 employees, and St. John’s Medical Center with 1,813 employees; but it is unclear how many of these employees are area residents.

Relatively few “industrial” jobs remain in the area with many former light industrial buildings now hosting a wide range of businesses in the “creative” industries. These are primarily renters, including design and entertainment companies, which typically would not be able to support rents in the newer, more large-scale employment space found in places like the neighborhood to the east. That area is the site of the high rent Water Garden, a Class A office park



constructed around an attractive water feature. Film, radio, TV, visual arts and photography, performing arts and design services and publishing are common in the Memorial Park and neighboring areas.

Reflecting the limited number of households in the immediate area and nearby retail centers in Santa Monica, Memorial Park boasts a limited number of retail establishments. This dearth of retail in Memorial Park will likely continue to be the case until the area's residential uses are developed in any quantity. With the arrival of the light rail station, the demand for housing will increase which will lead to greater demand for housing.

Other employment uses, as mentioned above, are located primarily in the area's light industrial space. A wide variety of entertainment and design businesses are attracted to the area due to its affordability (rents average \$2 per square foot per month). Light industrial and automotive uses also utilize this space, which generally indicates relatively low vacancy in the area.

### Residential Market Conditions

Residential uses currently are very minimal in the Activity Center Overlay and Adjacent Affected Areas, but are predominant on each side surrounding the study area.

The predominant housing type in the area is the smaller (4-10 unit) apartment building occupying the area's small, 7,500 sq. ft. lots. These buildings were generally developed in the 1950s and 1960s, with newer – often denser – rental apartment or for-sale condominium buildings interspersed throughout. Rents therefore vary widely, from the high \$1 per sq. ft. per month for the older housing stock, to the mid-\$2 per sq. ft. for newer housing stock. Additional new apartments will almost certainly require rents at the top (or even higher) of the price spectrum in order to be feasible, suggesting the need for significant creativity in order to keep units affordable to existing local residents.



For-sale condominiums in Memorial Park sell in the high \$400 per square foot range.

### Real Estate Development Potential

		\$/SF Assumption		
		-10%	\$655/SF	+10%
Parking Spaces / Unit	1-Space	\$121	\$178	\$236
	2-Spaces	\$96	\$154	\$211
		\$655/SF		
DU/Ac.		45		
Parking Req. (Spaces/Unit)		1		
Gross SF/Unit		1000		
Price/Gross SF		\$655		
Absolute Price		\$655,000		
Costs:				
Hard Costs/SF	\$300	\$300,000		
Parking/Space	\$20,000	\$20,000		
Soft Costs (% of Hard)	20%	\$64,000		
Total Costs		\$384,000		
Profit (% of Revenues)	15%	\$96,250		
Land Residual / Unit		\$172,750		
Land Residual/Acre		\$7,773,750		
Land Residual/SF		\$178.46		

In current market, with current policies (e.g., parking), real estate development is not feasible. Spurring private investment requires incentives for market investment such as: reduce parking requirements, Increasing allowable FAR, and Accelerated permitting/processing.

For-sale condominiums in Memorial Park sell in the high \$400 per square foot range. The remaining single-family homes are most typically converted to small-scale apartment buildings; the property values for these older homes are therefore determined by the residual land values for the proposed apartment buildings, and generally result in a value of approximately \$600 per square foot for the home.

One concern expressed by the panel's real estate market analyst is that redevelopment in the area probably borders on the infeasible given high land values, high construction costs, and an uncertain future for pricing. The key is to develop a creative strategy that will be attractive. The panel discusses these options further in the recommendations section.



Image Caption



Panelists began their day with a walking tour of the study area to better understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

## Findings

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis was conducted to evaluate the Memorial Park community and the impact of the arrival of the light rail line on the neighborhood. Strengths and weaknesses explore internal aspects of the project or elements that can be controlled or changed by new development. Opportunities and threats evaluate external influences that can affect the project. Most opportunities and threats are beyond the control of those associated with the project, such as economic factors like interest rates or loan availability. From the site visit, stakeholder interviews, and additional site research, the TAP determined the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to Memorial Park.

### Strengths

- Memorial Park is a well-situated community.
- Good access to Santa Monica's major job centers and regional destinations in downtown Santa Monica, in the City's medical area, around Bergamot Station, and in nearby West LA.
- The planned light rail station and transit line.
- Expo train ridership is expected to be high.
- High demand for affordable and market rate housing in Santa Monica.
- The athletic facilities at Memorial Park.
- Extensive planning that the community has already undertaken in creating the LUCE and the project's strong community buy-in.
- City's commitment to multi-modal transportation.
- The former Fisher Lumber site presents the City with an important opportunity to expand and improve the athletic facilities and enhance park access.
- A creative arts district exists and has potential for future growth.
- There is time to influence the station design and encourage integration at the station.

