Vermont Corridor Design & Development Proposal

Presented to
The Community Redevelopment Agency
By
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Presentation Outline

• Stage I: Findings
  – Physical conditions
  – Social conditions
  – Economic conditions
  – Business survey results

• Stage II: Vision & Recommendations
  – Vision
  – Scenarios
    • Short Term: Minimal Intervention
    • Long Term: Final Scenario
  – Recommendations
    • Physical Development
    • Economic Development
Land Use

- Land use predominantly commercial mixed with various institutional uses flanked by residential edge within short distance
Housing Stock

- Housing stock is old - in need of rehabilitation
- 57% of the housing stock in the study area was built before 1960.
Underutilization & Deferred Maintenance

- Vacant lots and under-utilized lots are scattered throughout the Corridor

Non-conforming uses, buildings lacking maintenance and incidences of graffiti are observed in all segments of the corridor
Lack of Identity/Image

- Most of the street-front businesses have collapsible iron shutters or grilles; parking lots have chain link fence or iron grilles that project an unsafe image of the corridor

- Instances of broken curbs, sidewalks, and street surfaces are abundant all along the corridor

- Melange of signage using a variety of elements
Parking

- Significant demand for parking in the Lower Middle and Upper Middle segments due to
  - USC and significant unbroken long edges that rules out any side street parking opportunities

- Demand for parking in Lower Vermont is low

- In Upper Vermont demand is partially alleviated by side street parking
Demographics

- Ethnically diverse community
- Median household income of the Project Area is less than $20,000

![Bar chart showing demographics](image)

![Bar chart showing household income](image)
Crime

- Level of crime is steadily decreasing in the corridor
- Upper Vermont has least number of incidences of crime (per capita) in the corridor
- Upper Middle, Lower Middle and Lower Vermont have relatively high levels of crime
- Perception of crime in the corridor in general is high
- 80% of the merchants surveyed in Upper Vermont suggested that reduced crime would improve their business
Economic Conditions

- Primary economic sectors in the Project Area* are Service, Manufacturing and Retail Trade.

- Service industry produces a higher proportion of jobs while Retail produces higher proportion of revenues compared to the larger zip code area and County.

- During 1990 to 1994, LA County lost 10% of the jobs, while the Project Area lost 18% of the jobs.

- Growth in only two industries had significant positive impact on employment:
  - personal services (+3%) and social services (+2%)

*Project Area includes zipcodes 90007 and 90037.
Business Survey Findings

ADVANTAGES of Locating Business

- Accessibility: 33%
- Customer Base: 33%
- Parking: 45%
- Visibility: 45%
- Location: 49%
Business Survey Findings

DISADVANTAGES of Locating Business

- Dirty Street: 29%
- Homelessness: 34%
- Not Enough Parking: 36%
- Parking Restriction: 45%
- Gang Activity: 45%
- Graffiti: 47%
Business Survey Findings

SUGGESTIONS to Improve Corridor

- Better Lighting: 36%
- More Parking: 45%
- Improved Day Time Security: 50%
- Improved Night Time Security: 50%
- Reduce Crime: 58%
“The Business Wish List”
Vision

• Regional Context
  – Reposition the Corridor within the larger CBD framework: Nexus with downtown
    • Vermont Corridor to be the ideal location for future business and expansion of existing business
  – Lively, transit oriented, pedestrian friendly place
  – Gateway Project
    • Retail anchor development to meet unmet local & regional demand
    • Catalytic project(s) to bring people, business, and visibility to the area
Vision

• Local Context
  – Engine for Business Enterprise
    • Proximity to USC - access to technology, skilled labor force, & business entrepreneurs
    • Fertile ground for business incubation
  – Mixed Use Developments
    • Allow mix of uses and incomes
    • Accommodate relatively higher densities - student housing
    • Increase “round the clock eyes on the road” making the area safer, and pedestrian friendly

– Increased Street Activities through
  • Better street configuration, sidewalk improvements, increased on-street parking, bike lanes, pedestrian amenities, façade rehab and other transit related improvements
Scenario:
Short Term - Minimal Intervention

- Imperative:
  
  Future development of the Vermont Corridor shall depend on successful and functional partnerships between the property owners, public agencies, community based organizations and other institutions.

