

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Jordan Downs Los Angeles, California



**Urban Land
Institute**

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Jordan Downs Los Angeles, California

A Catalytic Transformation of a Public Housing Project

February 8–13, 2009
An Advisory Services Panel Report

Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
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About the Urban Land Institute

The mission of the Urban Land Institute is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI is committed to

- Bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs;
- Fostering collaboration within and beyond ULI's membership through mentoring, dialogue, and problem solving;
- Exploring issues of urbanization, conservation, regeneration, land use, capital formation, and sustainable development;
- Advancing land use policies and design practices that respect the uniqueness of both built and natural environments;
- Sharing knowledge through education, applied research, publishing, and electronic media; and
- Sustaining a diverse global network of local practice and advisory efforts that address current and future challenges.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 38,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals represented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

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About ULI Advisory Services

The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI's interdisciplinary panel teams provide a holistic look at development problems. A respected ULI member who has previous panel experience chairs each panel.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and

stakeholders in the project under consideration, participants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academics, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

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Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

Los Angeles boosters often refer to their city as the capital of the Pacific Rim, the Entertainment Capital of the World, and the greatest manufacturing center in North America, among countless other titles. Less sanguine commentators accuse the city of promulgating sprawl, asphalt, and smog, while others cite greater Los Angeles as having the highest density and being one of the greenest of any urbanized metropolitan area in the United States. Glitz or grit? Green or greenhouse gases? Who is right? Catchy titles and appellations, both positive and negative, fail to pinpoint the essence of Los Angeles. The city and its broader metropolitan area encompass so much diversity—economically, demographically, and environmentally—that the urban and rural agglomeration that constitutes Greater Los Angeles is impossible to package.

Los Angeles County, the most populous in the United States, encompasses more than 10 million people spread across 4,752 square miles. The county contains 88 incorporated cities of varying sizes as well as many unincorporated places, and where one border ends and another begins is often difficult to discern. Planning for the broader region poses a tremendous challenge. The actual city of Los Angeles, the largest of the county's 88 cities, is home to about 4 million people in almost 500 square miles. Like its broader region, the city teems with limitless variety, especially among its neighborhoods, but some stand out, such as Watts.

Located in the heart of South Los Angeles (South L.A.), the neighborhood of Watts has a long and often checkered history. Incorporated in 1907 on land once part of the Mexican Rancho La Tajuata, Watts was an independent agricultural community until its 1926 merger with Los Angeles. As Los Angeles boomed, Watts prospered and developed a strong industrial base because of its proximity to rail lines that served the port.



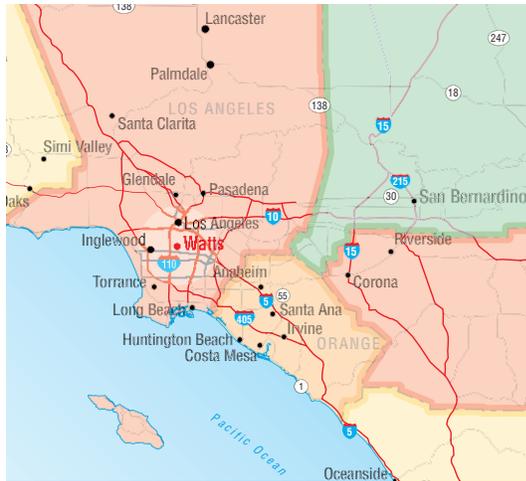
Location map.

The postwar period marked the demographic transition of Watts to an overwhelmingly black, working-class community.

Watts thrived, but by the early 1960s, the industrial base had begun to decline, and residents grew agitated over growing inequalities. On August 11, 1965, Watts erupted, forever searing the name of this previously unheard-of industrial neighborhood into the national psyche. Although Watts has undergone several other changes, most notably the shift from a black to a Latino majority, it has not been able to shake its association with urban decay and turmoil.

Watts continues to face challenges, but it boasts numerous community assets, such as a lively and dynamic arts community, thriving neighborhood organizations, active and visible civic organizations, and a community-wide social support system. Given the right incentives, government support, and community focus,

Regional map.



Watts could become a much more sustainable and successful part of the city.

In an effort to ameliorate the situation in Watts, Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa tasked the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) with redevelopment of the Jordan Downs housing development. Jordan Downs is one of four public housing complexes in Watts originally built to house industrial workers during World War II; the other three are Imperial Courts, Nickerson Gardens, and Gonzague Village. Although challenges permeate all the public housing communities within Watts, Jordan Downs arguably suffers more from a reputation as a center of gang activity, poverty, and failure. It consists of 700 affordable units in 103 townhouse-style structures on 49.48 acres on the eastern edge of Watts, directly parallel to the industrial Alameda freight-rail corridor. Jordan High School lies along the site's southern boundary.

In fall 2008, HACLA, in coordination with the city, released a request for proposal (RFP)/ request for qualifications (RFQ) package for the redevelopment of Jordan Downs with the expressed goal of creating a “Vibrant urban village that is sustainable, mixed-use, mixed-income community that includes green development and encompasses all the amenities that enable communities to ‘sustain’ over the long term.”

The RFQ #7495 package focuses on selecting a consultant for the community-based master plan process for the redevelopment of the site, while the RFP #7496 package focuses on selecting a consultant for the annexation effort of 21.08 contiguous acres northwest of the site belonging to Los Angeles County. After annexation, the ultimate redevelopment site will include approximately 100 acres located in the city of Los Angeles.

The Panel's Assignment

HACLA has engaged the ULI panel as an independent, objective third party to provide strategic advice on the RFQ/RFP package. HACLA specifically asked ULI to address seven questions:



- Can RFQ #7495 and RFP #7496 be fine-tuned to better address the needs of the existing residents and still meet the mission and goals as set forth in RFQ #7495 and RFP #7496?
- How can RFQ #7495 and RFP #7496 be fine-tuned to address the overlap between the annexation process and the master-planning/specific-plan process?
- What are the financial assumptions that can be made in terms of potential funding available for the redevelopment of Jordan Downs? What are the potential gaps, opportunities, and potential sources that the developer can tap as resources?
- What market indicators support the redevelopment of Jordan Downs and the potential to revitalize the Watts community?
- How can HACLA engage other stakeholders who may not be directly involved in the master-planning/annexation process to see the vision, become informed, and support the redevelopment of Jordan Downs?
- Given that HACLA is doing a one-for-one replacement of public housing, what suggestions can the panel offer in terms of phasing the project so that residents experience a smooth transition?
- What is the value added by the Jordan Downs redevelopment to the overall development of affordable housing in Los Angeles in relation to the mayor's Five Year Housing Plan?

Summary of Recommendations

The panel has provided specific answers for each of the seven broad questions from HACLA regarding the RFQ/RFP package (see appendix) and has taken the further step of providing its observations and recommendations on how the redevelopment of Jordan Downs could act as a broader catalytic and transformative initiative for the entire Watts community. The panel feels that the appropriately implemented redevelopment of Jordan Downs, called the Jordan Downs Process, could act as a truly revolutionary example of how to reinvent public housing developments in urban areas. The sections that follow provide a conceptual framework for a bold and pioneering redevelopment of not only Jordan Downs but also greater Watts. Although these ideas are ambitious and represent only one possibility, the panel feels the



HACLA's Jennifer Thomas briefs the panel on the redevelopment initiative for Jordan Downs.

Members of the Urban Land Institute advisory panel meet with residents, neighbors, and others from the Watts community at the Jordan Downs Community Center.





The 103rd Street light-rail station, located one-half mile west of Jordan Downs, serves as a community gathering point. Although this distance will prevent Jordan Downs from operating as a true transit-oriented development, it is still close enough to provide a commuter alternative for employment opportunities in the Greater Los Angeles area for the future residents of Jordan Downs.

Jordan Downs Process offers the best chance for groundbreaking success.

The panel’s recommendations revolve around the following prominent ideas.

Jordan Downs Czar

No one person or agency wields singular decision-making authority and has full responsibility for the Jordan Downs redevelopment. This lack of concentrated leadership has the potential to stall the process. The panel recommends that HACLA be designated to assume primary leadership.

Revised, Realistic Timeline

Given the complexity of this redevelopment site as well as the extreme challenges in the global financial markets, not to mention the fact that redevelopment is an extremely sensitive topic among Watts residents, a more realistic timeline of at least 15 years—not five—is needed.