### Weaknesses

- The current design plan for the station platform is not conducive to the City's desire for a complete neighborhood. The single station entrance and the fencing will serve as a barrier to pedestrian circulation and access.
- High land costs impede development of parcels.
- Memorial Park is limited to mostly highly competitive sports and is overlit at night.
- The capping of the freeway entirely from 14th Street to 17th Street is too costly.
- Lack of pedestrian amenities detracts from walkable environment.
- Lack of strategies to bring the LUCE's vision to the building and construction phase.
- The perception of the development planning process as lengthy and costly limits development.
- Existing residential building parking ratios hinder redevelopment.
- Proposal to eliminate Redevelopment Agencies under Governor Brown's budget proposal creates uncertainty.
- Quimby funds do not cover the costs for the park and are smaller than other surrounding jurisdictions.
- The community benefit package is not clearly defined and may be missing feedback from the immediate neighborhood.
- Lack of branding for this neighborhood.
- Environmental review process and the delay in implementing new zoning for the area.
- Shortage of parking at the rail station.

### Opportunities

Among the many opportunities explored throughout the day, the TAP focused on several that make up the core of the panel's recommendations to the City of Santa Monica.

- While planning is still underway for the Expo Line, the City of Santa Monica has a small window of opportunity to influence the design-build team to create a station that improves the transit rider experience and fulfills the goals set forth by the LUCE.
- The Fisher Lumber site might serve as a parking well for the future transit-oriented community.
- Tremendous place-making opportunity.
- Opportunity to create another walkable neighborhood.
- The City of Santa Monica is a desirable community.
- In Memorial Park, the large Santa Monica

Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) site presents a major urban infill redevelopment opportunity.

- Though a complete capping of the freeway between 14th and 17th Street is cost prohibitive at the moment there is an opportunity to reintegrate the Pico community back into the city in the short term through bridge widening and creating inviting corridors or a phased approach to capping.

Below are ideas for which the panel, in the time available, was unable to reach unanimous decision:

- The cluster of automobile-related businesses along Santa Monica Blvd and south to Colorado Avenue encouraged discussion among the TAP of the opportunity for a transition strategy here. Auto dealerships are of course a big part of the city's tax base. While Santa Monica doesn't want to chase them away, one panelist noted that it would be good if Santa Monica became known as the place to buy an all-electric vehicle and as a center for the bicycle community. The city is already home to one of the country's biggest Prius dealerships and to Miles and CODA Electric Vehicles. A new model of the urban auto dealership would be a great direction for Santa Monica.
- Sometimes a TDR density mechanism can be used to preserve character of one area while shifting use to other area.
- On the south side of the 17th Street station, Expo has agreed to do a wide sidewalk. How can the site be redeveloped to create added value for the community? Several panelists were also concerned that the narrow Expo station platform will be poorly suited to the volume of bike riders expected to take advantage of the new line.
- 17th Street will probably remain residential while 14th Street presents commercial and mixed use development opportunities.
- Jobs for the community and for the neighboring Pico neighborhood are a big opportunity. And, as one of the Pico neighborhood stakeholders told the TAP, there is a desire to see local developers hiring more 18-30 year olds from the Pico community. Ideally, the community's redevelopment will generate more life impacting job opportunities.
- The existing arts district presents a strong opportunity as does the neighborhood's potential unfilled market for neighborhood retail. One panelist described the industrial strip along the freeway as a land bank or reservoir for adaptive

reuse, an asset to be exploited in redeveloping the area.

- In terms of the athletic facilities at Memorial Park, community stakeholders said it would be nice to have more informal, unstructured, family-oriented recreation at the park in addition to the structured competitive uses it currently sees.

## Threats

Perhaps the biggest threat to the Memorial Park Activity Center's prospects is the potential loss, described above, of redevelopment funds. Political realities may in the end dictate what occurs here. Less existential threats include the fire department's insistence that parking spaces be removed along the south as well as north side of Colorado to accommodate the station platform (discussed below). A lack of control over the Metro and PUC-driven process related to the line and station also disturbed the TAP panel.

## Transportation Overview

Memorial Park Station is characterized by a number of access and mobility conditions that point toward successful transit-oriented development. The proposed station is anticipated to experience above-average Metro light rail transit (LRT) ridership. Metro's current LRT station average is around 2,000 riders per day and Memorial Station will carry roughly 2,500 riders per day. Traffic conditions or level of service in and around the station are acceptable now, and forecasts indicate acceptable conditions in the future. It is anticipated that 25,800 jobs and 16,100 people will be located within a half mile of the station by 2035, providing a solid base of potential ridership. Conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians are adequate and expected to improve, and future bus feeder service to the station will be beneficial.

The station environment is not without access and mobility challenges, however. The Metro LRT operating characteristics will necessitate removal of many on-street parking spaces along Colorado Avenue within the study area, and more may be lost due to fire access issues. Motor vehicle left-turns to the north and south will be limited to the intersection of 17th Street and Colorado Avenue in the study area. In addition, the LRT track area will constitute a barrier to pedestrian and bicycle crossing within the Colorado study area. Finally, the most prime piece of Metro station area property (not directly needed for LRT operations) is planned as 70 free all-day park and ride spaces. The suboptimal use of this critical portion of the site clearly requires further consideration and discussions with Metro.



The Metro LRT operating characteristics will necessitate removal of many on-street parking spaces along Colorado Avenue within the study area





Image Caption

## Panel Recommendations

### 1. Vision

The TAP identified opportunities at the following locations for enhancing the Memorial Park redevelopment.

1. The Station
2. The School District Site
3. West of the Expo Line Station
4. Memorial Park Athletic Fields
5. West of Memorial Park

#### Opportunity 1: The Station

The TAP envisions enlivening the planned station at the intersection of Colorado and 17th Street. The City and Metro have the opportunity to create a stronger presence for the station by hardscaping a larger area to the south and east of the station and by providing ground floor retail at the site.

