



RED FIELDS TO  
*green fields*

---

*Transforming Urban  
Communities*

Commercial, Industrial  
and Residential



JuanCarlos Chan, City of Los Angeles  
Dept. of Recreation and Parks



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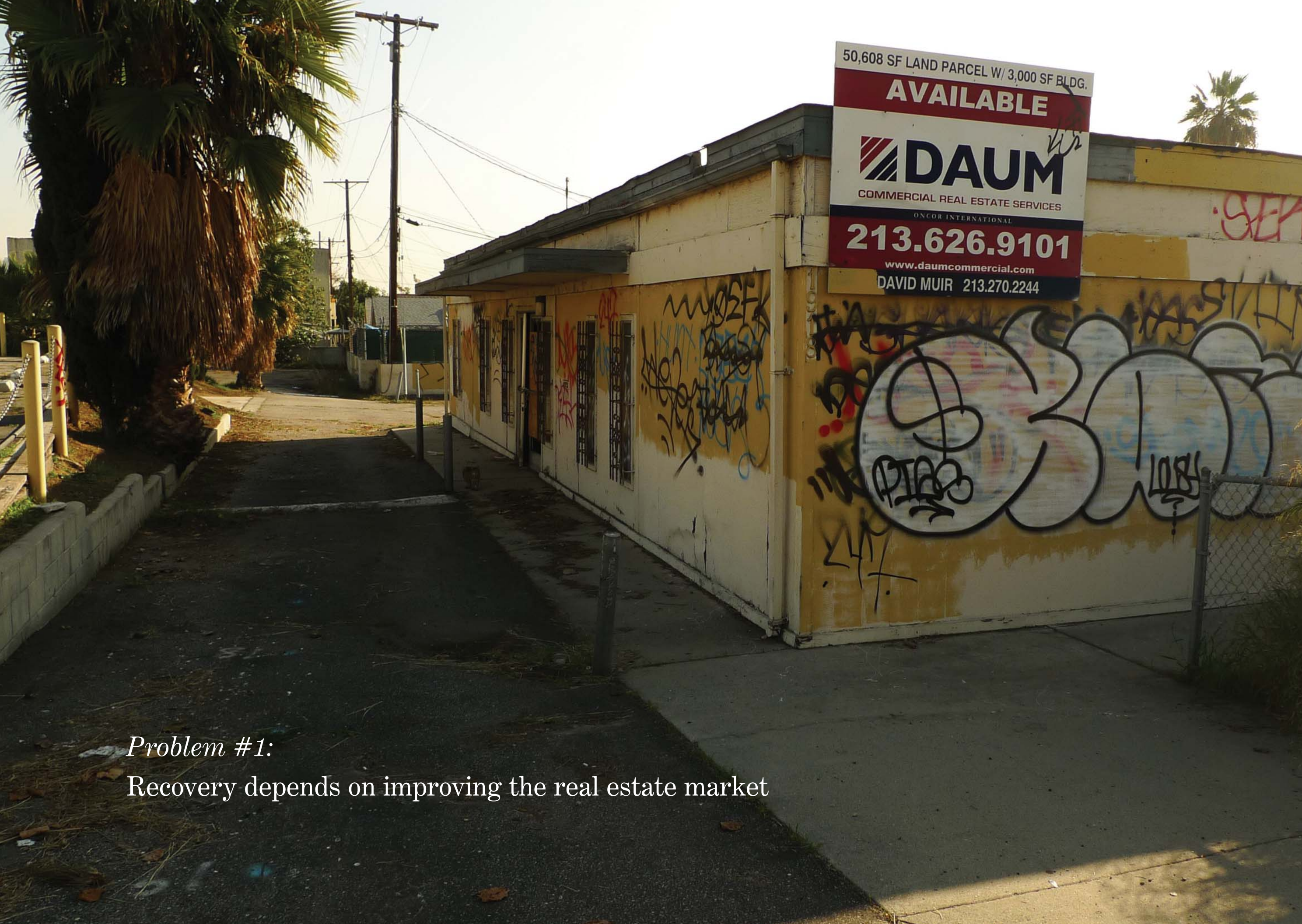
## Introduction

Los Angeles can transform communities by giving new life to distressed properties and creating a vast network of green space. The City is defined by its unique neighborhoods. All are culturally vibrant, but some lack economic opportunities and adequate infrastructure. While tourist destinations such as Venice, Hollywood, and LA Live benefit from outside visitors and development, neighborhoods such as South Los Angeles, Lincoln Heights and Westlake have uneven amenities and have received little private investment. Disadvantaged communities also lack access to healthy food and adequate park space. These communities suffer disproportionately, especially during periods of economic hardship.

In his 2010 State of the City address, Mayor Villaraigosa described a new economic reality for Los Angeles. Over the past three years, 65,000 jobs disappeared, construction slowed by 25 percent, and 23,000 Angelenos lost their homes. Foreclosed and distressed properties have flooded the real estate market. The City faces a \$485 million deficit resulting in significant reductions in service delivery. This new economic reality is devastating for Angelenos living in neighborhoods already lacking in community resources.

A new vision for Los Angeles starts with reimagining our most neglected spaces. Converting Red Fields into Green Fields redeploys capital out of underperforming real estate into green space that will generate new jobs, increase property values and foster community-driven development. A “Red Field” property can be physically or financially distressed, or both, and has negative value -- civically, environmentally and economically. Red Fields can be sites impacted by environmental concerns, such as asbestos containing materials, underground storage tanks, or contaminated soil or water. Disadvantaged communities will begin to attract visitors, draw new investments and create vibrant public spaces.

The parks of Los Angeles will provide the residents and visitors with quality recreational opportunities that promote a healthy lifestyle and strengthen the community through diverse physical, educational, and cultural programming.



*Problem #1:*

Recovery depends on improving the real estate market

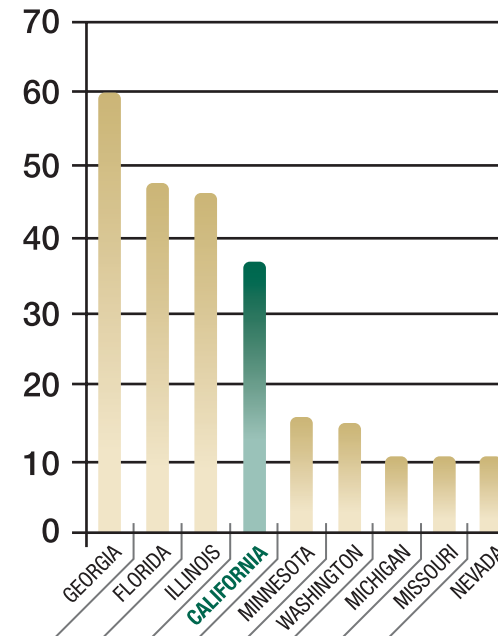
# Bank Failures, Unemployment, and Distressed Loans

- California ranks 4th nationally in total bank failures since 2006. 65% of the 37 failed banks in California were in Southern California (FDIC 2011). Many of these banks held distressed mortgages (LAEDC 2011).
- California ranks 2nd nationally in unemployment, currently at 12.0%. Los Angeles has an unemployment rate of 12.2% (BLS 2011).
- Los Angeles ranks 4th nationally in total amount of distressed Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities (CMBS) loans. Over \$1.8 billion are delinquent (Trepp, LLC 2011).



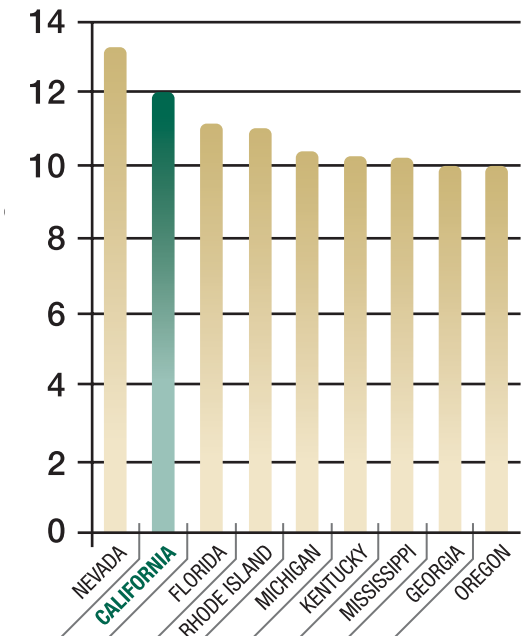
www.dsnews.com

## Failed Banks List

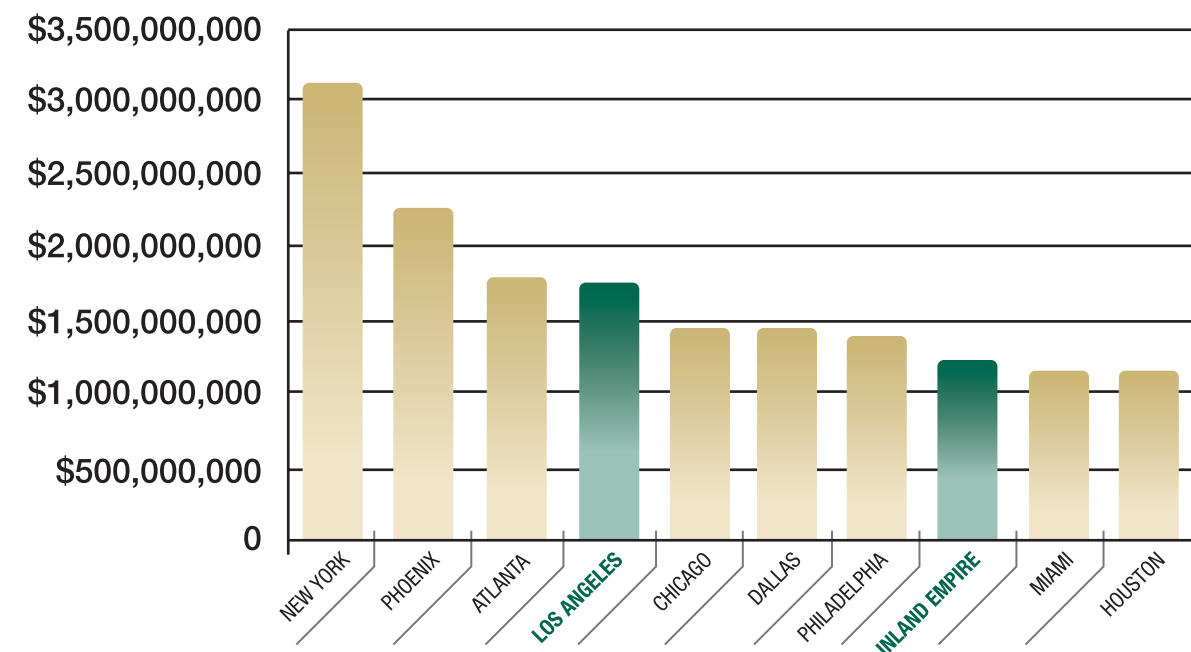


Source: FDIC, April 2011

## Unemployment Rates



## CMBS Distressed Loans



Source: Trepp, LLC, May 2011

# Property Values

## Lower Commercial Property Values

Commercial real estate values in Los Angeles dropped 30 percent from the peak in 2007 to 2011, from \$500 billion to \$350 billion (CoStar Data 2011).