CRA, MTA, LADOT, USC, Coliseum Commission, LA Business Team, CRTD, Churches, Business Association, Community Development Corporations, and individual stakeholders.
Scenario: Short Term - Minimal Intervention

- Initiate catalytic streetscape projects to
  - enhance the physical conditions of the corridor
  - make it suitable for private investment
  - make the Vermont Corridor a transit oriented pedestrian friendly place

- Visible, doable improvements in the public domain
  - create favorable pre-conditions for private sector investment and business attraction

RATIONALE

Vermont Corridor -- heaviest traveled transit corridor in Los Angeles County

Improvements such as:
- transit shelters
- street furniture
- pedestrian lighting
- pedestrian crossings
- landscaped median
- landscaping, shady trees etc.
Corridor-wide Physical Improvements

Bus Shelters

Provide covered bus stops with additional seating in the nearby area
Corridor-Wide Physical Improvements

- Designate seating areas. Extend sidewalk to accommodate benches and bicycle racks

- Develop additional parking along the side streets
  - compensate for the existing parking lost (due to the extension of the sidewalks to accommodate designated seating areas

- Improve pedestrian crossings

- Enhance designated areas with planting trees that also provide shade

- Provide public telephone booths/kiosks that can also be used for advertisements that could in turn generate revenue for maintenance of public areas
Corridor-Wide Physical Improvements

Street Lights

Improve sidewalk lighting by using pedestrian scale (globe) lights - a means to ensure night time safety
Corridor-Wide Physical Improvements

Awnings

Regulate the placement (height) of awnings but encourage variety in terms of color and type
Corridor-Wide Physical Improvements

- Encourage outdoor display of store goods
- Designate specific areas of the sidewalk where store goods, and sign-boards can be displayed
Phase I--Lower Vermont
View of Lower Vermont
Phase I--Lower Middle Vermont
View of Lower Middle Vermont
Phase I--Upper Middle Vermont
View of Upper Middle Vermont
Phase II--Lower Vermont
Phase II--Upper Middle Vermont
Phase II - Upper Vermont
View of the Side Street
Economic Development Strategies

- Seek out funding from public agencies
  - MTA, LADOT, EDA, HUD
  - other City departments to initiate catalytic projects

- Leverage private investment
  - support from private developers, and financing from lenders to implement early projects
  - Recruit new investors
  - Market the strengths and resources - involve the LA Business Team

- Promote strategic projects that create development momentum, demonstrate visible improvements and produce early successes
  - Public work projects such as streetscape and sidewalk amenities
  - development projects such as the Gateway in Upper Vermont
  - business incubator, senior housing, retail, and high-tech development in Lower Vermont are examples to jump start the local economy and create a success story
Economic Development Strategies

Develop public-private partnerships that are mutually beneficial, create jobs and make good business sense

Capture a greater share of economic activity

Develop a mix of uses/projects that promote greater economic integration, and create an economic spillover effect – multi-destination trips

Reduce leakage by capturing a greater share of economic activity generated by employee, student, visitor and business spending

Marketing of these districts in the short-term is critical in raising the visibility of the corridor
Economic Development Strategies

- Create niches in
  - high-technology sector
  - multi-media
  - communications
  - film
  - other entrepreneurial ventures
- to capitalize on the strengths and resources of USC
Economic Development Strategies

• Create an Economic Development Infrastructure
  - Develop links with business assistance clearinghouse, such as Business Expansion Network to provide financial information and assistance to new and existing businesses

• Promote access to capital by utilizing the
  - Community Development Bank
  - Local Development Corporation
  - Community Financial Resource Center
  - Los Angeles Business Assistance Centers

• Create implementation teams for:
  - corridor-wide marketing
  - business recruitment strategy
  - events planning
  - and streetscape improvements
Economic Development Strategies

- Encourage stakeholder participation in economic development efforts: BID for Vermont
  - The Business Improvement District (BID) is a vehicle to bring together property owners and other stakeholders to raise money and implement programs to stimulate desirable economic impacts
  - The BID would contribute to make the area a clean and safe place, on one hand, and market programs through materials such as logos, color, brochures, web pages that help upgrade the image of the corridor
  - The BID will also provide a unified voice to the stakeholders