Taking advantage of the unusual geometries created by transitioning from the old Exposition right-of-way to the median of Colorado Avenue in the mid-city area, and the necessity to divert the east bound travel lanes of Colorado around the proposed station platform, an opportunity exists to create a “complete place,” a piazza really, where street, sidewalk, and rail tracks co-mingle in a space defined by buildings and landscape edges. The street and sidewalk areas can be paved in similar if not identical materials, with bollards and trench drains, separating cars from pedestrians instead of curbs and gutters. Within this space the station will appear to be gently placed. The goal is to make the station into a central focus and activity generator of the space,

and not a barrier separating the two sides of Colorado. The eastern edge of the piazza is a point just east of 17th Street, where the rail line enters the space on the diagonal. This is the area most conducive to ground floor retail, with the caveat that PUC approval and Metro risk management concurrence is needed. though retail on the ground floor is also imagined surrounding much of the station area.

The panel recommends that the station be built to allow for two entrances. The second should be built when the resources become available or attained. The panel supports the City's efforts to work with the Expo Construction Authority to further assess this possibility.

#### Opportunity 2: The School District Site

The opportunity here should be focused on anchoring the pedestrian connection between the transit station and the school parcel, in particular at animating the southern edge of the piazza, or station plaza, which would require the removal of one building. The following elements should be considered for this location:

- Relocation of the school offices and faculty to the opposite side (south side) of the building.
- Create retail edge facing the train tracks, featuring a smaller footprint grocer.
- Residential units above the retail and school offices.
- One level of underground parking to support retail, residential and office uses.



### Opportunity 3: West of the Expo Line Station

Currently, the pedestrian and retail environment along Colorado Avenue to the west of the future Expo Line station is unsatisfactory. The vision here is to support the place-creation in the piazza to the east by allowing occasional street parking in front of buildings with flexibility to offer storefronts and or residential ground floor uses. Efforts should be made to extend the pedestrian-friendly improvements from the station down Colorado Avenue, and allow for flexible uses driven by market demand. Compatible uses along this corridor could include flex industrial/office and retail space.

### Opportunity 4: Memorial Park Athletic Fields

The Fisher Lumber site purchased by the city offers a chance to expand athletic facilities at the park and relocate parking. The existing layout should be adjusted to maximize value to both the park's existing uses and the community's needs for open space. The TAP's ideas include:

- Activating the corners of the park, specifically the east and west corners of the Fisher Lumber site. A community building (such as a relocated Police Athletic League facility or new gymnasium) will frame the western edge of the piazza or station plaza providing a civic component to the space
- Relocating the existing gym or rec center from Olympic Boulevard to the Fisher Lumber site, possibly at the northwestern corner.
- Making upgrades and renovations to remove the fencing surrounding Memorial Park to allow for pedestrian access and walkways through the park
- Solving the parking problem by creating ample underground parking on the former Fisher Lumber site, topped with a green roof to create a grand entrance and added open space into Memorial Park from Colorado Avenue
- Adding to the green space/roof a designated picnic area for families and other attending sporting events at the park. A gateway entry on axis with 15th Street will welcome athletes and pedestrians to the park.

### Opportunity 5: West of Memorial Park

The buildings lining 14th Street that face into the park could have a major positive impact on the community if this area is correctly utilized. The vision of this western block next to Memorial Park is residential with some ground floor retail, specifically work force housing marketed to the major institutions in Santa Monica. Some of the larger employers in the City of Santa

Monica are in dire need of affordable housing for their faculty and staff. The properties along 14th Street are best used as residential properties due to their location on a major through-way (14th Street connects the north and south sides of Santa Monica over the Santa Monica Freeway), and the premium views into Memorial Park.

### Opportunity 6: Urban Design

A number of streetscape enhancements will help to transform Memorial Park and the surrounding area. Re-envisioned, Memorial Park will be a mixed use community that presents a balance between residential and retail uses and accommodates added community benefits.

The TAP's vision for the transformation of the Memorial Park community includes specific design criteria. For example, the value-added opportunity around the park can be completed through street frontage improvements and streetscape enhancements. Some of the recommended items that can be completed that will be beneficial to neighborhood stakeholders include:

- Concrete pavers at crossings.
- Infiltration planters and curb extensions.
- Additional decorative streetlights.
- Granite cobble banding.
- Residential stoops and steps along streets.
- Retail frontage improvements.
- Blanket design rules for the community to create place since a majority of development projects and renovations will be adaptive-reuse.



Image Caption



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## 2. Catalytic Projects

The plans developed in years one through three should prioritize key public investment and identify catalytic private projects and strategies.

- Station Area Improvements to create a piazza-type environment (discussed in further detail in Opportunity 1 above).
- Streetscape Improvements (discussed in Opportunity 6).
- Greening the park edge.
- Development at the Fisher Lumber Site:
  - a. Construction of the new parking facility below the Fisher Lumber site.
  - b. Develop a community facility (discussed in Opportunity 4).
- School district sites may be appropriate for redevelopment.