## Lower Residential Property Values

Home values in Los Angeles dropped 35 percent from the peak in 2006 to 2010 (Data Quick 2011).

## Disadvantaged Communities in the City of Los Angeles were hit harder than most

Disadvantaged communities, such as portions of the San Fernando Valley, South Los Angeles, Westlake and Lincoln Heights held low values long before the recession and were hit harder than more affluent neighborhoods in West Los Angeles.

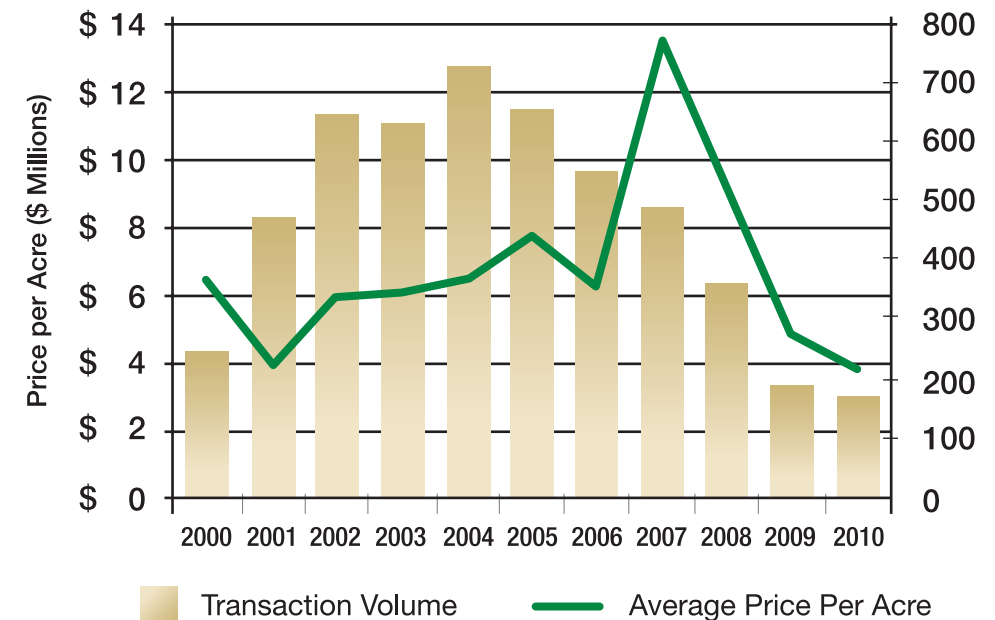
Home values fell much more drastically in disadvantaged communities since the peak in 2006 compared to Los Angeles city-wide (-35%) and at more than twice the rate of wealthier West Los Angeles (-20%).

- Los Angeles City: -35%
- West Los Angeles: -20%
- Westlake: -41%
- Lincoln Heights: -41%
- San Fernando Valley: -44%
- South Los Angeles: -62%

## Good News: Opportunity Knocks

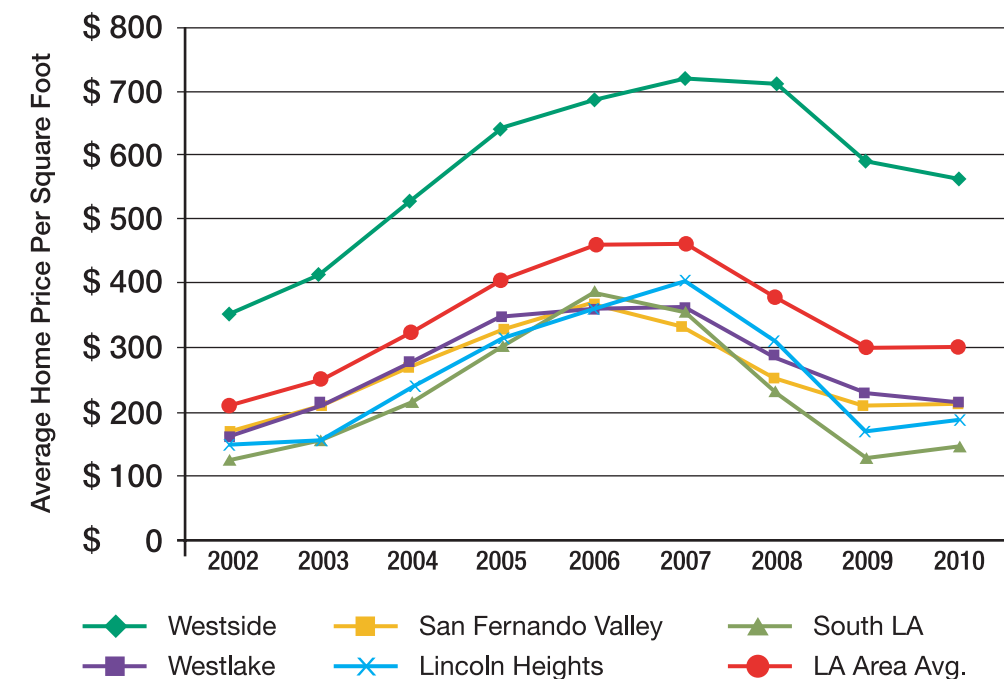
Given lower property values, reduced credit availability, and evaporating profits, there is an opportunity to purchase distressed real estate and revive the regional economy by turning these Red Fields into Green Fields.

## Commercial Real Estate Transaction Volume and Average Price per Acre



Source: CoStar Data Estimates, 2011

## Price Disparity of Homes in Los Angeles



Source: DataQuick and Verde Coalition, 2011

1898

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COMMERCIAL

90 DAY GUARANTEE



MARKET



*Problem #2:*

Low-income communities are park poor



## Lack of Open Space

Although Los Angeles ranks fifth among big cities with more than 30,000 acres of parkland, about 56 percent of its park acres are located in the inaccessible mountainous areas.

- Only 30 percent of the City’s 4 million residents live within one quarter mile of a park compared with 80 percent and 90 percent in Boston and New York, respectively (Trust for Public Land 2003).
- In Los Angeles predominately white neighborhoods enjoy 31.8 acres of park space for every 1,000 people, compared with 1.7 acres in African-American neighborhoods and 0.6 acres in Latino neighborhoods (Pincetl, et al. 2003).
- Seventy-three percent of parents in Central and South Los Angeles reported that their children had easy access to safe places to play, compared to 83 percent and higher for other parts of the county.

Enhanced access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6% increase in the number of people exercising three or more days per week.

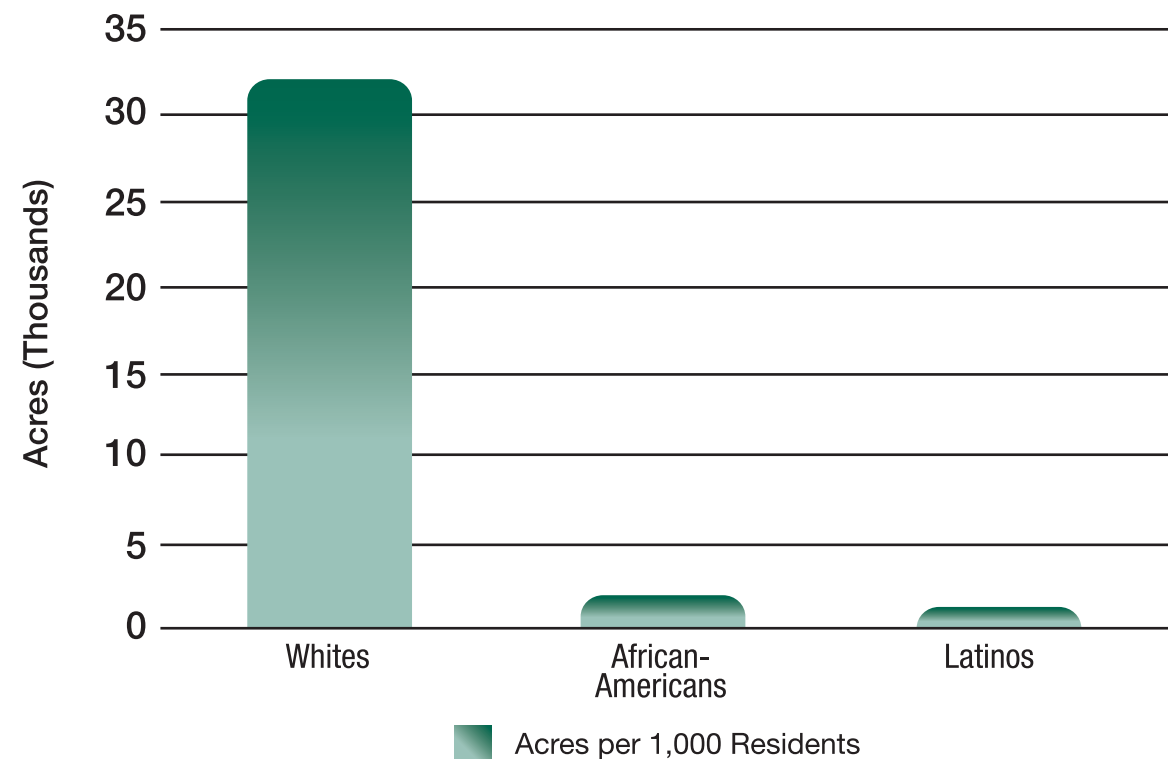
Centers for Disease Control, 2005

## Park to Land Area Comparison

	Land Area	Park Acres	Parks: % of Land Area
New York	195,072	38,019	19.5%
Washington, DC	39,297	7,617	19.4%
San Francisco	29,884	5,384	18.0%
Boston	30,992	4,897	15.8%
Los Angeles	300,201	23,798	7.9%
LA - Recreation and Parks	300,201	17,526	5.8%

Source: The Trust for Public Land

## Park Space Disparity by Race



Source: Pincetl 2003

*Problem #3:*

Poor environmental quality



## Climate Change & Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Climate change is a critical issue for Southern California, not only because of increases in temperature and intensification of weather extremes and storm events, but because greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) lead to poor air quality in the Los Angeles area (CA Energy Commission 2006).