Century Boulevard as Main Street

Jordan Downs is currently wedged in and isolated along an industrial corridor with few connections to the east. The extension of Century Boulevard, with the incorporation of a prominent greenbelt, to Tweedy Boulevard will create a major gateway thoroughfare that integrates Jordan Downs into the surrounding urban fabric.

Redevelopment of All Four Housing Projects

To achieve major transformative change in Watts, HACLA and the city need to redevelop the other three public housing complexes.

Planning should occur in tandem with Jordan Downs to produce a unified vision for Watts based on the cumulative transformation of all four public housing complexes.

Neighborhood Housing

Achieving the desired number of units in the redevelopment would produce unacceptable density levels in Jordan Downs. HACLA should concentrate on acquiring properties in the surrounding blocks beyond the current borders of Jordan Downs and the other three housing complexes; many are dilapidated and abandoned. By purchasing single-family homes in the adjacent blocks, HACLA can further spread the transformative effect, disperse the density, and offer residents more product choices.

Community Investment

HACLA has done an admirable job of involving Jordan Downs’ residents and community members, but the stakeholder investment does not mirror proportionately the sizable Latino population. The Latino population must play a role in Jordan Downs’ redevelopment.

Sustainability

Although sustainability often pertains to the environment, in Watts, it most urgently applies to human capital. Education and employment are essential for the evolution and future vitality of Jordan Downs and Watts. If education and employment do not factor into the redevelopment process, the community will receive newer housing and landscaping—but not much else.

The Vision

The visioning of Jordan Downs presents an opportunity for a catalytic and transformative revitalization, perhaps best characterized as being that single drop of water whose impact creates ripples that ultimately change the course of the river.

The Big Picture

The panel believes the city of Los Angeles, through its agency HACLA, has the opportunity to convene and facilitate the diverse pool of city, state, and national government agency resources and not-for-profit and educational organizations required to build a politically sustainable and economically viable platform to support the public and private investments required for the successful revisioning and rebuilding of Jordan Downs and Watts' three other public housing sites.

Extensive interviews have allowed the panel to understand that new housing is not the end goal of the Jordan Downs endeavor but rather the actor to catalyze Watts. As explained to the panel, "housing is where jobs go to sleep at night." HACLA clearly requested that the ULI panel explore ways in which the project can be sustainable. The panel has concluded that with respect to this undertaking, sustainability intertwines social, economic, and environmental components. However, for most Watts residents, sustainable simply means having a steady job.

Perhaps the most important visioning idea to convey is that Jordan Downs is not a typical "urban revitalization" based on bricks and mortar. Rather, Jordan Downs offers an entirely new approach to community revitalization: one that has long been talked about but never achieved. The Jordan Downs Process is, in fact, the beginning of a new blueprint for Watts.

The mayor is seeking every available resource to turn back the systemic tides of despair and hopelessness with opportunity and hope. The Jordan Downs Process is a public platform from which a new paradigm emerges, using 21st-century opportunities based on sustainable economics, community building, education, health, access, and employment.

Facing the Challenges

The panel spent considerable time reviewing documents and hearing from various stakeholders, including residents, politicians, police officers, church leaders, developers, educators, and leaders and staff from city and county agencies. Through these activities, the panel observed the extensive strengths that make the Watts community diverse, special, and exciting. The panel clearly understood that everyone wants Jordan Downs to be "the transformative" event that not only unites the stakeholders but also catalyzes the long-planned and hoped-for renaissance of Watts. Subsequent sections of this report address these strengths and opportunities. Clearly, recognizing and understanding the challenges facing all stakeholders is one of the essential ingredients necessary to sustain momentum, build successful partnerships and coalitions, and attract positive investment.

Desire, but Not Consensus

All players, from the mayor to the residents, concede that all stakeholders are willing to sacrifice to enable the Jordan Downs Process to succeed. However, although all stakeholders desire to make the Jordan Downs Process work, the panel found that they had reached no consensus regarding leadership. Interviews of key team players at all levels clearly indicate that *no one* person is in charge or has been publicly vested with the authority, power, and resources

to be the leader or “czar” of the process. The mayor has made Jordan Downs a centerpiece of his vision for the future of housing opportunities in Los Angeles and has assembled the best talents and resources to make the project happen, but the leadership that must deliver the results remains fractured.

Without a clear vesting of authority in one leader who has the ability to draw upon the political capital and the strength to pull the multiple agencies into a cohesive team with distinct roles, responsibilities, requirements, and deadlines, the timeline envisioned and the results hoped for will likely not be delivered. Failure to deliver what is promised by when it is promised will squander the political, human, and economic capital that has been assembled. The result would likely turn the process from one of hope and inspiration to another effort that failed because of turf battles and infighting.

A New Approach

All stakeholders and the ULI panel see this process as having the potential to transform and redefine the role of public housing in the city of Los Angeles.

The panel validates HACLA’s role as the convener, organizer, and “czar” vested with bringing to the table the previous efforts and resources of multiple, disparate municipal, state, not-for-profit, and national resources. HACLA needs to ensure that these resources focus on and create sustainable economic opportunities based in education, using the tools and processes of public housing development as the catalyst.

From the interviews conducted, investigations made, and research material provided, the panel sees the vision of the Jordan Downs Process comprising five separate but interconnected spheres:

- **Sustainability:** social, educational, economic, and environmental;
- **Education:** 21st-century skills for 21st-century opportunities;

- **Business and Employment:** educational skills and training to access creative-industry jobs;
- **Health:** meeting health challenges through education and job delivery; and
- **Access:** transit and Web access for 21st-century connectivity.

The vision for Watts and Jordan Downs promotes innovation, commercialization, economic competitiveness, and collaboration in a human-centric, comfortable, convenient, connected, and sustainable community that serves the needs of its citizens for the 21st century. The community must be socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable to support its citizens in a healthy and safe environment. Central to this vision is developing a community that promotes strong education leading to jobs and careers. The revitalized community connects Watts to its surrounding residential and commercial neighborhoods, employment centers, Los Angeles, and national resources through access, transit, electronic connectivity, and transportation.

Sustainability

Sustainability for Watts means achieving social, economic, and environmental sustainability. A specific plan for sustainability for Jordan Downs, ideally, is a blueprint that can be re-created at other sites within the Watts community.

- **Social Sustainability:** The new development must overcome large-scale, existing social barriers and weaknesses by strengthening families, acknowledging the demographic realities of the market and cultivating more culturally proportionate leadership, and understanding and celebrating Watts’s rich cultural heritage.
- **Economic Sustainability:** The community equates sustainability with being steadily employed; thus, Watts needs to foster a workforce prepared for 21st-century jobs. Jobs within Watts itself are limited by land area and the largely residential nature of the community, so strong links must be formed



with surrounding employment nodes, including the airport corridor; the port; the central business district; and the health, education, and industrial sectors. Although development contributes to economic vitality, economic sustainability starts with education that prepares new generations for active career paths in the 21st century. Economic sustainability is achieved by nurturing education and ongoing training from birth through maturity. It must be broad and responsive to meet market demand for desirable jobs in the United States and the world.

- **Environmental Sustainability:** The Watts community has an opportunity to create a vibrant, exciting, iconic community as well as a new economic engine. Environmental sustainability includes remediating environmental problems of the past; setting high standards for conservation of natural resources; using renewable energy; and developing a mixed-use, mixed-income, smart growth-based, transit-oriented, job-rich, carbon-neutral community.

Education

HACLA and the interviewees clearly conveyed to the panel that education is and must be the economic engine powering Los Angeles, and especially the Watts community. All stakeholders recognize, understand, and desire education as the preferred pathway for the community to lift itself from poverty to prosperity.

The panel recommends that HACLA use its leadership, ownership, and control of land at Jordan Downs to bring together the multiple educational resources available in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors to create a landmark center of educational excellence. Exceptional quality schools are widely understood to be perhaps one of the strongest catalysts with which to energize and change communities. Unfortunately, Jordan High School, which serves most of Jordan Downs and much of Watts, has struggled perennially. The panel recommends immediately beginning conversations with educational entrepreneurs such as Green Dot Charter Schools and the LA Partnership for Education to create at Jordan High the

The Maxine Waters Employment Preparation Center provides skills training, job counseling, and placement assistance, including degrees in medical administration, nursing, landscaping, and other areas. The connection between the redevelopment of Jordan Downs, the other public housing developments in Watts, and this facility and others like it will be a key element in overcoming the jobs and workforce dilemmas facing Watts.