In order to encourage and “jump start” reinvestment in the area an “inventive package” may be offered to the first projects. This could include significantly reduced or eliminated parking requirements and/or additional floor area rates beyond what is existing in the Memorial Park Activity Center Overlay. In order to be effective, this may be offered to the first few hundred residential units as well as the first two to three thousand square feet of retail/restaurant use.

## 3. Planning Tools

### Neighborhood Stakeholder Group

The formation of a Stakeholder Group comprised primarily of the larger property owners in the Memorial Park area is essential for development and implementation of a successful revitalization program. The group will need to be a partner with the City in the preparation of the plans during the next three years. It is hoped that they develop a common understanding of their inter-dependent and shared vision for their community. The Stakeholders Group will need to be an active advocate for the neighborhood with Metro and the City. The Stakeholder Group is essential if shared parking and shared parking expense programs are pursued.

### Develop an Area Plan & Park Master Plan

#### i. Area Plan

The City of Santa Monica is in the process of developing the Memorial Park Activity Center Master Plan, supported by a \$550,000 Sustainable Communities grant from



Over the course of the day the panel modeled several development scenarios relative to their recommendations.



Image Caption

the State of California. The panel agrees that this is the appropriate next step. Both planning documents should be developed with the participation of the Stakeholders Group mentioned above. Key components of the plan should include: 1) Refined Land Use Plan, 2) Urban Design Standards, 3) Parking Strategies and Revised Parking Codes, and a 4) Funding Program. A Park Master Plan should also be developed.

Ideally these plans will be put in place before the opening of the 17th Street Expo Line Station in 2015. Each of the five components identified above are inter-dependent and contribute to the long-term goal of creating a Complete Neighborhood in Memorial Park.

#### ii. Refined Land Use Plan

Santa Monica's adoption of LUCE was a major step forward for the Memorial Park area. The challenge now is to refine the land uses identified in LUCE. This will help Santa Monica and Memorial Park to achieve the neighborhood revitalization goals, and foster reinvestment surrounding the park that delivers the promises articulated in LUCE of an active pedestrian and transit-oriented hub consistent with the vision detailed above. The plan focuses on the specific land uses envisioned for each block at both the ground floor and above. As Santa Monica moves forward with its master planning process, staff should initiate discussions with key property owners to explore the potential for their sites. Four sites that may warrant this type of discussion are: the two school sites, the corner of Olympic and 14th Street and the corner of Colorado and 17th Street.





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### iii. Urban Design Standards

In furtherance of the land use plan a detailed set of urban design standards for both the public realm and private investment is recommended in order to achieve the vision of developing the quality, scale and intimacy implied by the vision.

The public realm standards include identifying key public investments that will reinforce the vision of Memorial Park and the creation of an identity that the neighbors will embrace and nurture. Recommended areas that the standards address include: street sections including sidewalk width, on-street parking and lane width, paving pattern and material and plant palate. Additionally, objectives for the public space adjacent to the station and the interconnection of alleys and pedestrian pathways should be detailed. Identifying and prioritizing public improvements will be a benefit to the community in seeking grants.

Recommended areas for the standards for private improvements to address include details on building height, set-back and most importantly building rhythm, entrance locations and the quality of building materials at the street facing ground floor. The success of the standards will be measured by how well the new buildings “fit in” and contribute to the small lot, low scale, organically developed neighborhoods in the City.

### iv. Parking Strategies and Revised Parking Codes

Critical to the success of the transit station, the park and Santa Monica's ability to achieve an appropriate

scale to new buildings and encourage reinvestment in existing structures, is a careful examination of future parking demand, strategies to meet that demand and a re-examination of the parking code requirements. The variety of users in the area (institutional, residents, park users, retail/restaurants and industrial tenants) and their need for parking at different times throughout the week, combined with the objective of maintaining a low scale vibrant neighborhood, demonstrate the need to revise the parking requirements and provide shared parking. In this way, smaller projects could come forward unburdened with the need to provide parking on their own sites.

The suggested first step is a careful analysis of the parking demands of existing uses in the study area. This study may include observation of the time of day and day of the week when both on-site and street parking are used and who the users are. The results of such a survey will inform the policies of regulating both public and private parking. The older structures in the neighborhood and the lot size and configurations imply that these parcels could not meet current parking regulations and this may be an impediment to reinvestment. But many of the existing buildings in the area can be reinvested in and can contribute to the area's vision if they, on an individual basis, need not provide parking on-site for intensification of their tenants, i.e. changing from manufacturing to retail. A program of a pooled parking resource, combined with the notion that retail and restaurant patrons will “walk in” suggests a policy change that would allow for a greatly relaxed or eliminated parking requirements. The current parking requirements do not reinforce the idea of a walk-able community. A new parking approach that encourages intensification of uses within existing buildings and revised parking requirements for new buildings should be explored.

An opportunity exists for creating a reservoir of parking below the former Fisher Lumber property. A very preliminary analysis indicates this site could accommodate in excess of 500 cars on one level, although detailed design studies need to be conducted to verify this. Ideally this parking could serve park patrons, release pressure on the Crossroads School and the SMMUSD headquarters to place all their parking on-site, and provide a pool of parking for intensification of uses in existing neighborhood buildings.