- The transportation sector is the single largest category of California's GHG emissions, producing 41 percent of the state's total emissions in 2004 (CA Energy Commission 2006).
- Annual vehicle miles traveled in the City of Los Angeles increased by 13 percent between 1999 and 2009. The percentage of commuters who traveled more than one hour to work increased by 4 percent between 1990 and 2009 (US Census).
- In Southern California, GHG emissions and vehicle miles traveled to accommodate sprawling land uses are the greatest contribution to climate change. These patterns increase temperatures, cause urban heat islands and worsen air pollution.
- Air quality remains the poorest in disadvantaged communities along the region's major freeway corridors (SCAQMD MATE II Study 2000).
- Poor air quality is a contributing factor to many adverse health outcomes such as: asthma, chronic lung disease, cardiovascular disease, and decreased respiratory function (EPA Air Quality Index, 2009).



Denny Zane

## Water Supply & Pollution

Los Angeles is experiencing freshwater shortages, its potable water supply is increasingly at risk, and polluted stormwater severely threatens marine life and coastal resources.

- The City of Los Angeles imports 85 to 90 percent of its water from distant sources.
- The region's population is growing and allocations from traditional, non-local sources of water are increasingly restricted due to environmental and regulatory issues.
- Only 16 percent of precipitation in the Los Angeles region currently percolates into groundwater, while 50 percent flows to the ocean as polluted urban runoff. In a natural hydrologic cycle, up to 50 percent of precipitation percolates into the ground, with only 10 percent becoming runoff (Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council 2010).
- Stormwater runoff is the number one source of coastal pollution.
- Studies have demonstrated a direct correlation between the percent of land in an area that is paved and the pollution of coastal waters that receive stormwater runoff.



Heal the Bay



*Problem #4:*  
Poor Public Health

# Food Deserts, Obesity and Health

Disadvantaged communities in Los Angeles suffer from a lack of supermarkets and a surplus of fast food restaurants and liquor stores. This creates a food environment dominated by high-calorie foods with low nutritional value that contribute to obesity and chronic diseases.

- There are less than half as many full-service grocery stores per resident in low income urban communities than in the City as a whole (Cotterill and Franklin 1995).
- Predominantly white neighborhoods have three times as many supermarkets per resident as black neighborhoods and nearly twice as many supermarkets per resident as Latino neighborhoods (Shaffer 2002).
- Grocery stores in disadvantaged areas do not consistently stock their shelves with healthy options and often sell spoiled meat and vegetables (Chung and Myers 1999).
- In Los Angeles County, 55 percent of the adult population is either overweight or obese, and 21.2 percent of children in grades 5, 7 and 9 are overweight (Los Angeles County Department of Public Health 2009).
- Overweight individuals are more likely to die prematurely than are those who maintain a healthy weight (Krupa 2001).
- Health status is inversely associated with income: 38 percent of adults and 25 percent of children living at or below poverty are in fair to poor health, compared to 8 percent of adults and 4 percent of children with household incomes above 300 percent of the federal poverty level (Los Angeles County Department of Public Health 2009).
- Less than 10 percent of students were physically fit in nearly one-third of Los Angeles Unified School District's 605 schools. Only eight schools had student populations where more than 50 percent are physically fit (The City Project 2006).



As illustrated in the photo above, rotten vegetables and junk food are often the only choices.

UEPI at Occidental College



Emily Hart Roth

Many of our urban neighborhoods are virtual food deserts, lacking access to healthy produce and locally grown food, where a Big Mac is far easier to find than a fresh head of cabbage.



# The Benefits of Parks

## Economic Benefits

### Job Creation

Constructing new parks and green networks leads to job creation. It is estimated that for every \$1 million spent on building a park from acquisition to development, 10 total jobs are created, each averaging \$51,000 in annual wages.

### Increased Property Values

Numerous studies show that parks and open space increase the value of neighboring residential property.

- A 2008 study found that home values in a community near downtown Los Angeles rose because of the increased presence of green space. The authors found that for every 1 percent increase in green space within 200 to 300 feet of a home, real estate values rose by 0.07 percent. If 15 percent more green space were added, the value of a median-priced home would increase by \$2,565 or 1.05 percent (Conway, et al. 2008).
- In Boulder, Colorado, home values near a new greenbelt were 32 percent higher than those that were further away, adding \$5.4 million to the total property values and \$500,000 per year in additional potential property tax revenues. This was enough to cover the \$1.5-million purchase price of the greenbelt in only three years (Crompton 2007).
- Homebuyers are willing to pay 10 percent more for homes that are close to parks, open space and greenery (National Association of Realtors 2001).

### Business Attraction

- Availability of park and recreation facilities is an important quality-of-life factor for corporations choosing where to locate.

### Tourism

- A park often becomes one of a city's signature attractions, a prime marketing tool to attract tourists, conventions, and businesses.
- Minneapolis' Chain of Lakes received 5.5 million visitors in 2001, making it Minnesota's second-biggest attraction after the Mall of America.
- San Antonio's Riverwalk Park, which cost \$425,000 to build, has overtaken the Alamo as the most popular attraction for its \$3.5 billion tourism industry.

### Community Investments

- Organized events held in public parks—arts festivals, athletic events, food festivals, musical and theatrical events—often bring substantial positive economic impacts to their communities, filling hotel rooms and restaurants and bringing customers to local stores. These events also foster social cohesiveness in communities.



# The Benefits of Parks

## Health Benefits

Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. Enhanced access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6 percent increase in the number of people exercising three or more days per week (Centers for Disease Control 2005).

## Social Benefits

Green spaces produce important social and community development benefits. Public parks offer recreational opportunities for at-risk youth, low-income children, and low-income families. Access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and, in particular, to reduced juvenile delinquency (Trust for Public Land 2005).

## Environmental Benefits

Trees reduce air pollution and improve water quality, help keep cities cooler, and together with other low impact development practices, can offer a less expensive way to manage stormwater runoff than conventionally engineered flood control systems.

The U.S. Forest Service calculated that over a 50-year lifetime one tree generates \$31,250 in oxygen, provides \$62,000 in air pollution control, recycles \$37,500 in rainwater, and controls \$31,250 in soil erosion.

Trees and the soil under them act as natural filters for water pollution. Leaves, trunks, roots and soil remove particulate matter from rainwater before it reaches storm drains. Trees also absorb nutrients created by human activity, such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, which otherwise pollute streams and lakes.



606 Team



JuanCarlos Chan, City of Los Angeles  
Dept. of Recreation and Parks









What if we were to transform  
Los Angeles' Red Fields to  
Green Fields?



We can catalyze economic growth in Los Angeles' disadvantaged communities.

We can transform underutilized urban spaces by creating far-reaching improvements in the city's social, ecological, and economic systems from the ground up.

We can create a network of neighborhood parks.

We can expand our network and connect neighborhoods by revitalizing the Los Angeles River.



Steve Rasmussen Cancian

# How will it work?

## Implementing the Vision

### Phase I

Seize Opportunity



### Phase II

Green Fields Solutions



### Phase III

Create Connections



### Phase IV

Expand Network

# Converting Red Fields to Green Fields

## Expand the definition

Across Los Angeles, Red Fields in park-poor areas can be financially or physically underutilized spaces -- vacant lots, overflow parking lots, buildings for sale or lease in poor condition, and other properties that could yield multiple benefits if redeveloped into Green Fields.

These Red Fields are mostly small -- on average 0.5 acres -- and are often located around commercial corridors.

There are an estimated 2,000 Red Fields totaling over 1,100 acres in Los Angeles' most park-poor communities.

## Prioritize communities in need

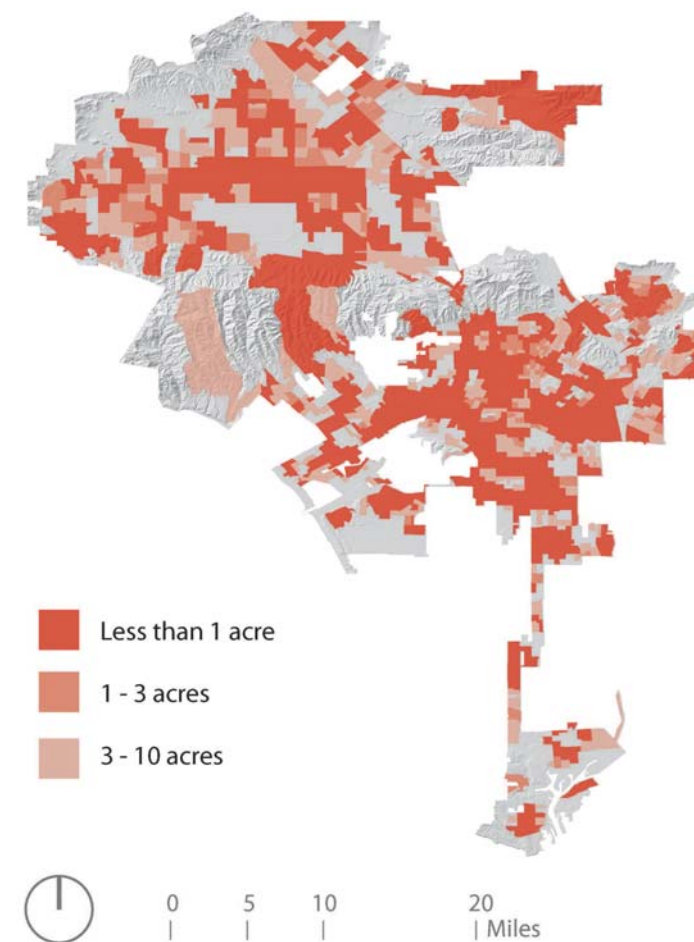
Los Angeles' most disadvantaged communities\* are adjacent to downtown, south of Interstate 10 and along Interstate 110, and in parts of the San Fernando Valley. In addition to being economically disadvantaged, these communities are severely park-poor.