Jordan High School is located next to the Jordan Downs development. The careful coordination of redevelopment activities with the Los Angeles Unified School District will be an important part of reinventing the larger Watts community.

first of what could be many specialized centers of learning excellence. Locke High School has engaged in similar redevelopment, and HACLA should examine its progress. A renewed Jordan High would be an immediate first step in community transformation. The center of excellence, like a specialized magnet school, would focus on providing academic and practical skills that enable students to compete effectively for 21st-century jobs.

Jordan High's center of excellence could serve as the first in a series of centers that would eventually become integral to the rebuilding of Nickerson Gardens, Imperial Courts, and Gonzague Village. Establishing schools of excellence within or adjacent to each housing community will make the community a magnet for all residents of Watts seeking specialized educational skills. As an example, Jordan High could become the center of excellence for the design arts, such as architecture, graphic design, and industrial and fashion design. The design and construction process for Jordan Downs could serve as a visual and hands-on laboratory for

students learning these skills. Ultimately, these studies could lead to careers linked to Watts' revitalization. Nickerson Gardens, Imperial Courts, and Gonzague Village could use the same general blueprint of specialty education centers linked to community resources to promote the development of critical job skills.

Business and Employment

Watts and its surrounding neighborhoods currently have an economy composed of three layers: the official market economy; an extensive gray-market economy; and a very small, yet notorious, criminal economy. Although official employment data indicate high unemployment, local estimates put as much as 30 percent of the total Watts population as employed or partially employed in the gray-market economy. One of the major strengths of the Watts community is a large, motivated workforce. With education and training, this gray-market economy workforce has the potential to blossom into a talented pool of human capital ready for full market employment. However, inside the Watts community, very few large-scale employment opportuni-



ties exist because few undeveloped commercial or industrial land parcels exist in this mostly residential community.

The majority of local employment in Watts is generated by small, local entrepreneurial businesses, both in the market economy and in the gray economy. The panel recommends that the Watts community redevelopment process focus on building and enhancing the capacity of these local employers to create a strong, local employment base and a source for generating wealth within the community. A local business center with a business incubator, as well as technical and financial support, is a key component of helping businesses start and grow, and meet the needs of the 21st-century economy. This center

should complement the existing, successful Maxine Waters Employment Preparation Center.

Health

Watts and its surrounding neighborhoods represent one of the most medically underserved areas in the United States. According to Jim Lott, the executive vice president of the Hospital Association of Southern California, South L.A. has less than one hospital bed per thousand residents. That number is less than half the Los Angeles County average. With the closing of Martin Luther King Jr./Drew Medical Center (King/Drew) hospital (the hospital built in response to the Watts riots) in August 2007, Watts residents and most of South L.A. lost their primary medical care facility. Residents,

The Watts Towers is an internationally recognizable symbol of the Watts community. The associated Arts Center and similar community uses hold the key to sustainability for the entire area.

many of whom lack full health insurance and suffer from higher rates of illness, have to waste crucial time traveling to distant facilities.

The implicit message this health care shortage sends many area residents, leaders, and activists seems to be that life in Watts and broader South L.A. is just not as valuable. Access to top-notch health care is essential for Watts's transformation; it validates the dignity of the residents, provides urgently needed services, and has the potential to serve both as a job provider and as an educational facility. Los Angeles County supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, under whose jurisdiction Watts falls, has vowed to reopen King/Drew. U.S. Representative Maxine Waters and many other political leaders have rallied to the cause. Current plans aim to have the hospital reopened in 2012: this *must* happen.

Access

Watts ostensibly possesses excellent access to multimodal transit. Just looking at an aerial map shows that Watts borders two freeways, a heavy-rail line, and a light-rail line and has convenient proximity to both Los Angeles International Airport and the Ports of Long

Beach and Los Angeles. However, the reality on the streets of the community is very different. The recessed freight line that borders Watts' eastern edge, the Alameda corridor, creates a physical moat with limited crossings.

Although the Metropolitan Transit Authority Blue Line light rail has a stop at 103rd Street in the heart of Watts, getting to the station is not a simple matter. What appears to be an easy half-mile walk from Jordan Downs is actually a gauntlet fraught with danger; residents have to traverse several different gang territories to access the station. In a neighborhood where so many residents do not own personal automobiles, safe access to transit is essential in creating a vibrant streetscape that bolsters the immediate community while enabling residents to tap into the economic opportunities of Greater Los Angeles.

Market Potential

Analysis of market conditions and market potentials indicates demand exists for a variety of residential products now and into the future, and subsequently for office and retail space. Achieving market velocity requires incorporating additional land areas adjacent to the site into the redevelopment process of the Jordan Downs environs to establish a critical mass supportive of nonresidential land uses. A 15-year horizon would use more land than what is currently defined as the Jordan Downs site. Therefore, planners must look beyond the site boundaries to make the redevelopment of this vital and promising area a reality.

Overall Conditions

Although the vision for Watts is ambitious, its evolutionary potential lies in its ability to harness the economic opportunity within its boundaries while being cognizant of its context within the broader South L.A. market. The overall condition of the market area surrounding Jordan Downs is diverse and extends well beyond Jordan Downs and Watts to include adjacent jurisdictions, such as Compton, South Gate, and Lynwood. Many of the surrounding areas compete directly with Watts and have prospered in recent years with redevelopment, new housing, shopping opportunities, and cultural facilities.

The areas immediately adjoining Jordan Downs and Watts, however, have lagged behind the neighboring communities. They have little sense of community, connectivity, or safety, but they have made some progress. Organizations such as the Watts Gang Task Force have contributed to a 50 percent reduction in the crime rate in Jordan Downs over the last three years. These efforts to eliminate the influence of

gangs and other nonbeneficial activities must be continued and intensified.

For economic conditions to advance and for the area to become attractive again for residents, these overall conditions must improve. Improvement will take a community effort that is not limited just to Jordan Downs residents. Success will require coordinated action by all public and private stakeholders.

The following sections cover the demographic trends for Jordan Downs and the Watts environs and explain how those trends apply to potential demand for residential, retail, and office development.

Employment

Employment growth in a region is a typical indicator of demand for residential land uses as well as employment centers. A typical approach is to define historical trends in employment by industry for a county or Metropolitan Statistical Area, project future employment by industry, and assign a portion of that growth to a specific submarket or trade area. In this case, that typical approach does not apply; Watts faces enormous challenges in attracting new employment. Land is very limited and expensive, and most employment is concentrated in small and medium-sized businesses. Economic development efforts should concentrate on realistic business size expectations.

Although unemployment and underemployment are extremely high in the area, jobs are available. However, the residents' skill sets do not always match the jobs available, and efforts to match these skills must continue. In interviews, the panel noticed a disconnect between the local and regional economic development agencies and the residents. The residents must be better informed about opportunities on a regular basis. Also at play is a large presence

Table 1
Historical and Projected Population and Households in the Watts Environs, 1980–2023

	1980	1990	2000	2008	2009	2013	2018	2023	Average Annual Percentage Change			
									1980–2009	1990–2009	2000–2009	2009–2013
Population	54,817	64,157	69,636	80,133	81,511	87,022	93,11	100,800	1.4%	1.3%	1.8%	1.6%
Households	16,606	16,989	17,399	19,522	19,800	20,913	22,304	23,695	0.6%	0.8%	1.5%	1.4%
Household Size	3.30	3.78	4.02	4.10	4.12	4.16	4.21	4.25				

Sources: Claritas iXpress; THK Associates, Inc.

Industrial uses are abundant adjacent to Jordan Downs along Alameda Street.



of undocumented economic activity, whether gray market or criminal. A number of persons and households appear to earn significant income, yet they are “unemployed.” Creating new jobs that are competitive in wages and earning power to undocumented employment is the only way to break this cycle.

Immediate sources of new employment are likely to come from construction activity—first, in Jordan Downs and other public housing projects, and then, from other properties as the community revitalizes. Retail jobs will grow over time as new retail increases to meet demand from new residents. A greater commitment from public agencies to locate satellite offices in Watts should also be pursued to provide employment for area residents.