Image Caption

#### v. **Park Master Plan**

A detailed and potentially phased improvement program for the park should be developed and completed in one to three years in preparation for construction in years 4-10. The plan needs to recognize that the nature of the park as an active place for organized sports must be maintained but supplemented by design practices that will benefit the immediately surrounding real estate. The park edges should be transparent and softened to provide a pleasant environment for adjacent residents and neighborhood tenants, while not reducing the sports activities. The nature of these ideas is to create a perimeter treatment that is more community friendly, without compromising the existing fields and hardscape uses.

This may be accomplished by increasing the tree canopy of the park, and over time clustering the buildings and hardscape (tennis courts, etc.) at grade and above the below-grade parking of the Fisher Lumber site. Passive areas should be introduced. The panel also discussed the idea of putting the park's hardscape on top of the parking along the Fisher Lumber site. Overly bright lighting in the evening hours is another issue that will need to be addressed in the park master plan.

#### vi. **Housing Policy to include Workforce Housing**

The Memorial Park TOD has the potential to address the workforce housing challenges facing major institutions in Santa Monica such as UCLA Medical Center, St. John's and Santa Monica College. The City has started to facilitate a solution by forming a consortium of major employers and institutions to craft innovative policy and financing mechanisms for the development of workforce housing at the Memorial Park TOD. The consortium could collaborate to seek grant funding from HUD's sustainable communities program to explore concepts such as transit efficient mortgages and pre-purchasing of units for moderate-income workers. The consortium might also advocate for key projects seeking HUD housing bond assistance. In addition, Prop 1C Housing Bonds will be available again this year and the City could pursue TOD and Infill Infrastructure funds in particular. Another idea for funding would be to convene discussions with Enterprise Community Partners and the Low Income Investment Fund. In the Bay Area, a partnership with these organizations established a \$50 MM Transit Oriented Affordable Housing Fund, a 10-year low-interest loan fund for property acquisition and infrastructure.

#### 4. **Community Benefits Program**

In order to most successfully leverage the development potential for the site, the Community Benefits program should:

- Contain clearly defined categories of benefits and levels of contributions required at each scale of development to create greater certainty and confidence for developers and the community; and,
- Reflect the stated specific concerns and interests of the surrounding community.

The TAP recommends that the City of Santa Monica consider including the following elements in a Community Benefits Program:

- 1) Transit Plaza and other station enhancements as discussed in the Opportunities 1 and 6.
- 2) Streetscape improvements and landscaping.
- 3) Bridge improvements.
- 4) Community building.

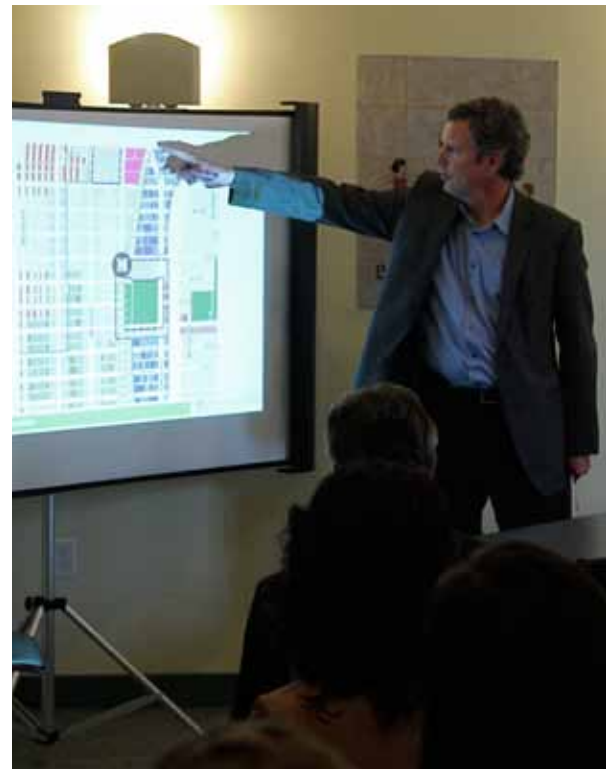
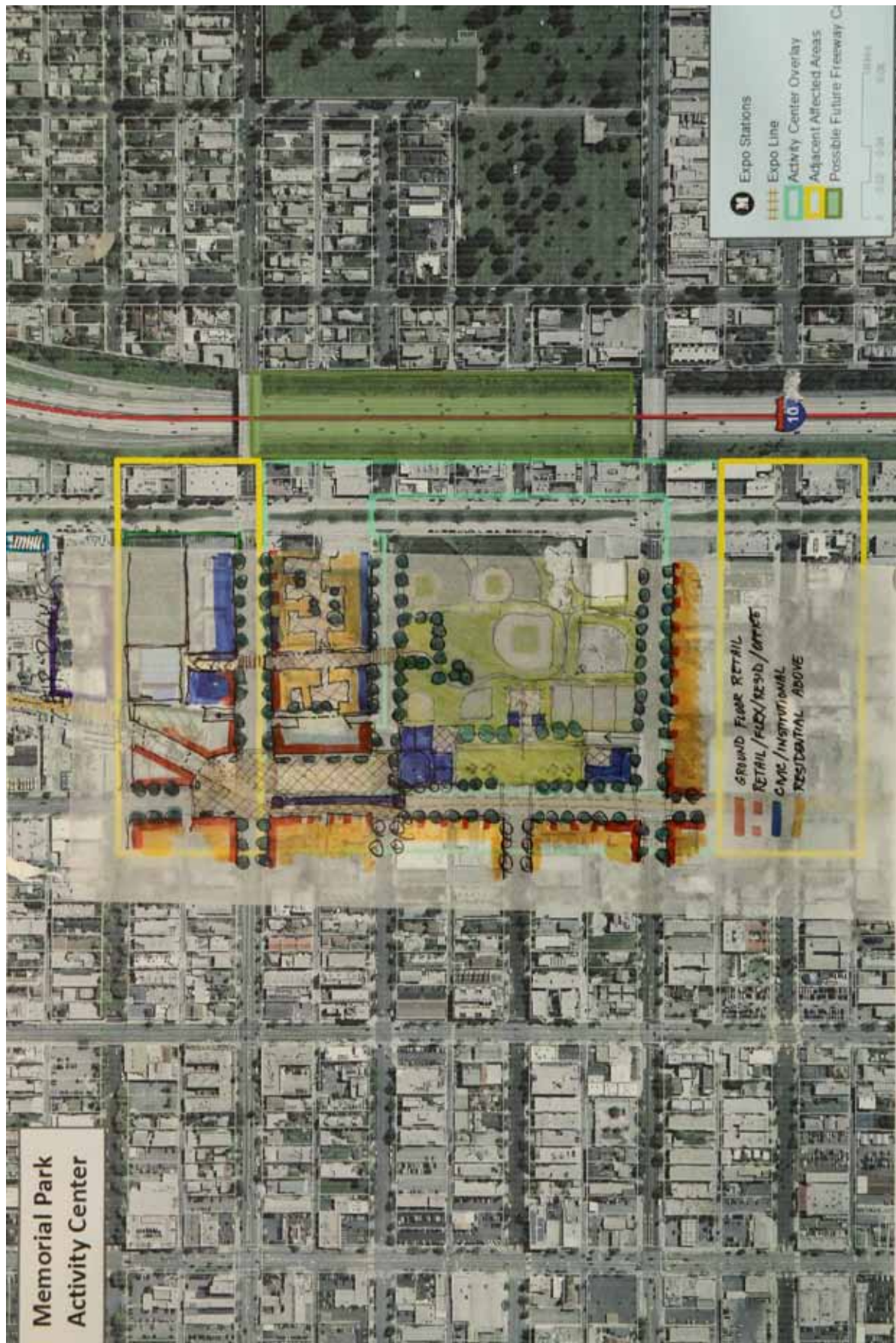