Most of these neighborhoods have less than 1 acre of parkland per 1,000 residents; in many cases these communities have no parkland at all. At the same time, these disadvantaged and park-poor communities also contain large areas of underutilized land that offers the potential for usable green space.

\* Communities with a household median income that is 80 percent or less of the state's median household income.



606 Team



Source: 606 Team

# Phase I: Seize Opportunity

## Acquisition & Stabilization

The first phase of a Red Field to Green Field strategy for Los Angeles is acquiring priority Red Field properties while prices are low. Red Fields can be a range of underutilized distressed properties and may be privately or publicly owned. Private easements on publicly owned lands (such as railroad or utility easements) and long-term ground leases on underutilized or nuisance publicly-owned lots or rights-of-way can be acquired or transferred for Green Fields. Brownfields, properties which are contaminated, warrant special consideration as Red Fields.

Following acquisition, properties should be secured and cleaned-up in order to stabilize the neighborhood. When a property is suitable for a new long-term project use but it is not economically feasible to develop in the short-term, an interim Green Field use may be appropriate. A low-cost and low-maintenance use such as installation of native or low water landscaping can be implemented to provide important habitat, recreation, urban cooling, food production or soil remediation benefits.

Long Beach and Philadelphia have two examples of stabilization programs for city-owned vacant lots. Long Beach's Operation Mulch-A-Lot has three goals: landscaping, weed control and beautification. It keeps 6,000 tons of leaves and branches from reaching landfills annually, provides stormwater retention and keeps stormwater from carrying pollution into storm drains, rivers and the ocean. Mulching a vacant lot keeps the lot activated and well maintained rather than being neglected and overrun by weeds and trash.

Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green Program stabilizes vacant lots as the first step to transforming the lot. Trees and grass are planted and a simple wood fence is erected. More than 7 million square feet of land have been transformed, immediately increasing property values.

Philadelphia Green's  
Land Stabilization  
Program





## Phase II: Green Field Solutions

### Create a Neighborhood Plan

The second phase is to create a neighborhood plan with extensive community input. Careful planning, organizing and consideration of community needs are essential to the development of a strategic green network.

The plan should prioritize which Red Fields to acquire and develop, identify solutions for Red Fields and allow the development of Green Fields to be coordinated with other community projects and existing redevelopment efforts. Creative collaborations with schools and agencies should be sought to connect adjacent parks, schoolyards and alleyways.

Community planning to engage all relevant stakeholders -- from community members to agency representatives -- will facilitate a process to consider the range of land-use needs within a neighborhood. For example, some Red Fields may be better suited for other uses than green space, such as affordable housing. On the other hand, when possible, green space and housing, especially affordable housing, retail and commercial site, should be developed together.

Once a group of community stakeholders is assembled and that group decides which Red Fields should be redeveloped, the decision of what sort of Green Field to create should be made based on community needs and desires.

The following considerations are suggested for prioritizing Red Fields to develop into Green Fields:

- Appropriateness for open space development using criteria such as: vacancy, size, slope, and other factors that impact the type of open space that can be created.
- Connectivity to other Green Fields increases access to a range of open space resources such as playgrounds, walking paths and passive spaces for community members who might not have these resources at one location.
- Proximity to existing and proposed green streets, pedestrian improvement projects, bike lanes and public transportation will create a green network of Green Fields and green streets.
- Proximity to commercial corridors maximizes the opportunity to convert vast stretches of asphalt and concrete into green spaces reinvigorating important corridors and community centers.



Verde Coalition

## Phase II: Green Field Solutions

### Transforming Communities

Los Angeles can transform communities by giving new life to distressed properties. A new vision starts with reimagining our most neglected spaces. Transforming Green Fields can provide residents with quality recreational opportunities, promote a healthy lifestyle and strengthen the community through diverse physical, educational, and cultural programming.

Green Field solutions are varied and should complement and enhance the function of adjacent sites, such as a farmers' market that sells produce grown at a nearby community garden.

Sustainable design elements, such as rainwater capture and stormwater treatment should be included whenever feasible. Multiple Green Field solutions can and should be applied to a particular site.

**1) Urban Agriculture** refers to food production in the urban environment. This includes community gardening, farming, composting or production of value-added products from agriculture.

- Urban agriculture increases the food security of communities by creating a food system that is less dependent on importing food and instead relies on local access to fresh and healthy food choices.



**2) Active Recreation** includes playgrounds, sports fields and courts, and exercise equipment.

- Active recreation ranks high on the list of needs for Los Angeles residents (City of Los Angeles 2009). Park poor communities typically have higher rates of obesity due to a lack of recreational exercise opportunities (Los Angeles County Public Health 2005).



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**3) Passive Recreation** includes amenities such as walking paths, shade trees, relaxing views, picnic sites, tot lots, and playgrounds.

- Passive recreation helps address the need for recreational opportunities and respite in park-poor communities. Increasing the amount of park space available has a positive impact on public health, mental well-being and quality of life in communities.



Verde Coalition

#### **4) Community (Indoor)**

Green Fields include community centers where classes or community events are held and where critical services are provided. These Green Fields may not be green in a literal sense, but serve a vital role as public spaces that bring a community together.



[www.thehispanicnurses.org/conference-2009-los-angeles-chapter-conference/](http://www.thehispanicnurses.org/conference-2009-los-angeles-chapter-conference/)

**5) Community (Outdoor) Green Fields** can take the form of plazas or flex spaces which can host community events or they can be devoted to specific uses such as farmers' markets or performances.

- Community (Outdoor) Green Fields are important community gathering spaces, contributing to the cultural and economic strength of communities, improving the quality of life, and overall social and economic stability.



Verde Coalition

**6) Engineered Wetlands** are directly focused on ecological functions related to stormwater treatment and flood control. These may include daylighting underground streams in order to biologically treat large amounts of water or restoring degraded existing wetlands.

- Engineered wetlands help meet water quality requirements for rivers and streams, and provide a multitude of valuable environmental services. Engineered wetlands can also provide opportunities for education and connection to nature, as well as serve as valuable wildlife habitat.



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**7) Other Stormwater Treatment Green Fields** can achieve ecological objectives related to stormwater treatment, infiltration and groundwater replenishment on a smaller scale than engineered wetlands. Stormwater treatment solutions in the form of low impact development can fit into most Green Fields and are thus compatible with most Green Field projects. Solutions may include bioswales, climate-appropriate landscaping, stormwater gardens and retention basins.

- Green Fields with stormwater features can play a valuable role in educating the next generation of LA residents about water issues and instilling a landscape ethic consistent with the realities of natural resource limits and a changing climate. Stormwater capture and treatment also serve important economic functions in reducing the region's dependence on distant sources of water.



Los Angeles & San Gabriel Watershed Rivers Council

**8) Habitat Park Green Fields** provide habitat for sensitive species, enhancing ecological connectivity and improving air and water quality. These Green Fields typically involve native vegetation restoration and habitat for targeted native wildlife species. They can also include walking paths, educational signage and other amenities, and may take the form of botanic gardens, preserves or parks.

- Habitat parks provide opportunities for connection to nature and environmental education typically lacking in the urban environment, especially in disadvantaged communities.



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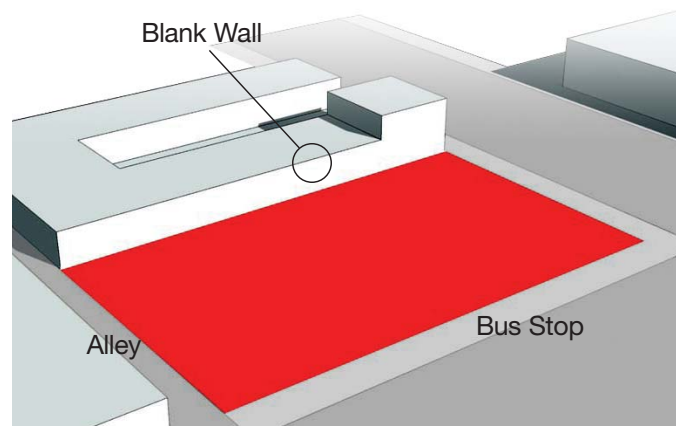
# The Process in Action

The following four concept examples illustrate the dramatic transformations that are possible. These designs were developed by graduate students from California Polytechnic State University Department of Landscape Architecture, 606 Design Studio.

## Red Field #1: Westlake

This small Red Field is a rectangular vacant lot in a dense, primarily immigrant community of Los Angeles. On the corner of two major thoroughfares in the heart of Westlake, this site is nearly always surrounded by people. The streets bustle with pedestrians and vendors. The site is also adjacent to an alley, two bus stops, and is backed by the blank wall of a commercial building. A fence around the site currently prohibits access and accumulates trash.