Given the high price of land, the large number of properties taxed at very low rates because of long-term ownership, and the highly desirable M-3 industrial zoning (property owners like the M-3 zoning because it permits a wide variety of uses, from commercial to heavy industrial, and the quantity in city is relatively limited), large parcels of land are unlikely to become available soon to attract major new employers. The future of employment for Watts residents revolves around continued efforts to improve their skills and education to allow them to compete in the overall labor market. Also, safe passage to light rail and other public transportation is critical, given that more than 20 percent of the households in the Watts area do not own an automobile.

Population and Households

The panel has defined a primary trade area for the Jordan Downs vicinity that encompasses all of the Watts community bounded by 86th Street on the north, the 105 freeway on the south, Alameda Street on the east, and Baring Cross Street on the west. Within the immediate Watts environs, the 2009 estimated population is 81,511 individuals in 19,800 households. Since 2000, the Watts area has added 1,319 people per year and 266 households. By 2013, even with limited vacant land, estimates are that through redevelopment and increased densities the Watts area will grow to 87,022 people in 20,913 households. By the year 2023, the Watts area could have more 100,000 people in just under 23,695 households. (See table 1.)

Housing Conditions

The housing stock in the areas surrounding Watts varies and encompasses all product types. Areas in surrounding communities such as Lynwood, South Gate, and Compton have seen home prices fall significantly in recent years. The following market statistics were obtained from the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). This data set is limited because MLS reports only a portion of the market. Foreclosure sales, short sales, and property transfers that occur between private parties do not use Realtor and MLS services in most cases. A significantly larger market is believed to exist than what has been available through MLS. A detailed market analysis would research other sources, such as county records.

The average price of for-sale residential properties in the Watts area is approximately 65 percent of the prices in the surrounding areas in 2008 and 86 percent of prices in 2007. This differential indicates that the housing downturn has been much more significant in Watts than in the other areas. At the same time, these depressed prices could be a positive sign for buying opportunities. A for-sale market exists, but at these prices, the production of market-rate or nonsubsidized units for ownership is questionable when land, soft costs, and hard costs are considered. As the markets recover and improvements are realized in the area, the panel



Originally developed as semi-permanent housing for defense industry and World War II workers, Jordan Downs was converted to public housing in the early 1950s. The two-story apartment-style complex of 103 buildings includes 700 public housing units.

would expect the ownership market to return over time. Overall in the South L.A. area, home values are in the \$375 per square foot range.

In the Watts environs, approximately 65 percent of the housing stock is contained in single-family or clustered housing. Only 6 percent of the housing stock is in properties that have more than 20 people per building. In Watts, homeownership is relatively low, at 36 percent of households, and ownership patterns have changed little since 2000. Even with improved conditions, homeownership will be the last of the markets to show significant shifts in market share. The data contained in table 2 have been

Table 2
Housing Units by Type in the Watts Environs, 2008–2023

Household Income	2000		2009		2013		2018		2023		Annual Average Percentage Change
	Housing Units	% of Total	2000–2009								
One-Unit Attached	2,215	11.1	2,341	11.0	2,469	11.0	2,633	11.0	2,797	11.0	1.1
One-Unit Detached	10,661	55.5	11,802	55.5	12,471	55.6	13,298	55.6	14,126	55.6	1.1
Two Units	1,044	5.45	1,152	5.4	1,215	5.4	1,296	5.4	1,377	5.4	1.1
Three to 19 Units	4,255	22.1	4,678	22.0	4,930	22.0	5,257	22.0	5,584	22.0	1.1
20 to 49 Units	429	2.2	510	2.4	552	2.5	589	2.5	626	2.5	1.9
50 or More Units	612	3.2	662	3.1	693	3.1	739	3.1	785	3.1	0.9
Other	99	0.5	108	0.5	114	0.5	121	0.5	129	0.5	1.0
Total	19,227		21,252		22,444		23,934		25,423		

Tenure of Housing Units

Owner-Occupied	6,876	35.8	7,842	36.9	8,313	37.0	8,865	37.0	9,417	37.0	1.5
Renter-Occupied	10,463	54.4	11,983	56.4	12,723	56.7	13,568	56.7	14,412	56.7	1.5
Vacant	1,888	9.8	1,428	6.7	1,407	6.3	1,594	6.3	1,594	6.3	-3.1

Sources: Claritas iXpress; THK Associates, Inc.

developed from Claritas information that is derived from U.S. Census and other data. Before making any development and financial decisions, HACLA should confirm these data.

Household Income

Median household income is an indicator of housing demand and affordability. As previously mentioned, significant unreported and undocumented income in the Watts area artificially lowers income levels and thus indicated demand for housing by price range. The estimated \$28,889 median income for the Watts area in 2009 is believed to be understated because many area residents appear to have unreported sources of income. Nevertheless, most purchasers will use these lower income levels to qualify for loans and leases of residential properties. As shown in table 3, about 44 percent of households have incomes below \$25,000. Only about 7 percent of households have incomes over \$100,000.

Housing Demand

Using the projected demand for household growth in the Watts environs, THK Associates, Inc., has estimated housing demand in the area as shown in tables 4 and 5.

For some product types, such as affordable and assisted housing, the Watts environs can capture portions of this demand today from current residents and unfilled demand within the system. Limited demand exists for market-rate rental and ownership housing at this time because these residents have alternatives in locations better perceived than the Watts area. Ownership and rental market-rate housing opportunities will emerge in the Watts environs over time. Keys to this transformation include increased connectivity to other areas and increased neighborhood cohesiveness, improved schools that become attractors rather than detractors, a retooled job base and labor pool

Table 3
Housing Income in the Watts Environs, 2008–2023

Household Income	2000		2009		2013		2018		2023		Annual Average Percentage Change	
	Housing Units	% of Total	2000–2009	2009–2013								
Less than \$15,000	6,088	35.0	5,500	27.8	5,306	25.4	5,064	22.7	4,822	20.4	-1.1	-0.9
\$15,000–\$24,999	3,360	19.3	3,160	16.0	3,107	14.9	3,041	13.6	2,975	12.6	-0.7	-0.4
\$25,000–\$34,999	2,499	14.3	2,696	13.6	2,782	13.3	2,889	13.0	2,996	12.6	0.8	0.8
\$35,000–\$49,999	2,286	13.1	3,066	15.5	3,183	15.2	3,329	14.9	3,475	14.7	3.3	0.9
\$50,000–\$74,999	1,927	11.1	2,651	13.4	2,993	14.3	3,421	15.3	2,849	16.2	3.6	3.1
\$75,000–\$99,999	745	4.3	1,314	6.6	1,558	7.4	1,863	8.4	2,168	9.1	6.5	4.4
\$100,000–\$149,999	310	1.8	1,020	5.2	1,401	6.7	1,877	8.4	2,353	9.9	14.2	8.3
\$150,000–\$249,999	164	0.9	254	1.3	397	1.9	576	2.6	755	3.2	5.0	11.8
\$250,000–\$499,999	35	0.7	113	0.6	136	0.7	165	0.7	194	0.8	13.9	4.8
\$500,000 or More	1	0.0	27	0.1	50	0.2	79	0.4	108	0.5	44.1	16.9
Total	17,415		19,000		20,913		22,304		23,695			
Household Income												
Average	\$32,654		\$40,102		\$45,936		\$55,424		\$64,911		2.3	3.5
Median	\$22,799		\$28,889		\$32,345		\$41,109		\$49,873		2.7	2.9

Sources: Claritas iXpress; THK Associates, Inc.

for the economy of today and tomorrow, and improved safety of the area so the Watts vicinity is competitive for those housing products.

Using the median income in the Watts area, the typical household can afford a \$167,300 home. This finding is consistent with the limited sales in 2008 but inconsistent with the 2007 data. Housing demand by price range takes into account the reported household income but has been adjusted to allow for the undocumented income in the area as well as actual values researched in the area. Either buyers are making larger-than-typical downpayments, or purchasers are coming from other areas to Watts.

Because of this new housing activity, significant job creation will occur. According to statistics from the National Association of Home Builders, the construction process creates approximately one job per 1.3 multifamily units and one job per 2.3 single-family units.