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- 5) Require developers to contribute towards a fund that will pay for the cost of developing a shared parking facility beneath Memorial Park.
- 6) Mandate that developers implement a local hire program for construction in the area. This can be modeled on the CRA/LA Construction Careers and Project Stabilization policy or the Metro Exposition Line construction careers program. These programs generally mandate that 30 percent of all construction work hours on affected projects target workers from high unemployment zip codes and that 10 percent of all work hours target individuals facing barriers to employment. These programs are implemented through a Master Project Labor Agreement with the Los Angeles/Orange County Construction Trades. Given the poor employment picture in the neighboring Pico neighborhood across the freeway from Memorial Park, Santa Monica would do well to adapt these models for the development of Memorial Park.
- 7) Develop a job-training fund based on a cost per unit or square foot formula. The fund would support existing workforce development, pre-apprenticeship and other job training programs that will enable the City to achieve its local hire construction goals and link local workers to jobs in the existing and growing creative arts cluster.





# Funding Sources

## Funding Sources

### Infrastructure Finance District

With the threatened demise of the redevelopment agency as a funding tool, the City of Santa Monica could turn to the formation of an Infrastructure Finance District to pool the tax increment from the City and other cooperating taxing entities to build-out the infrastructure necessary to spur the development of the Memorial Park Activity Center.

Cities and counties can create Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs) to pay for regional scale public works (SB 308, Seymour, 1990). IFDs can divert the non-school shares of property tax increment revenues to finance highways, transit, roadway/streetscape improvements, water systems, sewer projects, flood control, child care facilities, libraries, parks, and solid waste facilities. IFDs cannot be used to pay for maintenance, repairs, operating costs, and services. Unlike redevelopment project areas, the property in an IFD does not have to be blighted. As debate over the future of redevelopment continues in Sacramento, the City of Santa Monica could advocate for streamlining the process of adopting IFDs in order to facilitate development of TODs consistent with SB 375 mandates.

The job training and redevelopment needs of the Memorial Park-adjacent Pico neighborhood south of the freeway beg the question, to what extent is Santa Monica College a retraining/training center for these potential employees? Together with the College, the city has a cluster of arts related resources including the 18th Street Arts Center, Crossroads. The TAP encourages Santa Monica to explore whether there is a to-date untapped opportunity in these programs for workforce development. For example, though unrelated to the construction-hiring goal, the fund could support scholarships for young adults from the Pico Neighborhood to enroll in Santa Monica College's new entertainment industry training track.



Brian Welch presents findings from the Technical Assistance Panel relating to potential funding sources.