- Site area: 0.3 acres
- Neighborhood density: 38,214 people / sq. mi.
- Immigrant community
- Two bus stops
- High pedestrian traffic
- Large blank wall
- Street vendors
- Flat terrain





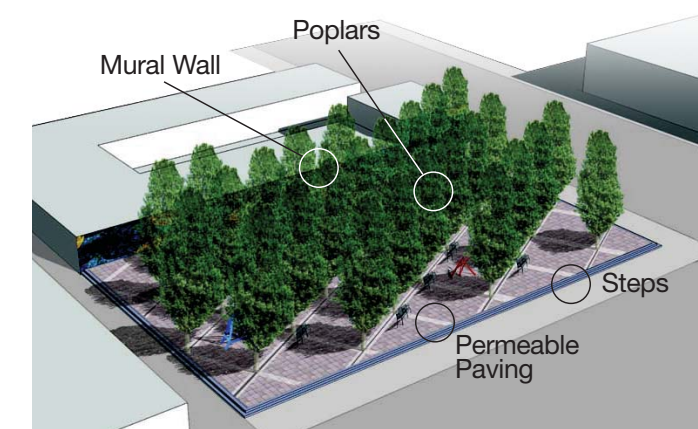
## The Process in Action

### Green Field #1: Poplar Plaza

Poplar Plaza is an open community space that features a bosque of fast-growing poplar trees. The tall trees draw people from the community to come relax on benches in the shade. A shimmering mosaic, brightly lit at night, covers the formerly blank wall. A rotating exhibit of sculptures created by local artists further punctuates the space and contributes to the community's sense of pride and identity. Permeable pavers in a grid pattern define the floor area and allow water and air to infiltrate to tree roots. Meanwhile, the poplar trees quietly remove pollutants from the soil.

#### Benefits:

- Art contributes to community identity
- Iconic beauty adds value to neighborhood
- Benches provide seating for bus riders and pedestrians
- Open plaza improves pedestrian circulation
- Trees reduce the heat island effect
- Trees produce oxygen and sequester carbon
- Trees remediate soil pollution
- Permeable paving captures stormwater



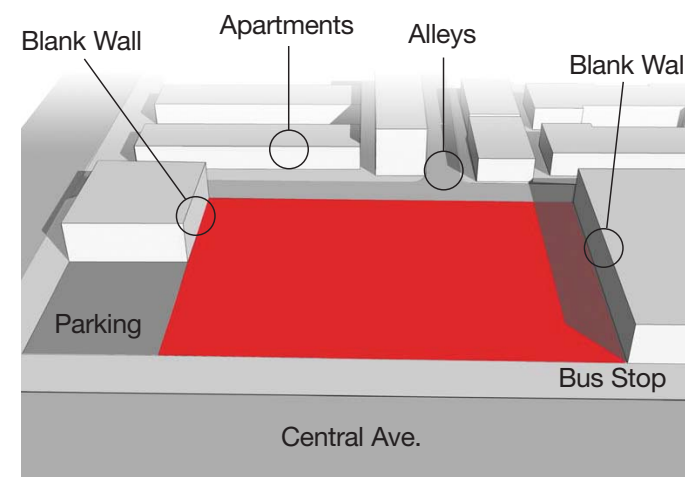
# The Process in Action

## Red Field #2:

### South Los Angeles

This small Red Field is located in South Los Angeles along Central Avenue, a major commercial and industrial thoroughfare through an otherwise residential neighborhood. Alleys run parallel and perpendicular to the site on the east side, with adjacent apartments. Two public schools are within a quarter of a mile, and are accessible through the alleys. Next to the site on the north side is a small discount store with a small parking lot in front. The lot to the south contains a probation office. Also near the site is a bus stop on Central Avenue. Across from the site on Central Avenue are two large buildings, one owned by the Salvation Army and the other a juvenile justice center.

- Site area: 0.3 acres
- Neighborhood density: 15,661 people / sq. mi.
- Adjacent bus stop
- Between commercial/industrial corridor and residential alleys
- Bordered by two blank walls
- Surrounding uses: apartments, market, probation office, Salvation Army and juvenile justice center
- Two schools within a few blocks







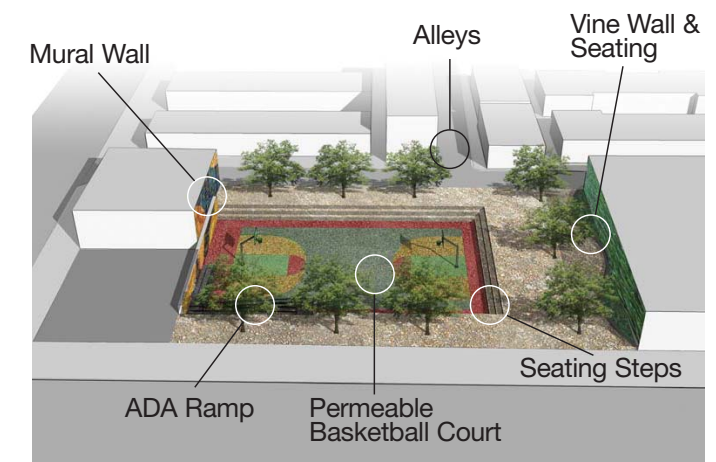
## The Process in Action

### Green Field #2: Florence Court

The main feature of Florence Court is a sunken basketball court, which is surrounded by amphitheater style seating. This court can be accessed by a wheelchair-accessible ramp as well as by the seating steps. It is paved with a porous material that allows water infiltration. This addresses the need for drainage while also reducing stormwater runoff and contributing to groundwater recharge. Florence Court is also designed to accommodate access to the alleyways. The building walls facing the site feature a colorful mural on the north wall and vines on the south wall. The vines make the adjacent curving bench a pleasant place to sit. The site is also punctuated by trees, but is designed to promote high visibility, access, and safety for all users.

#### Benefits:

- Recreation contributes to the health of the community
- Active programming provides positive activity for youth
- Seating, shade and greenery contribute to mental health
- Public mural contributes to community identity
- Improved circulation encourages walking, cycling, and bus riding
- Trees reduce urban heat island effect
- Trees produce oxygen and sequester carbon
- Porous sunken court captures rainwater

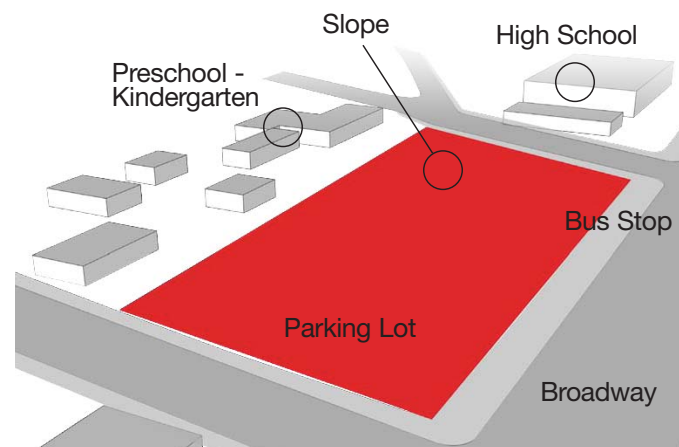


# The Process in Action

## Red Field #3: Lincoln Heights

This larger Red Field is a sloped, vacant lot located on Broadway, a busy commercial street in one of the oldest neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Multiple schools surround the site, including a high school, elementary, preschool and kindergarten. An adjacent bus stop on Broadway is heavily used by high school students and other residents. The site has steep topography on one side, providing views of buildings in downtown Los Angeles, and a relatively flat parking lot on the other side. It has high visibility, good accessibility, and a stream of pedestrians passing by--particularly at the beginning and end of the school day. The south-facing site receives full sunlight.

- Site area: 1.1 acres
- Neighborhood density: 10,602 people / sq. mi.
- Surrounding uses: schools, residential, commercial
- Adjacent bus stop
- Sloped topography
- Pedestrian traffic from high school





## The Process in Action

### Green Field #3: Lincoln Heights Local

Lincoln Heights Local focuses on promoting healthy food options and building community. The community garden provides plots to surrounding schools as well as other members of the community. There students grow their own food while learning about natural processes. The farmers market plaza, with a large oak tree, hosts weekly farmers markets as well as other community events such as health fairs, arts and crafts fairs, and flea markets. The juice stand utilizes fruit from the orchard as well as other fresh produce to provide healthy snacks to the high school and neighborhood. The top floor of the community building serves as an outdoor classroom, while the bottom floor houses garden tools. A bioswale treats any runoff before it leaves the site.

#### Benefits:

- Hands-on agriculture provides agricultural education and health-food for school children
- Farmers market provides fresh produce and local economic exchange
- Juice stand with neighborhood bulletin board informs the neighborhood about healthy food options
- Oak and citrus trees on site sequester carbon, reduce the heat island effect, and improve air quality
- Bioswale cleans runoff

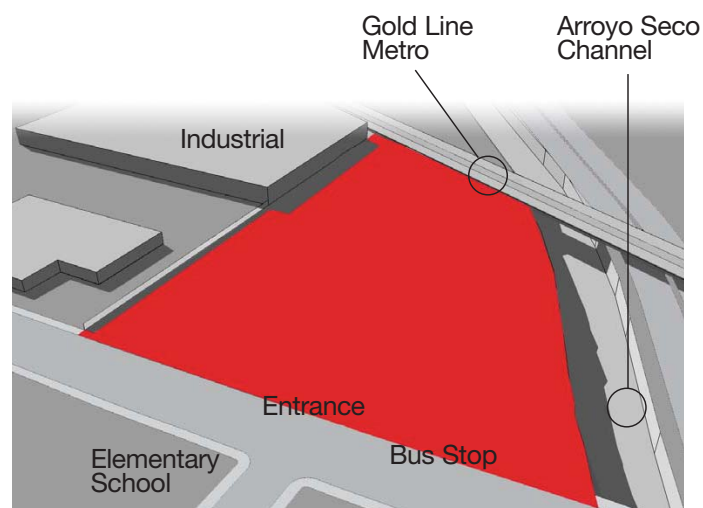


# The Process in Action

## Red Field #4: Lincoln Heights

This 2.7 acre brownfield site is located between residential and industrial areas at the crossroads of several transportation corridors. The site is bordered on the north by the Arroyo Seco, a 60-foot wide concrete stream channel. On the other side of the Arroyo Seco is the Pasadena Freeway, which runs parallel to the channel. The site is bordered on the west by railroad tracks for the Metro Gold Line, which has a stop nearby. Along the eastern edge is Pasadena Avenue, a four lane road. To the south is a large industrial building and parking lot. Across Pasadena Avenue to the east is a public elementary school. The site is mostly flat except along the edge of the Arroyo Seco where the terrain drops sharply meeting the top of the channel.

