Community-Based Planning, Organizing and Advocacy for Healthy Communities - Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)

A Blueprint for Health: Planning Communities that Promote Equity – Los Angeles
November 17, 2015
Mission

To change public and corporate policy in a manner that provides concrete economic benefit to working-class people, increases the economic rights of working class people, and builds leadership through a movement for economic justice.
Areas of Work: The fight for equitable development and healthy communities

**People’s Control Over Land** – People-led community planning for equitable development, inclusive economic development and the end to displacement of residents in South Los Angeles

**Healthy Neighborhoods Same Neighbors** – Ending slumhousing and other uninhabitable, exploitative living conditions and promoting healthy, affordable housing
Popular Education and Leadership Development

Organizing and Coalition Building

People's Planning School
Research

Los Angeles Times
A threat, or improvement?

Some USC neighbors worry that a project to redevelop a parking lot near campus will destabilize the area rather than enhance it.

Media and Communications

Shame of the City:
Slum Housing and the Critical Threat to the Health of L.A. Children and Families

A Rapid Health Impact Assessment of the City of Los Angeles’ Proposed University of Southern California Specific Plan
April 30, 2012

Conducted by:
Human Impact Partners
In conjunction with a panel of impacted residents

With support from:
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)
Esperanza Community Housing Corporation
Organizing at Different Levels, w/ Different Strategies

- Neighborhood-based organizing for equitable development
- Citywide land use policy for equitable development
- Citywide tenant rights
- National movement for housing rights
Median household income $25,243
40% below the poverty line

93% People of Color
73% Latino (Hispanic)
13% African American
5% Native American

*2010 census for 90007, 90037, 90011

Most overcrowded neighborhood in the United States

L.A. and Orange counties are an epicenter of overcrowded housing

The two counties contain more than half of the nation’s most heavily crowded neighborhoods, with rising rents for housing.

March 07, 2014  |  By Emily Alpert Reyes and Ryan Memmes

Sixteen-year-old Monica buried her face in a pillow, trying to rest for school the next day, as the clock ticked past 3 a.m.

Sleep was a battle in the tiny apartment. Hunched at the other end of the family’s only mattress, two of her brothers played a video game while a third lounged next to her, watching virtual soccer players skitter on screen. Her 2-year-old niece toddled barefoot near the door, crying with a pile of pennies.

In all, seven people live in this wedge of space in Historic South-Central, including Monica’s mother and the mother of the little girl—the longtime girlfriend of one of her brothers. They squeeze into an
South Central LA has survived

Among the policies our community has experienced are:

- Restrictive covenants
  → Redlining
  → Disinvestment
  → War on drugs/criminalization of people of color
  → Slumhousing and Unemployment
  → Profit-driven investment/speculation
  → Displacement of low-income communities of color
Los Angeles: the most unaffordable city in the U.S.

“Los Angeles has a lower median income than New York or San Francisco, but only a small difference in median rents.”

Highest median rent-burden in the country at 47%
$40B in Transit Investment in Los Angeles

Opportunity for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

By 2039 there will be:
• $40 Billion in transit investment
• 42 new rail stations, totaling 113 stations citywide

80% of future development is forecasted to be done along these transit corridors
Understanding how displacement happens (in Los Angeles)

Displacement pressures

- Skyrocketing housing prices
- Low wage jobs and high unemployment
- **Strong incentives to violate tenant rights and lack of enforcement**
- Statewide legislation legalizing some no-fault evictions legal (e.g., Ellis Act)
- Significant lack of on-campus university student housing
- Foreign investors from Asia and Europe buying up land and properties
- Wall Street equity firms (e.g., Blackstone) purchasing thousands of single family homes for rental speculation
- **Few requirements or incentives to build new affordable housing**
- A public narrative that demeans poor people and affordable housing

Forms of Displacement

- Exclusionary displacement:
  - Fair housing violations
  - Displacement of community-serving businesses
- **Illegal evictions**
  - Deception of tenants
  - Tenant harassment
- **Illegal rent increases**
- “Slumhousing” them out
- **Conversions from rental units to condos**
- **Demolition of buildings**
- Increased costs (illegal and legal)
  - Exorbitant rents
  - Increased costs for goods and services
- Messaging to low-income families:
  - Exclusionary signage
Displacement on one Block, 1999-2009
Development along the Figueroa Corridor
Development along the Figueroa Corridor
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Development along the Figueroa Corridor
Opportunity for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

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Development along the Figueroa Corridor

Two major rail lines
- **Expo Line**
- **Blue Line**

15 Transit Stations in South LA
(11 shown here)

Including 5 **New** stations
Development along the Figueroa Corridor
Development along the Figueroa Corridor
Organizing for “Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors”
United Neighbors In Defense Against Displacement

UNIDAD • UNITY
Victories in the fight against displacement and disinvestment

1990s – establishment of Displacement Free Zone near USC campus

2001 – Staples Community Benefits Agreement

2005 – Formed community land trust – TRUST South LA

2007 – Creation of People’s Planning School

2011 – Lorenzo Project CBA
    - community health clinic, affordable housing, targeted hiring, small business supports