Retail Demand

Although the surrounding communities have been able to attract national tenants, retail goods and services appear to be underrepresented in the immediate vicinity, with few national or regional tenants. This situation is partly attributable to scattered landownership and limited vacant land. Furthermore, many national retailers fail to recognize the undocumented income that exists in the community. At this time, most storeowners in the immediate Watts area have a captive audience.

The panel estimated retail demand in the Jordan Downs area using the existing and future household base, reported and adjusted household incomes, and expenditure patterns from ULI's *Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers* for amounts spent on retail and sales volumes per square foot. The panel applied dollars available for retail goods and services to

Table 4
Estimated Housing Demand in the Watts Environs

Year	Households	Annual Change	Housing Unit Demand	Ownership	Single Family	Townhome Condominium	Rental Multifamily
2009	19,800	254	267	94	61	33	174
2010	20,073	273	288	101	65	35	187
2011	20,350	277	292	102	66	36	190
2012	20,631	281	296	103	67	36	192
2013	20,913	282	297	104	67	36	193
2014	21,184	271	285	107	72	35	178
2015	21,459	275	289	108	73	35	181
2016	21,737	278	293	110	74	36	183
2017	22,019	282	297	111	75	36	185
2018	22,304	285	300	113	76	37	188
2019	22,576	272	286	114	80	34	171
2020	22,850	275	289	116	81	35	174
2021	23,128	278	293	117	82	35	176
2022	23,410	282	296	119	83	36	178
2023	23,695	285	300	120	84	36	180
Annual Average	21,742	277	291	109	74	35	182
Total	—	4,149	4,367	1,638	1,108	530	2,729

Source: THK Associates, Inc.

The commercial areas of Watts include a wide variety of older retail corridors and newer strip shopping centers. Neither of these land use types is close to Jordan Downs.



the number of existing and forecast households. By applying sales per square foot in the region, the panel estimated the total amount of sup-portable retail space. (See tables 6 and 7.)

In 2009, estimated demand equates to 643,502 square feet of retail space in Watts that will grow to 770,090 square feet by 2023. Within the Jordan Downs vicinity, the panel thus anticipates a need for approximately 100,000 to 115,000 square feet of retail space by 2023. With limited amounts of land available for new retail space and much of the retail space that exists today in smaller and older spaces, new retail development in the Jordan Downs environs should be very well received, especially when the possibility of improved access into and out of the Watts area is considered.

This space should be located on strategic corners of the property and along the central corridors that attract residents from within Jordan Downs and the perimeter neighborhoods. A portion of the higher-density residential units can be located above much of the retail. Tenant types will be typical to those found in a com-

Table 5
Housing Demand by Price Range in Watts Environs and Jordan Downs Environs

	Annual Demand	Percent	Jordan Downs Environs Capture Rate	Annual Units	Total Units by 2023
Single Family					
Under \$250,000	26	35.0	30.0	7.8	116
\$250,000–\$349,999	22	30.0	30.0	6.6	100
\$350,000–\$449,999	18	25.0	25.0	4.6	69
\$450,000–\$549,999	4	5.0	25.0	0.9	14
\$550,000 and Above	4	5.0	25.0	0.9	13
Total	74	100.0	28.3	21.0	313
Townhome/Condominium					
Under \$250,000	14	40.0	25.0	3.5	53
\$250,000–\$349,999	11	30.0	25.0	2.7	40
\$350,000–\$449,999	7	20.0	25.0	1.8	27
\$450,000–\$549,999	4	10.0	25.0	0.9	13
\$550,000 and Above	0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0
Total	35	100.0	25.0	9.0	133
Rental Multifamily					
Under \$250,000	64	35.0	25.0	15.9	239
\$250,000–\$349,999	45	25.0	35.0	15.9	239
\$350,000–\$449,999	36	20.0	35.0	12.7	191
\$450,000–\$549,999	18	10.0	35.0	6.4	96
\$550,000 and Above	18	10.0	35.0	6.4	96
Total	182	100.0	31.5	57.0	860

Source: THK Associates, Inc.

munity shopping center, such as a grocery store or dry cleaner.

Construction of this new retail space will create one job per 980 square feet, or 100 to 120 construction jobs. At 400 square feet per employee, 250 to 300 permanent jobs will be created. This amount of retail space would require nearly nine acres of land, assuming a 30 percent floor/area ratio. Lease rates for retail space in the Watts area range from \$32.00 to \$35.00 per square foot (triple net lease).

Office/Professional Demand

Demand for office and professional space also exists in the Watts environs, which the Jordan Downs area can easily accommodate. According to the major brokerage houses, Los Angeles County contains an estimated 190 million

square feet of office space, which translates into just under 60 square feet of office space per household. Recognizing that the Watts area has a smaller degree of professional office employment within its labor force, the panel estimates that the area’s ratio is 20 percent that of the county as a whole, or 15 square feet per household. With 19,800 households in the Watts environs today, demand exists for 297,600 square feet of office space that will grow to 284,340 by 2023. One can reasonably assume that up to 20 percent of this demand could be accommodated or located in the Jordan Downs environs. Space should be reserved to accommodate 50,000 to 60,000 square feet of professional-oriented office space. With a 40 percent floor/area ratio, three to four acres should be reserved for this use. Lease rates for professional office space in the Watts area are reported to be in the \$16.50 to \$18.50 per

Table 6
Retail Demand Estimate

Population	
2009	81,511
2023	100,800
Households	
2009	19,800
2023	23,695
Median Income	
	\$28,889
Adjusted Income	
	\$43,334
Income Spent on Retail	
	\$13,000

Sources: Urban Land Institute, Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers; THK Associates, Inc.

Table 7
Retail Demand by Square Foot

Retail Dollar Volume in Watts	
2009	\$257,400,900
2023	\$308,036,185
Sales per Square Foot	
	\$400
Supportable Square Footage in Watts	
2009	643,502
2023	770,090
Jordan Downs Market Share (Square Feet)	
2009	96,525
2023	115,514

Sources: Urban Land Institute, Dollars and Cents of Shopping Centers; THK Associates, Inc.

square foot range (full service), according to local brokers.

Tenant types anticipated for this space include medical-related services such as clinics and professional services, including lawyers, accountants, real estate offices, and other professionals serving the Watts community.

The construction activity would generate 50 to 60 construction jobs and 220 to 260 permanent jobs.

Land Use Potentials

Based on the preceding market findings, the following section describes a recommended land use program for the redevelopment of the Jordan Downs area, exclusive of the 700 existing units that will be relocated on site. The panel envisions that the land uses will require at least 15 years for absorption. Not all of the units will be located on the specific Jordan Downs property; some will need to be on properties adjacent to the existing property.

Development, Planning, and Design

To frame the discussion of specific strategies, one first has to lay the foundation based on a vision, the current market conditions and the future potential market, and an understanding of the assets within the community as a whole. The panel's vision links a concept of a ripple effect from a single drop of water to an opportunity to begin a new approach to develop a comprehensive community strategy that is broader than just the specific development of Jordan Downs. The hope is that redevelopment of Jordan Downs will be like a single drop of water that will radiate new vitality throughout the entire community of Watts. Depending on the success of Jordan Downs, the panel believes that HACLA should expand its efforts over time to include Gonzaque Village, Imperial Courts, Nickerson Gardens, and their surrounding neighborhoods.

Everyone is well aware of the current market conditions that make ambitious efforts challenging for production of housing units and commercial space. The lack of capital sources has severely affected the ability to finance developments through existing funding mechanisms. Until the capital markets stabilize and money starts to flow again, challenges will continue. The panel expects and believes that through efforts at the federal, state, and local government levels, and with help from the private sector, capital will become available, economic activity will pick up, and jobs will rebound. In accord with this belief in the future, the panel is providing an idea of how HACLA could go forward with the rebirth of Jordan Downs. Essential to this concept is that everyone understand the panel's recommendations are intended to illustrate what it thinks is possible. HACLA must go forward by engaging the community through the planning effort already underway and take advantage of the political will that has been demonstrated by Mayor

Villaraigosa, Representative Waters, and other community leaders.