- Size: 2.7 acres
- Neighborhood density: 10,602 people/ sq. mi.
- Surrounding uses: industrial, elementary school, Arroyo Seco, light rail
- Adjacent bus stop





## The Process in Action

### Green Field #4: Arroyo Seco Park

Arroyo Seco Park features recreation and education tied together by the theme of the Arroyo Creek. Active areas include a multi-use sports field and playgrounds. The playgrounds feature interactive water play and natural playground design elements. Picnic areas and walking paths invite more passive uses. The paths meander around the site and mimic the arroyo, with stopping points that feature boulder seating and educational signage. Environmental education is enhanced by the nature center, pond, learning circle, and native landscaping. At the entrance of the park is a plaza and arch with an iconic heron sculpture greeting visitors and enticing them to explore.

#### Benefits:

- Environmental education connects students and community to history and the Arroyo Seco
- Playgrounds provide places for children to play
- Multi-use field provides opportunities for exercise and events
- Seating, paths and picnic areas provide respite from the urban environment
- Native landscaping and pond provide opportunities to interact with nature
- Trees and vegetation reduce heat island effect, sequester carbon and produce oxygen



## Phase III: Create Connections & Develop Network

Green solutions are not limited to the field sites. Green infrastructure can extend from the site into the adjacent streets and alleys, creating green connections. Street treatments such as green streets, complete streets, and green alleys can enhance the transformation of Red Fields into Green Fields. By building connections, Green Fields become important networks of a city-wide system of connectivity that includes green infrastructure as well as walking, cycling, and public transportation.

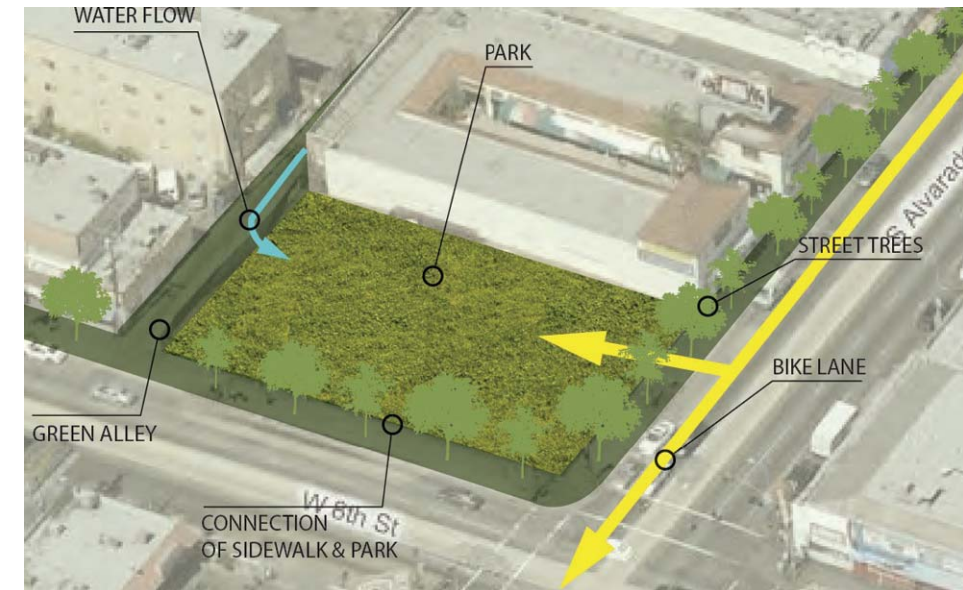
A green network starts within a neighborhood with the creation of Green Fields. Once destination travel patterns are identified, the network expands to green streets and alleyways that improve access to green space and encourage walking, biking and transit use. As neighborhood networks grow, a regional network will link existing regional parks to small parks as well as one community to another.

### Creating Connections

Streets and alleys are important public spaces that can be improved to create a vibrant social environment and provide important ecological services. These green networks include:

- Trees and vegetation
- Ample sidewalks and shade for pedestrians
- Green and park medians
- Stormwater treatment features
- Green transportation infrastructure such as bike lanes, streetcars, light rail or bus-only lanes
- Traffic calming measures
- Urban waterway connections
- Engaging buildings and architecture

Incorporating one or all of these elements into adjacent streets and alleys will allow Green Fields to extend into the urban fabric with infrastructure improvements. This will result in a network within and between communities that will grow organically as Red Fields are gradually transformed throughout the City.



606 Team



Photo used under Creative Commons from Waltarrrr

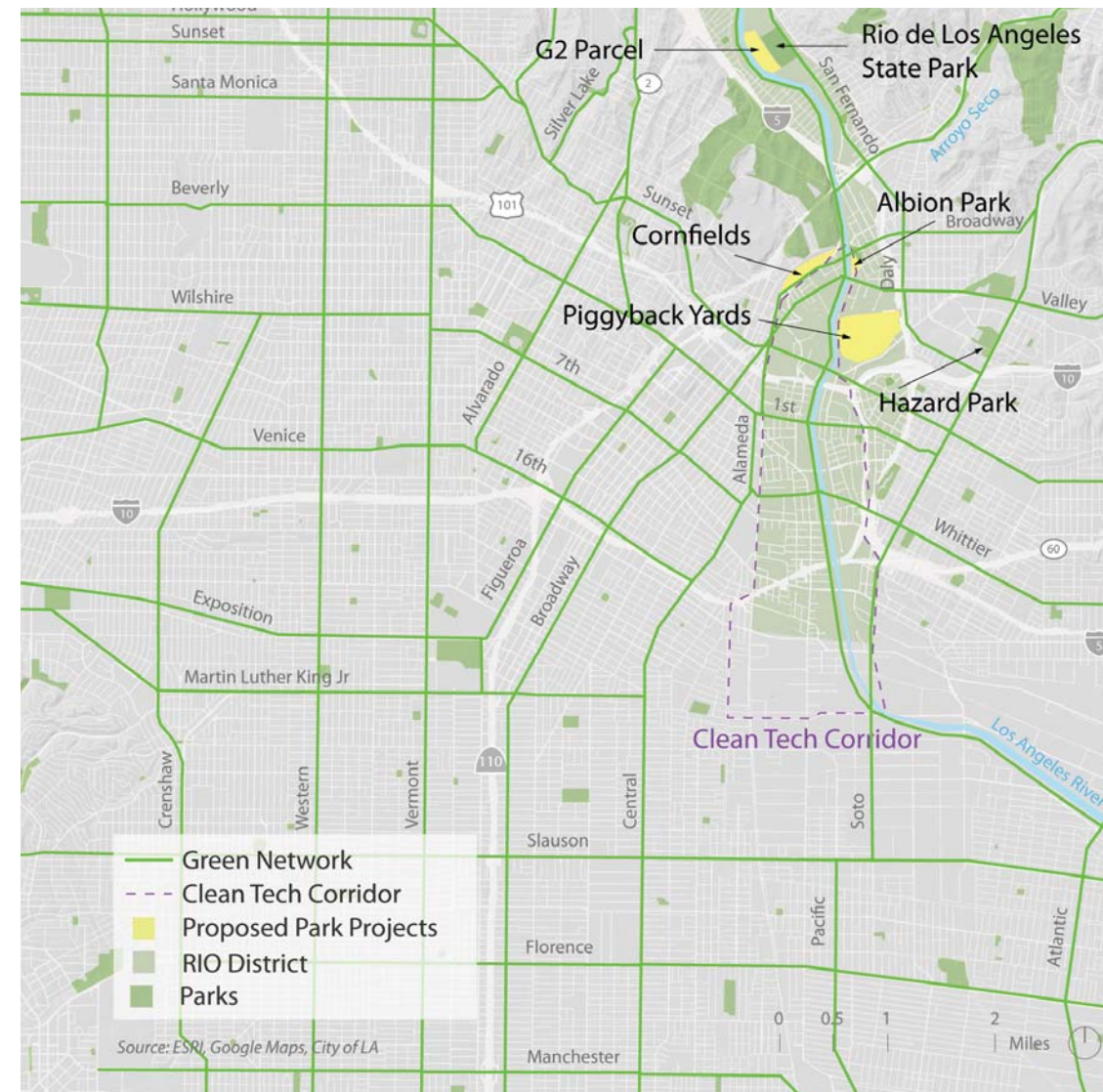
## Phase IV: Expand the Network

Newly created Green Fields accessible to existing and planned parks will create an expanding green network providing a comprehensive open space strategy for Los Angeles. Red Fields that become small neighborhood parks and proposed large scale projects are both important components to the Red Fields to Green Fields model.

Current and planned projects such as the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, the planned Phase II development of Los Angeles State Historic Park (Chinatown-Cornfields Park) and the Piggyback Yard can anchor the Los Angeles green network.

### Los Angeles River

Converting Red Fields to Green Fields in areas adjacent to the Los Angeles River will provide new park-like amenities including trails and parks that will catalyze new urban infill housing developments, including for low-income resident households. Additionally, city-owned regional open spaces in the Los Angeles River watershed should be restored as habitat parks aiding in the treatment of urban storm runoff before it enters the Los Angeles River. Abandoned railroad easements are important to form a network of bike and walking trails to connect older densely populated urban neighborhoods without open space, to the newly developed parks along the Los Angeles River. In sum, converting Red Fields to Green Fields in areas adjacent to the Los Angeles River creates valuable economic and environmental benefits for the region.