2012 – USC development agreement
    - 4,200 net new student beds, $20 M for affordable housing, targeted hiring, small business supports
CBA Wins

A. Staples (LA Live) CBA - 2001
- **Jobs**: 50% local hiring for permanent jobs; Seed funding for a First Source Referral System
- **Housing**: 200+ affordable housing units; affordable housing in-lieu fees for 20% market rate units; seed fund for TRUST South LA (land trust)
- **Parks and green space funding**

B. Palmer (Lorenzo) CBA - 2011
- **Jobs**: Local and “disadvantaged” hiring for permanent and construction jobs
- **Housing**: Lease up of 46 affordable units on site; $1 million affordable housing grant program.
- **Community Health Center** with 20 years free rent
- **Small Business** fund and discounted rent
- **TOD strategies fund**

C. USC Development Agreement - 2012
- **Jobs**: 30% Local and 10% ‘disadvantaged’ hiring for permanent and construction jobs
- **Housing**: $15-20 MM in affordable housing funds
- **Student Housing**: 4,000 net new on-campus student beds (helping relieve the local housing market)
- **Legal clinic** at USC law school for tenant rights
- **Local Small Business** support program
- **Economic Development Coordinating Council**

D. Grand Met CBA - 2015
- **Housing**: 15% on site affordable housing (5% extremely low-income, 10% very low-income)
- **Jobs**: Local ‘disadvantaged’ hiring for construction and future retail jobs
- **Local Small Business**: 5% commercial space for community-based businesses
- **Community Benefits Fund** to support local small business and social services for family and homeless
- **Development commitment** to support affordable housing and living wage policies
Rendering of Proposed “SoLA Village”/Reef Project

$1 billion = 1,444 units of housing, 230,000 sq. ft. of digital billboards
Community Development Meetings Series:
Come to a series of meetings about the future of our community. Who will decide what happens in our neighborhood? Developers or you?

Thursday, Aug. 20, 2015
Thursday, Aug. 27, 2015
Thursday, Sept. 3, 2015
Thursday, Sept. 10, 2015
Thursday, Sept. 17, 2015
Thursday, October 8, 2015
Thursday, November 5, 2015

Time:
5:30pm – 8 pm

Location:
Los Angeles Trade Tech (LATTC)
Corner of Grand & 23rd St. Building TE Room 101
ON-SITE / ADENTRO DEL BARrio

- We get more if we fight for it.
- More jobs, more material, more opportunities.
- People may feel safer.
- More affordable housing.
- More protected spaces.
- More green areas.

OFF-SITE / Afuera del Barrio

- We can't fight alone.
- More jobs, more opportunities.
- People may feel safer.
- More affordable housing.
- More protected spaces.
- More green areas.

TYPES OF USES

- Children's playground
- Community garden
- Picnic area
- Pet area

TIPOS DE USOS

- Jardín infantil
- Jardín comunitario
- Área para picnic
- Área para mascotas

ON-SITE

We fight for and win a % of affordable housing at the reef.
Core Issues Named by Community

1. Jobs
2. Preventing Displacement
3. Affordable housing
4. Small business/econ. dev.
5. Homelessness
6. Health
7. Safety
8. Parks/Green Space
9. Youth Development
“[43,000] residents living within a 2-mile radius of the proposed project could be at risk of financial strain or displacement as a result of the Reef Development Project”

- Health Impact Study, 2015
LOS ANGELES REEF PROJECT
DRAWS CONCERNS OF RESIDENT DISPLACEMENT

How Many Historic South-Central Residents Will Be Displaced
By Massive Megaproject The Reef?

Tuesday, October 27, 2015, by Jeff Wattenhofer
Scaling Up Community Benefit Wins to Equitable Development Policy
Community Plans Campaign: Zoning for Anti-Displacement
Community Plans Campaign: Zoning for Anti-Displacement

Goal: “Better Neighborhoods, Same Neighbors”

Three elements:

**NET GAIN OF AFFORDABLE HOMES**
- Prevent displacement of low-income residents
- New housing for very-low and extremely-low households
- Preservation of rent-stabilized units and senior housing

**JOBS/SMALL BUSINESSES**
- Living wage jobs for local residents
- Preservation of community-serving small businesses

**COMMUNITY HEALTH**
- More quality, affordable healthcare centers
- More healthy food options
- More green space and parks
- Better indoor + outdoor air quality
- Better pedestrian + bike infrastructure

United Neighbors In Defense Against Displacement

UNIDAD • UNITY
Citywide coalition working for equitable TOD

http://www.allianceforcommunitytransit.org/

Citywide Land Use ordinance will:

1. Prevent displacement by ensuring a net gain of affordable housing near transit, by preserving and incentivizing new affordable units.

2. Expand good job opportunities

3. Incentivize health-promoting land uses

4. Be a result of a grassroots community engagement process
Thank you!

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www.saje.net
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righttothecity.org