This part of the report deals primarily with the “bricks and mortar” portions of the process. The panel believes that a comprehensive neighborhood strategy to reinvigorate Watts and neighborhoods adjacent to the communities of Jordan Downs, Gonzaque Village, Imperial Courts, and Nickerson Gardens, which comprise 2,434 total units, is essential and long overdue. They have been the source of many issues over time. The need to improve quality of life and provide opportunities for all residents includes not only housing but also education and jobs. The Watts community at large as well as the community of Jordan Downs has a number of assets:

- Jordan Downs Community Advisory Committee;
- Churches;
- Partnership with Los Angeles Police Department through the Watts Gang Task Force;
- Central Avenue Corridor;
- Engaged community members;
- Wonderful people and families that live at Jordan Downs, Nickerson Gardens, Imperial Court, and Gonzaque Village;
- Community gardens;
- Vacant land to facilitate phasing and construction of job generators;
- Schools;
- Public transit connections;
- Proximity to Alameda Corridor for vehicular access to jobs downtown, at the port, and

in the industrial and retail areas along Alameda Street;

- Community facilities such as the Maxine Waters Center;
- Watts Towers;
- Cultural Crescent;
- Mingus Center;
- Political will; and
- A community of working people both in the formal and gray economy.

With these assets, the potential for success is not hard to imagine—not only at Jordan Downs, but also at Gonzaque Village, Imperial Courts, and Nickerson Gardens and in the community of Watts as a whole. The strategic vision that the panel believes will lead to the long-range revitalization of the community—including better education, more jobs, and an improved living experience—must incorporate a thought process and overall planning and execution strategy that provide a template broader than just redevelopment of Jordan Downs. Thus, in addition to Jordan Downs, which will be explored in greater detail, the panel has addressed some ideas for the other three communities owned by HACLA.

Development Principles

HACLA has clearly outlined the basic goals and principles guiding the redevelopment of Jordan Downs. The panel agrees that full commitment to these goals is essential to the success of the redevelopment. Continued articulation and reinforcement of the importance of the following goals will be important throughout the process:

- **One-for-one replacement of 700 public housing units.** Public housing units are a valuable long-term resource for the community and should be replaced. The availability of additional land purchased by HACLA and other potential acquisition opportunities in the neighborhood make this goal feasible.
- **No displacement of existing residents.** Again, the availability of additional land makes construction of new units possible without requiring off-site temporary relocation.
- **Mixed income in the new community.** Diversifying the income mix at Jordan Downs is essential to its long-term sustainability. The panel believes the new community can provide affordable workforce housing and attract households with incomes of up to 60 percent of median income as part of the first phase of construction.
- **Mixed use in the new community.** Any development of more than 1,000 units needs to offer residents a range of services and amenities. Jordan Downs should be no different. Additionally, the location of the site offers the opportunity for construction of significant commercial uses that could also benefit the community as a whole by generating additional revenues to HACLA.
- **Employment of residents.** This goal should be addressed not only through construction employment but also through an immediate focus on economic development programs.
- **Environmental sustainability.** In all aspects of the development, environmental considerations should be paramount. The baseline goal for Jordan Downs should be to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) neighborhood development standards. Other efforts should include energy efficiency, water conservation measures within individual units, evaluation of the feasibility of solar energy, xeriscaping, rainwater reuse on site, use of pervious paving, and meeting LEED building construction standards.
- **Safety and security for all residents.** Given the large family and senior populations, both including physical design standards (eyes on the street, defensible space, and the like) and continuing support of community engagement in security issues through the block captains, collaboration with the Watts Gang Task Force, and close communication with the Los Angeles Police Department are especially important.

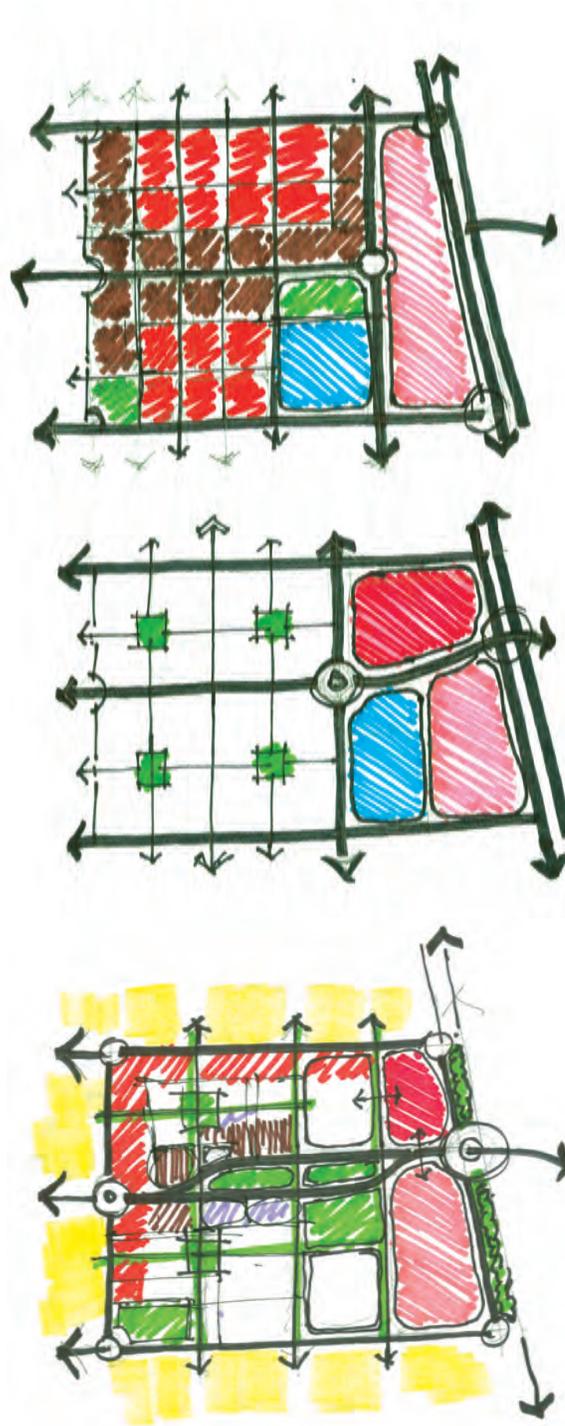
- **High-quality and community facilities, amenities, and open space.** These features must be included in the redevelopment plans and be accessible to all residents.

More Than Jordan Downs

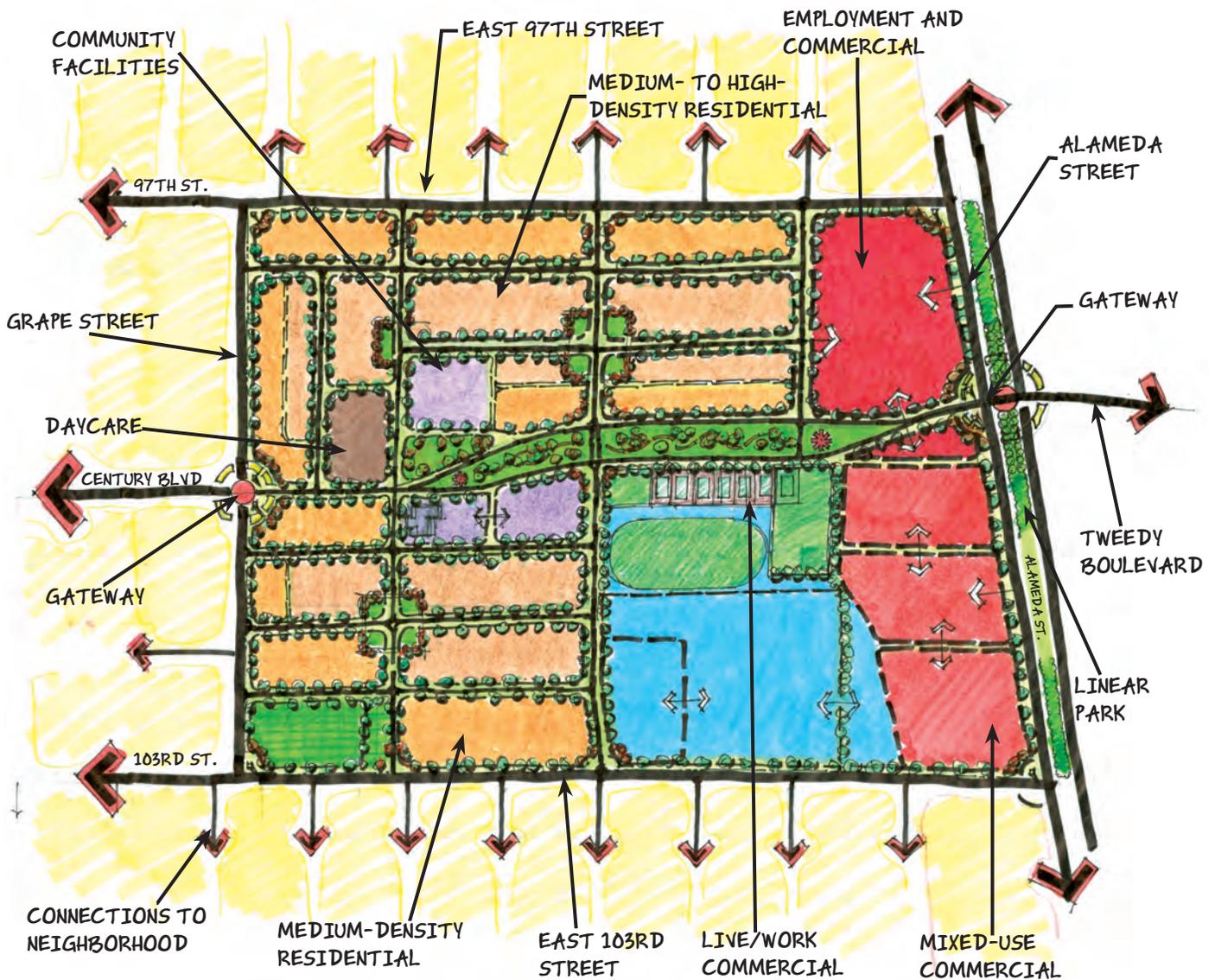
The project study area has been defined by HACLA as approximately 100 acres, including the following areas:

Jordan Downs	
public housing complex	49.48 acres
HACLA-acquired vacant parcel	21.08 acres
Jordan High School	18.99 acres
Current industrial space	
on Alameda Street	7.71 acres
Community garden	2.24 acres
Total	99.74 acres

Although this land assemblage is unusually large for Los Angeles, Jordan Downs cannot be an island. To accomplish a more comprehensive revitalization, HACLA must expand the boundaries to include the adjacent neighborhood. The panel recommends that the boundaries of the neighborhood be defined to the north at 92nd Street, to the west at Wilmington Avenue, to the south at 107th Street, and to the east at Alameda Street. This definition triples the project area to approximately 300 acres. Expanding the boundaries of the area allows Jordan Downs to be connected more effectively to the larger neighborhood. Additional funding sources can be accessed, neighborhood partners can be more engaged, and the long-term sustainability of the redevelopment will be more secure. Of this assemblage, 70.56 acres is available on site for redevelopment—the Jordan Downs property plus the vacant parcel acquired by HACLA. Within this acreage, a need will exist for road infrastructure, commercial uses, open space, community facilities, and housing. After deducting spaces for the nonresidential uses, roadways, and open space, the remaining land available for development is approximately 38 acres. If 2,100 units were built on this acreage, the average density would be 55 units per acre, which would mean that four-story



The panel considered a variety of urban forms, including street, block, and spatial layouts, before settling on the art park, gateway, and open-space components suggested in this report.



A conceptual land use plan suggesting various land use types and densities, public facilities, and gateway entrances.

structures would be the predominant building type. This outcome clearly does not mesh with the expressed desire of community members or the market. A more sustainable overall density would be 25 to 30 units per acre. This density would yield 950 to 1,140 housing units on HACLA land, thereby necessitating the identification of other areas to meet the originally stated goal of 2,100 housing units.

Opportunities exist within the approximately 200 acres in the adjacent neighborhood to address some of this need by acquiring existing residential structures and vacant land. Foreclosed homes are available today. Vacant and underused sites exist in the neighborhood. Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding can be targeted to acquire these homes and lots, which will enable HACLA to move the

redevelopment process forward on a fast track. The availability of housing resources off site will facilitate the relocation of Jordan Downs' residents within the neighborhood and ensure fulfillment of the one-for-one replacement commitment while allowing the construction of housing aimed at a more sustainable mix of incomes on the Jordan Downs site.

The panel recommends HACLA target at least 200 units for acquisition or construction in the adjacent neighborhood, half for replacement of public housing units and half for new high-quality workforce housing. These units would provide a combination of rental and ownership, including a lease-to-own program for existing Jordan Downs residents. To determine the potential supply, HACLA should schedule an inventory of foreclosed homes and vacant lots in

the expanded project area as one of the immediate tasks. HACLA should aggressively purchase as many foreclosed or for-sale homes, multiple units, or vacant lots as possible during this time of economic stress.

Residential Development

Because of phasing, market, and financing considerations, the panel believes the residential development on the site will be most successful as a mix of public housing replacement units and workforce housing initially targeted to households at less than 60 percent of median income (Low Income Housing Tax Credit [LIHTC] units), totaling approximately 1,100 units. This total would include 600 public housing replacement units on site plus 100 units provided off site as described in the previous section. Of these units, 120 will be set aside for seniors.

In the interest of creating a dynamic community, the other 980 on-site units would be a mix of 480 public housing replacement units and 500 LIHTC/workforce housing units. These units would range in size from one to four bedrooms and would be located in a variety of building types. This variety is important to address the needs of different household types and sizes and to create a visually lively and diverse site.

The new structures will include garden apartments and two- and three-story townhouses, including a three-story townhouse designed to accommodate flexible live/work space and small-scale commercial uses. These townhouses would provide workspace or retail on the ground floor and private living space on the second and third floors. The townhouse type of product lends itself well to either rental or ownership housing.

Given the current market conditions, the new housing built at Jordan Downs will be most feasible as rental apartments. However, over time, perhaps in Phases 4 and 5, a portion of the units should be developed for homeownership. Making a target of 25 percent of the housing units on site available for homeownership will further



Residential units adjacent to Jordan Downs consist of primarily single-family detached homes in widely varying conditions.

stabilize the community and provide more connection to the neighborhood. These units should be viewed not only as a resource for new households moving to Jordan Downs but also as an opportunity for existing residents to move to homeownership.

Commercial Development

On the eastern boundary of the project area along Alameda Street, commercial land use should predominate. The rationale for commercial use in this location is site visibility

and access to the Alameda Corridor—strong positive factors for commercial, but negative factors for residential. The panel has identified a market potential in the larger trade area for up to 175,000 square feet of commercial uses. It would comprise 100,000 to 115,000 square feet of retail/restaurant use and 50,000 to 60,000 square feet of office/flex space. Some of these commercial uses, possibly small-scale retail or other uses to serve the community, will be located along Century Boulevard and at the Century Boulevard/Grape Street intersection, with the majority on the Alameda Street edge.

The estimated demand could be partially fulfilled by dedicating up to 13 acres of land for commercial development, a portion on land currently owned by HACLA and a portion on the sites identified by HACLA to be acquired along Alameda Street. The introduction of the Century Boulevard/Tweedy Boulevard roadway connection creates two distinct commercial opportunities, a smaller one-acre site to the south of the new roadway and a larger six-acre site bounded by the new roadway and 97th Street.

HACLA has identified other parcels farther south along Alameda for potential acquisition for commercial development. These parcels are expected to total 7.71 acres. Because the two commercial sites currently owned by HACLA are viable commercial sites regardless of whether the other parcels are acquired, in the short term, HACLA should focus its efforts on the sites already targeted. Assuming HACLA is successful in acquiring one of the additional commercial parcels, it will have an opportunity to swap land parcels with the Los Angeles Unified School District to increase the commercial area. This land swap would be for land currently containing housing, adjacent to the southwest corner of the school site.

The market should dictate the specific uses of these commercial parcels, but for illustration, they could include retail uses such as a neighborhood market, home improvement stores, or personal services. Alternatively, the location on Alameda has the potential for use by nonretail job-generating businesses. As owner of the land, HACLA could give priority to uses

that would help meet the long-term employment goals of community residents. These uses could include manufacturing, assembly, and health services.

Regarding the disposition terms of the commercial sites, HACLA should form a joint venture with any commercial developer/owner or ground lease the land to generate long-term HACLA revenues and to ensure long-term involvement with the owner and operator regarding employment efforts.