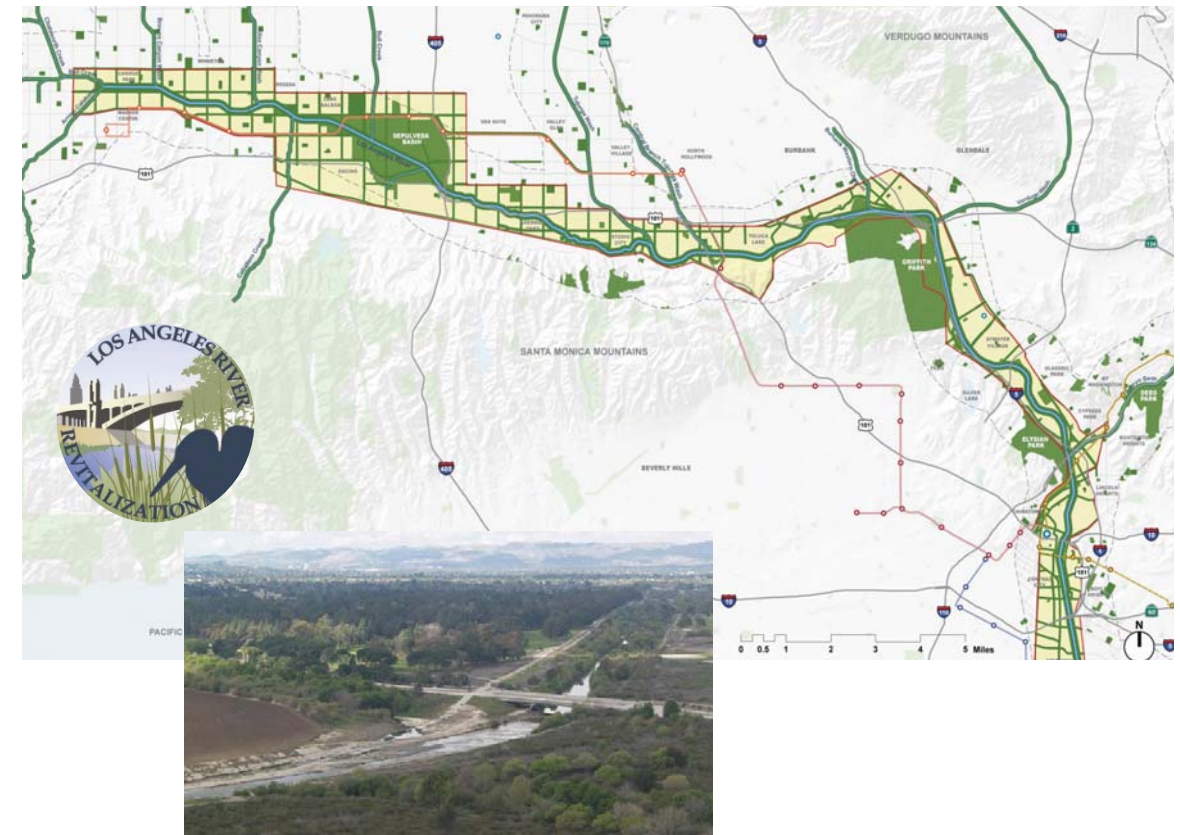


# Phase IV: Expand the Network

## Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan

Adopted by the City Council in 2007, the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan is one of Los Angeles' most ambitious greening projects. The Plan focuses on the first 32 miles of the Los Angeles River that flow through the City of Los Angeles and translates into 64 miles of waterfront greening.

The Plan includes more than 240 projects that will transform the river's banks, channel, and adjacent neighborhoods. The goals of the plan include creating connections to the river from neighborhoods that have been historically divided by it and new opportunities for public access to connect people with natural resources, recreational facilities, healthy food options, and arts and cultural destinations by traveling along the river.



Images: (c) 2007 City of Los Angeles LA River Revitalization Master Plan



# Phase IV: Expand the Network

## Economic Revitalization Benefits

Revitalizing the LA River will catalyze economic revitalization by providing opportunities to convert undervalued and underutilized lands into new, multi-benefit uses that will attract and retain family-sustaining jobs, ensure healthy communities, and establish Los Angeles as one of the world’s greenest, most livable and innovative cities.

## River Revitalization and Flood Management Benefits

LA River revitalization reflects a new way of thinking that strikes a balance between environmental restoration and flood management. A monumental example of urban infrastructure, the river’s concrete channel was constructed in the 1930s to allow millions of people to populate its historic floodplain. River revitalization prioritizes acquisition of adjacent lands to accommodate modification of the River’s concrete channel. Naturalizing parts of the river will restore ecological value to the river. Seasonal overflows can be absorbed by open and green space next to the channel to preserve flood protection functions.

## Economic Impacts

New Investment in Development	\$2.9 - 5.7 billion
Short-Term Job Creation	52,000 - 104,000
Long-Term Job Creation	10,5000 - 19,000
Annual Wage Increase	\$360 - 740 million
Annual Utility Tax Revenue Increase	\$1.5 - 3 million
Annual Sales Tax Revenue Increase	\$7 - 14 million
Annual State Income Tax Revenue Increase	\$20 - 40 million
Annual Property Tax Revenue Increase	\$49 - 96 million
Long-Term Tax Revenue Increase	\$90 - 168 million

Source: City of Los Angeles LA River Revitalization Master Plan



# Phase IV: Expand the Network

## Chinatown-Cornfields

The Chinatown-Cornfields area represents the opportunity to create both active and passive recreation, habitat, and passive water treatment facilities while seamlessly connecting with the future redevelopment of the Los Angeles State Historic Park (Chinatown-Cornfields site). This area represents just one of the many opportunities to create valuable connections to the river, link Los Angeles to its past, and establish a centralized location for recreation.

This open space features a linear park and will include four street-end parks that are cantilevered over the river using a system of suspended piers for passive recreation and plaza spaces. The parks are linked laterally along the river by a broad, urban promenade creating a recreation loop. It also includes a ponded area of open water.

Development Program includes:

- 589,584 SF; 3,041 residential units
- 1,477,114 SF office
- 147,270 SF manufacturing

## Economic Impacts

New Investment in Development	\$1,558,751,375
Short-Term Job Creation	28,468
Long-Term Job Creation	7,947
Annual Wage	\$378,577,490
Annual Utility Tax Revenue	\$1,082,590
Annual Sales Tax Revenue	\$7,268,688
Annual State Income Tax Revenue	\$20,367,469
Annual Property Tax Revenue	\$2,989,697
Long-Term Tax Revenue	\$28,374,528

Source: City of Los Angeles LA River Revitalization Master Plan



Images: (c) 2007 City of Los Angeles LA River Revitalization Master Plan

# Phase IV: Expand the Network

## Piggyback Yard

The Piggyback Yard site, in the heart of the city, will transform a vastly underutilized railyard into part of the green network. The plan is the most significant opportunity to provide public access to the Los Angeles River through downtown.

The Piggyback Yard will create an extraordinary 130-acre park combining active areas and passive areas for relaxation and the enjoyment of the restored river. It will also build a diverse community where people live, work, learn and play.

The river will be restored to a natural habitat by replacing the concrete channel with a wider, soft-bottom river bed, slowing down the water to allow vegetation to grow within its banks. A significant portion of the site will be available for flood water detention to protect the communities downstream as the region faces a greater likelihood of storm weather conditions resulting from global climate change.

This 130-acre site will also include:

- Stormwater treatment facility to reuse LA River water
- Bike and pedestrian bridges

## Economic Impacts

Permanent Job Creation	4,000 - 5,000
Wages Earned	\$200 - 300 million
Tax Revenue	\$15 - 20 million

Source: Piggyback Yard Collaborative Design Group

## Before



## After



Source: Piggyback Yard Collaborative Design Group

# Implementing the Model: What can we do with \$7.2 billion?

## Increase Park Equity and Access

- \$7.2 billion purchases 1,100 acres of small and walkable parks in Los Angeles' most park-poor communities, more than doubling the City's small parks system.
- Improve park accessibility in Los Angeles' disadvantaged communities that are both park-poor and low income. The ratio of park acres per 1,000 residents is increased by 48 percent.
- Expand the green network with 600 additional acres of open space, including large parks and hillside habitat restoration.
- Dramatically respond to residents' continuing expression of need for a revitalized Los Angeles River.



Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority

If we transformed 1,100 acres of Red Fields into Green Fields we would exceed:

Los Angeles' Elysian Park  
600 acres



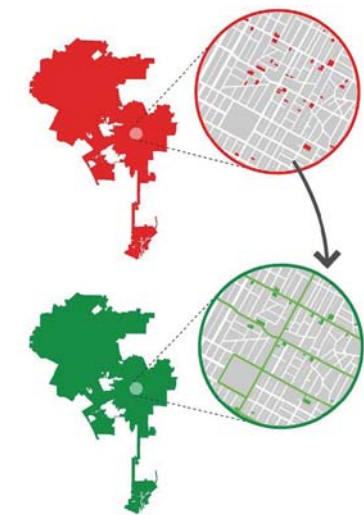
New York's Central Park  
870 acres



Boston's Emerald Necklace Park System  
1,000 acres



San Francisco's Golden Gate Park  
1,013 acres



Red Fields  
Los Angeles  
1,100 acres

606 Team

## Process

A budget was developed to estimate all costs associated with implementing our vision, including: acquisition, demolition, design, construction, operations and maintenance for twenty-five years. The budget is meant to be a broad estimate to gauge the magnitude of potential costs and to estimate job creation and other economic benefits.