## Acknowledgements

The TAP wishes to thank the City of Santa Monica for its commitment and support for the preparation of this report. The TAP is also thankful for the participation of the following City staff and community members:

- Mayor Richard Bloom, City of Santa Monica
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- Ellen Gelbard, Assistant Director, City of Santa Monica, Planning & Community Development Department
- Francie Stefan, Division Manager, City of Santa Monica, Strategic and Transportation Planning Division
- Elizabeth Bar-El, AICP, Senior Planner, City of Santa Monica, Strategic and Transportation Planning Division
- Irma Carranza, Pico Neighborhood Association
- Karen Ginsberg, Assistant Director, Community and Cultural Services Department
- Bob Odermatt, Principal, The Odermatt Group
- Monica Born, Project Director at Expo Line Construction Authority
- Alexander Kalamaros, Joint Development Program Manager, Los Angeles County Metro
- Jan Maez, Assistant Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer, Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
- Barbara Whitney, Director of Finance and Operations, Crossroads School

## Acknowledgements



Panelists Cecilia Estolano and Taylor Mammen interview [Need name of interviewee] to better understand the study area.



# Panel Members

## Panel Chair

### Brian Jones

#### Managing Director, BMJ Advisors

As the Managing Director of BMJ Advisors, a consulting and advisory services firm focused on commercial and mixed-use real estate development opportunities, Brian M. Jones brings over 30 years of experience as a developer of premier shopping destinations. Most recently, Mr. Jones served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of West Coast Commercial Development division of Forest City, a US\$11.7 billion NYSE-listed national real estate company. Brian M. Jones' career with Forest City Enterprises included the development of 19 million square feet of Class A commercial development projects, with an estimated portfolio value of US\$3 billion dollars (before debt). He was the visionary behind two of the industry's most unique, innovative and highly honored projects Victoria Gardens and San Francisco Centre, each winning the International Council of Shopping Center's highest acknowledgement, the International Design & Development Award – Americas in 2006 and 2008, respectively.

At Forest City, Mr. Jones was responsible for overseeing all aspects of development, including site selection, government relations, financing, master planning, site and building design, anchor and small shop leasing, construction and property management. In addition, he directed all facets of the division's business activities, managing and leading a staff of over 100 employees. Mr. Jones was also a member of Forest City's investment committee, which evaluates and authorizes new investments for the firm. In this capacity, Mr. Jones guided the firm's exploration of new international business opportunities for the company. Jones has been in the commercial real estate industry since the early 1970's. He joined Forest City in 1978 as vice president and project developer on the Charleston Town Center, a major, urban, mixed-use project located in Charleston, West Virginia. Moving west, he was subsequently responsible for the following commercial developments: The Galleria at South Bay - Redondo Beach, Antelope Valley Mall, The Mall at Victor Valley, The Promenade at Temecula, Simi Valley Town Center, Galleria at Sunset in Henderson, Nevada and the Northfield Town Center in Colorado, to name a few.



Andrew Dresdner presents the panel's findings to city officials.

## Panel Members

### Richard Bruckner

#### Director of Regional Planning, County of Los Angeles

Richard Bruckner was appointed Director of the Regional planning Department of Los Angeles County in 2010. The Department of Regional Planning is responsible for land use planning and the enforcement of local land use regulations with the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Bruckner was the Director of Planning & Development Department for the City of Pasadena. He was responsible for citywide economic development, planning, building, code enforcement, cultural affairs, real estate, and the management of eight redevelopment projects areas. Before his appointment in Pasadena in 1999, he was the Deputy Executive Director of the Community Development Department for the City of Anaheim, California.

### Andrew Dresdner, AICP

#### Urban Designer and Planner, Cuningham Architecture

Andrew Dresdner has more than 10 years of experience in urban design and urban planning in which he has worked extensively with both private and public clients. Mr. Dresdner is committed to creating mixed-use communities with lasting value and enduring beauty. His focus has been to use the design process in a public forum to collaboratively solve urban and neighborhood problems. As an urban designer, Mr. Dresdner is particularly skilled at managing diverse viewpoints to create solutions that add value to both public and private interests. Mr. Dresdner has considerable experience designing and planning Transit Oriented Developments. They include the West Don Lands in Toronto, Ontario; Seigel Courts in Charlotte, North Carolina; LTV Redevelopment in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Fort Norfolk in Norfolk Virginia. In addition, Andrew directed the urban design and land use component of the 2020 Transit Vision for Southwest Pennsylvania. Andrew's role on all of the above projects was project manager and project designer.

### Cecilia V. Estolano

#### Chief Strategist of State and Local Initiatives, Green For All

Cecilia V. Estolano spearhead Green For All's effort to scale public-private partnerships that grow family-supporting, green jobs in cities across the country. While at CRA/LA, Ms. Estolano oversaw a budget of over \$700 million in 32 redevelopment project areas. She successfully delivered significant transformative investment to areas of Los Angeles that have previously not shared in the city's cycles of prosperity. During her tenure, CRA/LA adopted a landmark local hiring policy for construction projects that receive financial support from CRA/LA. The agency also created a Healthy Neighborhoods policy that serves as a blueprint to integrate sustainability principles throughout CRA/LA's practices, programs, and projects. Additionally, Ms. Estolano served on President-elect Obama's Transition Team as the Deputy Chair of the Environmental Protection Agency Review Team. "I commend Cecilia Estolano and the many accomplishments achieved by the CRA under her steady leadership," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "Over the past few years, we have seen ambitious redevelopment ideas come to fruition in some of our most distressed communities. Cecilia was at the forefront of our efforts to create a clean tech corridor and it was her unwavering commitment

to provide living wage jobs for hard-working Angelenos that resulted in project labor agreements. Cecilia has been a public servant in the truest sense and the City of Los Angeles is grateful for her service.