### \$7.2 billion budget:

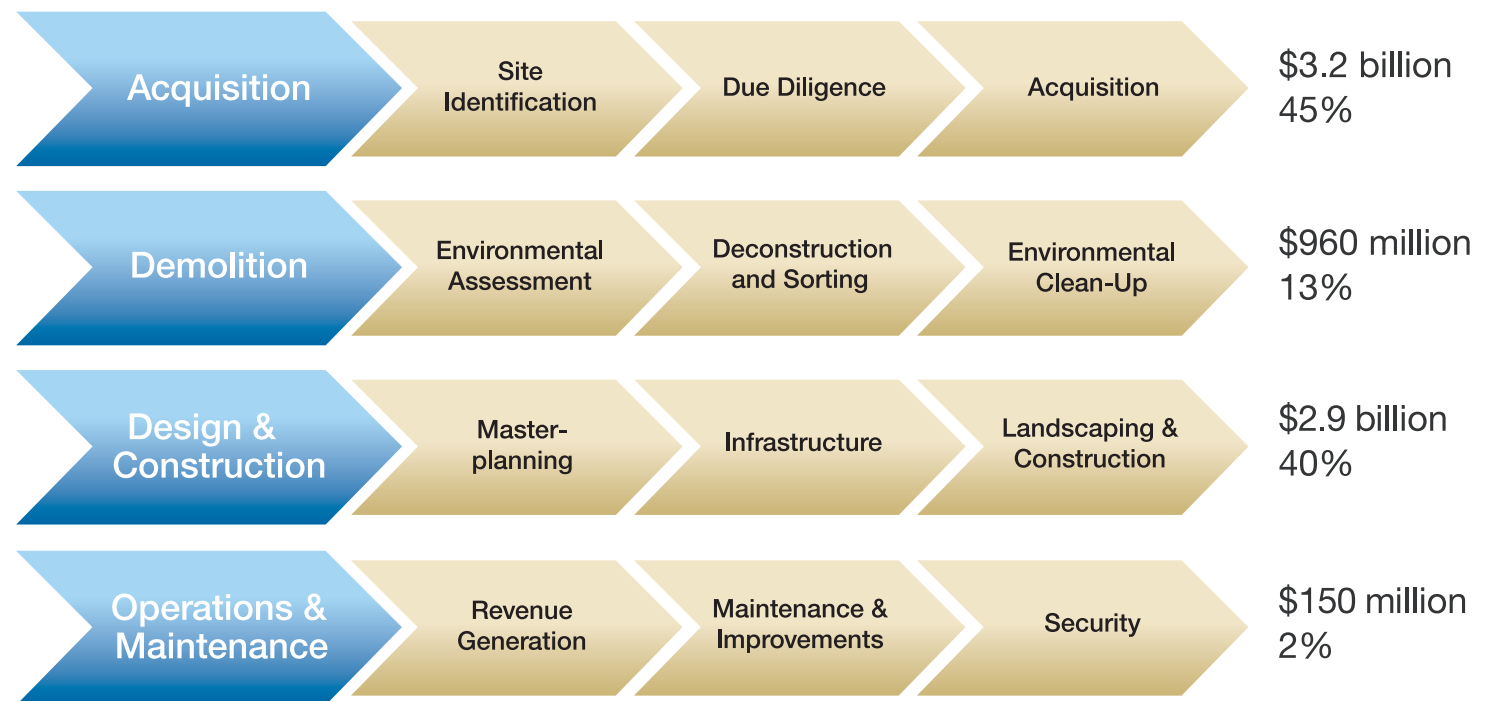
» Creates **77,000 jobs** over 10 years:

Direct jobs	44,000
Jobs created by products and services purchased	14,000
Jobs created by goods and services purchased by the increased wages from jobs created	19,000
<b>Total jobs</b>	<b>77,000</b>

» Removes **1,300 acres** of underutilized distressed properties from the market

## Implementing the Vision: Funding Strategy

Funding our vision will take short and long-term strategies. There are multiple funding strategies and opportunities to leverage including: amending a range of federal funding programs to include open space acquisition and development, accessing bank-owned properties, employing conservation easement tax credits, and many local and state funding mechanisms. In addition there are non-purchase strategies to access underutilized public and private properties.



## Implementation Recommendations

Implementing our vision will require significant ongoing work to improve conditions that make it difficult to create open space in Los Angeles. Below are some recommendations for implementing the Red Fields to Green Fields program.

- Los Angeles needs dedicated local sources of revenue that can be used for operations, maintenance, programming and planning of open space.
- Ensure effective programming and adequate staffing to deter unwanted and criminal activity.
- Increase collaborations with non-profits, school districts, and park agencies.
- Improve inter-agency coordination especially in creating and maintaining trails, linear parks, green streets and alleyways necessary for expanding the network.
- Improve coordination and collaboration between community redevelopment agencies and community development corporations to address open space needs of the low-income communities they serve.
- Prioritize the conversion of underutilized public rights of way, including public infrastructure, publicly-owned lands, waterways, streets and parkways into usable green space for healthier living.



Miguel Luna

## Implementing the Vision: Non-Purchase Acquisition Strategies

Strategy	Brief Description	Owner Type	Transfer Criteria	Examples
Publicly held easements	Underutilized land under easement	Public agency such as: LA Dept. of Water and Power, Caltrans, LA County Flood Control	Easement could be transferred to LA Recreation and Parks Department for open space if improvements are funded and maintained by the department.	LA River Bike Path, Silverlake Reservoir, Sepulveda Recreation Area
Railroad easements	Underutilized and surplus railroad easements	Union Pacific Railroad and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway	Land could be purchased or donated to the City of Los Angeles or a non-profit if no longer usable for rail purposes.	Los Angeles State Historic Park and Rio de Los Angeles State Park — two parks owned by the state of CA.
Ground leases	Underutilized surplus land	City of Los Angeles	A non-profit organization that agrees to improve and maintain the property could be allowed to develop the property for open space. Some properties could be made available on an interim basis, others could be transferred permanently to the non-profit once the in-kind and cash contributions equal the value of the property.	Community gardens, underutilized street medians and parkways, DWP owned property in watershed, around reservoirs and along the Los Angeles River.
Brownfields	Brownfields are real property for which the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.	Privately and publicly owned	Seller's responsibility to clean; long term liability for clean up; fair market price determination.	Former railyards and other industrial properties

## Implementing the Vision: Funding Strategy

### Public Funds Available in LA:

- Local, state and federal funding programs may be accessed to fund urban park acquisition but each source is limited
- Local funds from Propositions O (Clean Water Bond) and K (LA for Kids), and county Proposition A (Safe Neighborhood Parks)
- State voter-approved bond Propositions 12, 13, 40, 50 and 84 totaling more than \$15 billion and \$1.6 billion remain available, though little is left for local and state parks projects
- Array of federal funding programs exist but facing huge cuts
- Public-private: state tax credit, developer fees, financing districts, partnerships, New Market Tax Credits, land banks

Park-based leisure activities may improve moods, reduce perceived stress, and enhance a sense of well-being.



en.wikipedia.org





## Red Fields to Green Fields

Los Angeles is comprised of a variety of communities with varying degrees of resources and prosperity. While this diversity makes Los Angeles a unique center of culture and industry, it presents disparities that are exacerbated during periods of economic turmoil. Challenges such as an abundance of distressed real estate and a scarcity of accessible park space are most detrimental in low-income communities and communities of color.

A \$7.2 billion investment will allow Los Angeles to rebuild disadvantaged neighborhoods, add vital park space and improve the economic reality city-wide. Converting Red Fields to Green Fields will reduce disparities between communities and strengthen the City's social, economic, and environmental health. It will remove underperforming and distressed properties and fund existing park projects and new green infrastructure. The resulting network will help to unite the City's rich multicultural resources and help to achieve the Mayor's goal of making Los Angeles one of the greenest cities in the nation.

### Key Impacts:

- Create 77,000 new jobs
- Remove 1,300 acres of distressed real estate from the market
- Add 1,100 acres of small and walkable parks and increase the ratio of parks per thousand by 48% in disadvantaged communities
- Restore 400 acres of habitat in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- Create 200 acres of park space along the Los Angeles River



Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority

# Acknowledgements

## Project Team

### Steering Committee



Contact: Kevin Caravati  
Senior Research Scientist  
404.407.8058  
Kevin.Caravati@gtri.gatech.edu

Joseph Goodman  
Matt Wren  
Jennifer Jones



Joseph Hughes, Ph.D., P.E., BCEE  
Cade Strippelhoff  
Erin Keller



Catherine Nagel  
Executive Director  
nagelcatherine@cityparksalliance.org



Jessica Gudmundson, Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College

Tori Kjer, The Trust for Public Land

Carrie Sutkin, Verde Coalition

Stephanie Taylor, Green LA Coalition & Verde Coalition



California State Polytechnic University, Pomona  
Department of Landscape Architecture, 606 Studio

Dakotah Bertsch, Graduate Student  
Mike Boucher, Graduate Student  
Eran James, Graduate Student  
Abby Jones, Graduate Student

### Advisors

Karen C. Hanna, Professor of Landscape Architecture, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Dr. Lee-Ann Milburn, Chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Dr. Susan J. Mulley, Professor of Landscape Architecture, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona



We would like to acknowledge Mike Messner of the Speedwell Foundation for his vision and generous support.

## Project Partners

This project was truly a team effort. We are grateful for the support from the City of Los Angeles and the many individuals from the following organizations for providing information, insight, advice, and support.



### City of Los Angeles

Office of Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa,  
Romel Pascual, Deputy Mayor, Environment  
Department of Recreation & Parks, Jon Kirk Mukri,  
General Manager  
Community Redevelopment Agency Los Angeles,  
Jason Neville, Associate Planner  
Los Angeles River Project Office, Department of  
Public Works, Bureau of Engineering,  
Carol Armstrong, Project Manager  
City Planning Department, Simon Pastucha,  
Urban Design Studio  
Office of Councilmember Ed P. Reyes, District 1

Center for Sustainable Cities,  
University of Southern CA  
From Lot to Spot  
Los Angeles Conservation Corps  
Los Angeles River Revitalization Corporation  
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust  
Mia Lehrer + Associates  
Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority  
People for Parks  
Service Employees International Union, Local 721  
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy  
Shared Spaces Landscape Architecture  
TreePeople



usc SCHOOL OF POLICY, PLANNING, AND DEVELOPMENT

### University of Southern California, School of Policy, Planning and Development

Joy Kwong, Graduate Student  
Nikola Hlady, Graduate Student  
Zachary Elgart, Graduate Student



Federal Reserve Bank  
of San Francisco

## Contact Information



Green LA Coalition & Verde Coalition  
Stephanie Taylor, Managing Director  
213.346.3284  
staylor@greenlacoalition.org