### **Peter Hillakas**

#### **Vice President, Newmark Realty**

Peter Hillakas – Peter Hillakas is currently an Associate Vice President in Newmark Realty Capitals Los Angeles office. Since joining Newmark, Peter has arranged over 1 billion in debt and equity financing for all major property types. He has experience structuring equity, construction, permanent and bridge financing for transactions that have included complicated mixed use properties and portfolios as well as single tenant deals. Prior to joining Newmark, Peter worked for a boutique merchant bank and a multi-family lender. Peter earned dual degrees in Finance and International Relations from the University of Southern California where he graduated a Renaissance Scholar and magna cum laude. He is also a licensed real estate broker in California

### **Taylor Mammen**

#### **Principal-Director of Consulting, RCLCO**

Taylor Mammen's work at RCLCO has featured a broad array of real estate product types, including market and financial analysis of master-planned communities, high-rise mixed-use projects, and resort residential (from RV parks to exclusive ski-in/out properties). In the course of these engagements, Taylor's work has been characterized by innovative approaches to land use questions, including developing new land valuation and employment demand methodologies. Prior to joining RCLCO and during his time in graduate school, Taylor worked for the Boston Redevelopment Authority, where he assisted in concept development and public rollout of the Crossroads Initiative, a public-private effort to revitalize and re-knit downtown Boston in response to the Big Dig. He also worked as Director of Research for a Washington, DC government relations firm, where he helped craft strategies and act as liaison for municipalities, universities, and health care centers as they partnered with the federal government on a variety of initiatives.

### **Neal Payton**

#### **Senior Principal, Torti Gallas and Partners, Inc.**

Neal Payton is a Principal at Torti Gallas and Partners, Inc. where he created and directs the 20-person West Coast office in Los Angeles. Before arriving in California, he co-directed Torti Gallas's Urban Design efforts in their Silver Spring, Maryland office. Often called upon to work on politically sensitive sites, including multi-ethnic or racially diverse neighborhoods, Mr. Payton has led over 50 community design charrettes and participated in over 100. In every case, the effort is to engage the community with an understanding of both the reality of the present and possibilities for the future. Mr. Payton's urban design efforts have been honored nationally with AIA Honor Awards for Regional and Urban Design, an AIA Housing Committee Award, and several Charter Awards from the Congress for the New Urbanism. Mr. Payton is currently working on TOD planning for the Westside Extension of the Purple Line along Wilshire Blvd in L.A., and the redevelopment of Wyvernwood a 70-acre site in Boyle Heights, as well as a form-based code for 300+ acres of Honolulu, among other efforts.

## Panel Members



TAP Panelists (left to right) –Andrew Dresdner, Richard Bruckner, Neal Payton, Taylor Mammen, Cecilia V. Estolano, Brian Welch, Brian Jones, Jim Suhr, and Peter Hillakas.

### **James K. Suhr**

#### **Principal, James Suhr and Associates**

James K. Suhr brings over 22 years of experience in Southern California real estate and development to each project. He has worked on a wide range of product types, including office, industrial, adaptive reuse, entertainment studio, mixed-use, apartments, for-sale residential, and retail projects, with specializations in acquisitions, underwriting, financing and entitlements. Prior to forming James Suhr & Associates in 2002, Mr. Suhr worked with BRE Properties as Director of Land Acquisitions, with Newhall Land & Farming as Vice President Office Development, in corporate real estate roles with The Walt Disney Company and Warner Bros., and with The Ratkovich Company. Mr. Suhr currently serves as the President of the Westside Urban Forum and is actively involved with Palisades Charter High School and the Urban Land Institute.

### **Brian Welch**

#### **Fehr and Peers**

Brian Welch has over 25 years of experience in transportation planning including 12 years of public sector service and nine years with Fehr & Peers. He has completed multimodal transportation planning projects in California, Colorado, Kansas, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah. He has authored numerous consulting reports including downtown parking and circulation studies, area-wide circulation studies, travel time and delay studies, infrastructure financing analyses, traffic impact studies, parking accumulation and delay studies, circulation elements, and specific plans. Mr. Welch has considerable experience in analyzing the relationship between urban form and travel behavior, and is regarded as a local expert regarding the transportation/land use implications of mixed-use, transit-oriented development. He has authored papers and spoken at professional conferences on various topics including innovations in transit-oriented, mixed-use development and organizational leadership. Mr. Welch currently leads Fehr & Peers' Smart Growth Discipline Group.

**At the Urban Land Institute, our mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.**



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ULI Los Angeles, a district council of the Urban Land Institute, carries forth that mission as the preeminent real estate forum in Southern California, facilitating the open exchange of ideas, information and experiences among local, national and international industry leaders and policy makers.

Established in 1936, ULI is a nonprofit education and research institute with over 40,000 members across the globe —1,500 here in the Greater Los Angeles area. As a nonpartisan organization, the Institute has long been recognized as one of America's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

The membership of ULI Los Angeles represents the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines. They include developers, builders, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, lenders, academics and students. Members of the Urban Land Institute in the counties of Los Angeles, Ventura, Kern, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara are automatically members of ULI Los Angeles.