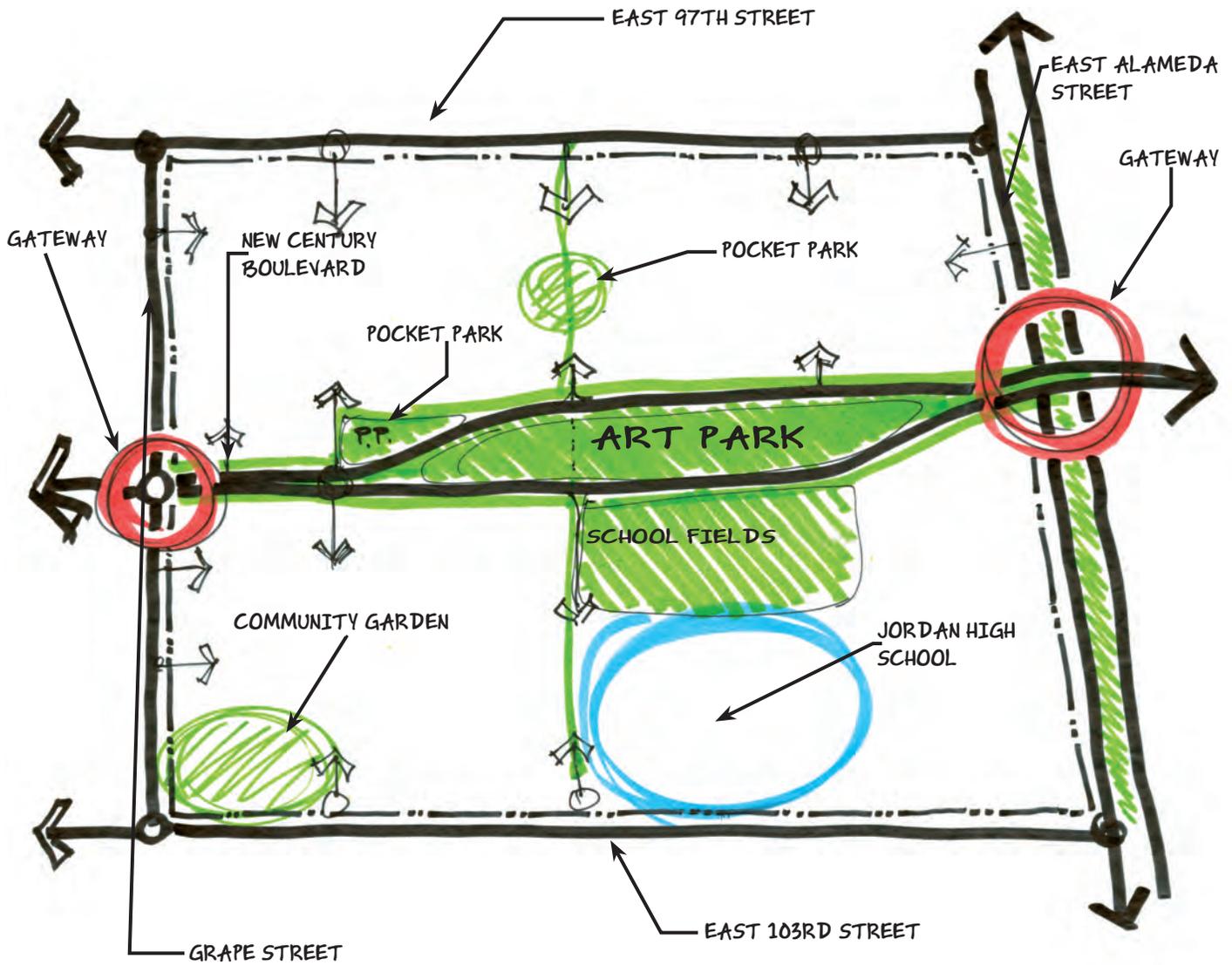
Infrastructure

As part of this revitalization, the entire utility and roadway infrastructure must be redesigned and upgraded. As a basic organizing principle, Century Boulevard should be connected to Tweedy Boulevard on approximately seven acres of the HACLA-owned property. This street will become the new “Main Street” for the redevelopment, bring transit through the rerouting of the Number 117 bus, and provide a location for services in the heart of the community. The critically important design details of this street are discussed in other sections of this report.

Another major benefit of this connection is the opportunity to mark the property entrances on the east and west, providing a strong identity statement. This new entrance to Jordan Downs will facilitate the connection to shopping and employment opportunities in the communities to the east. In addition, interior secondary connector streets should be constructed as part of the phasing to enhance the connection to the adjacent neighborhood. According to the panel’s conversations with the Los Angeles Police Department, a through-street pattern will enhance security and safety.

Open Space

More green and open spaces must be a part of the new Jordan Downs community. This goal can be met by providing a center green within Century Boulevard, pocket parks with playgrounds throughout the site, landscape features as part of the entry statements at



Century/Grape and Century/Alameda, and landscaped elements along the internal connector streets. The community gardens will remain a green asset connecting the neighborhood to Jordan Downs.

To further mark the new Jordan Downs as a green community, the panel recommends that the portion of the Alameda trench adjacent to the site be covered to allow installation of landscaping. Initially, this green planting could be part of the roadway connection project and extend for at least 150 feet on both sides of the road crossing. It would make a very visible statement of change to the more than 30,000 Los Angeles residents who pass by the site daily.

The panel also recommends that the sports field at Jordan High School be opened to the public by moving the northern security fence to the south side, adjacent to the school buildings. This change will improve the open space

within Jordan Downs as well as provide a better connection for students from the bus stop on Century Boulevard to the school.

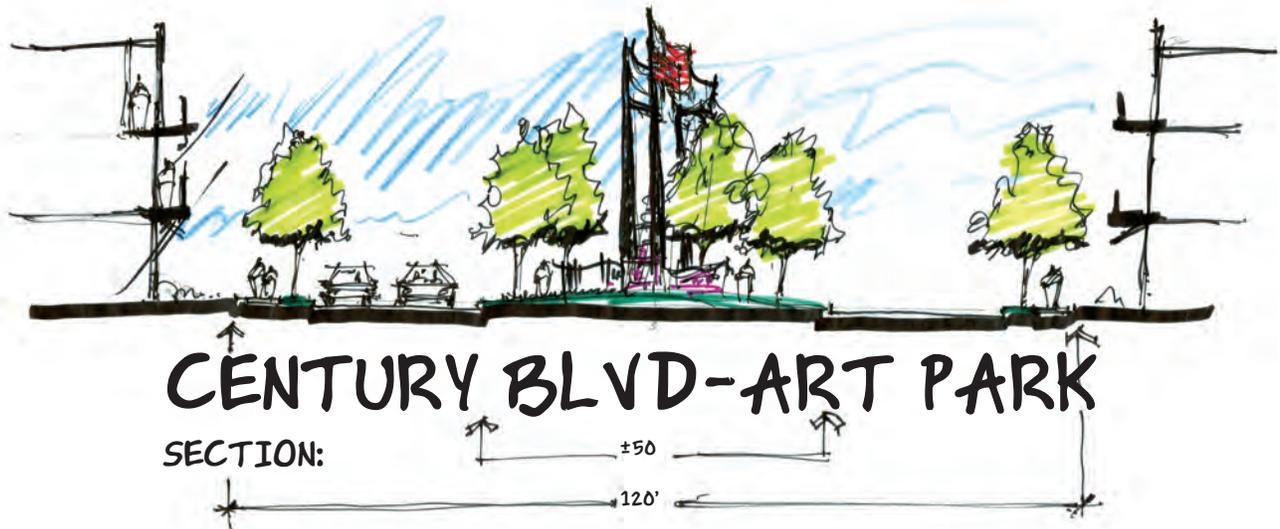
Community Facilities

Currently, the site has several community facilities:

- Management office/community building;
- Preschool;
- Ballfield and gym leased to the Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks; and
- Maintenance facility.

The recommended location for the management office/community building is in the center of the community along Century Boulevard. It can be maintained in the current location during the first several phases of construction;

A framework plan establishing the Art Park as the central organizing feature for the new neighborhood.



A conceptual cross section for the Art Park along the new Century Boulevard.



An artist's conception of the entrance point to the New Century Boulevard, emphasizing the creative and celebratory theme of Watts. It uses "green" materials to enhance the public realm.

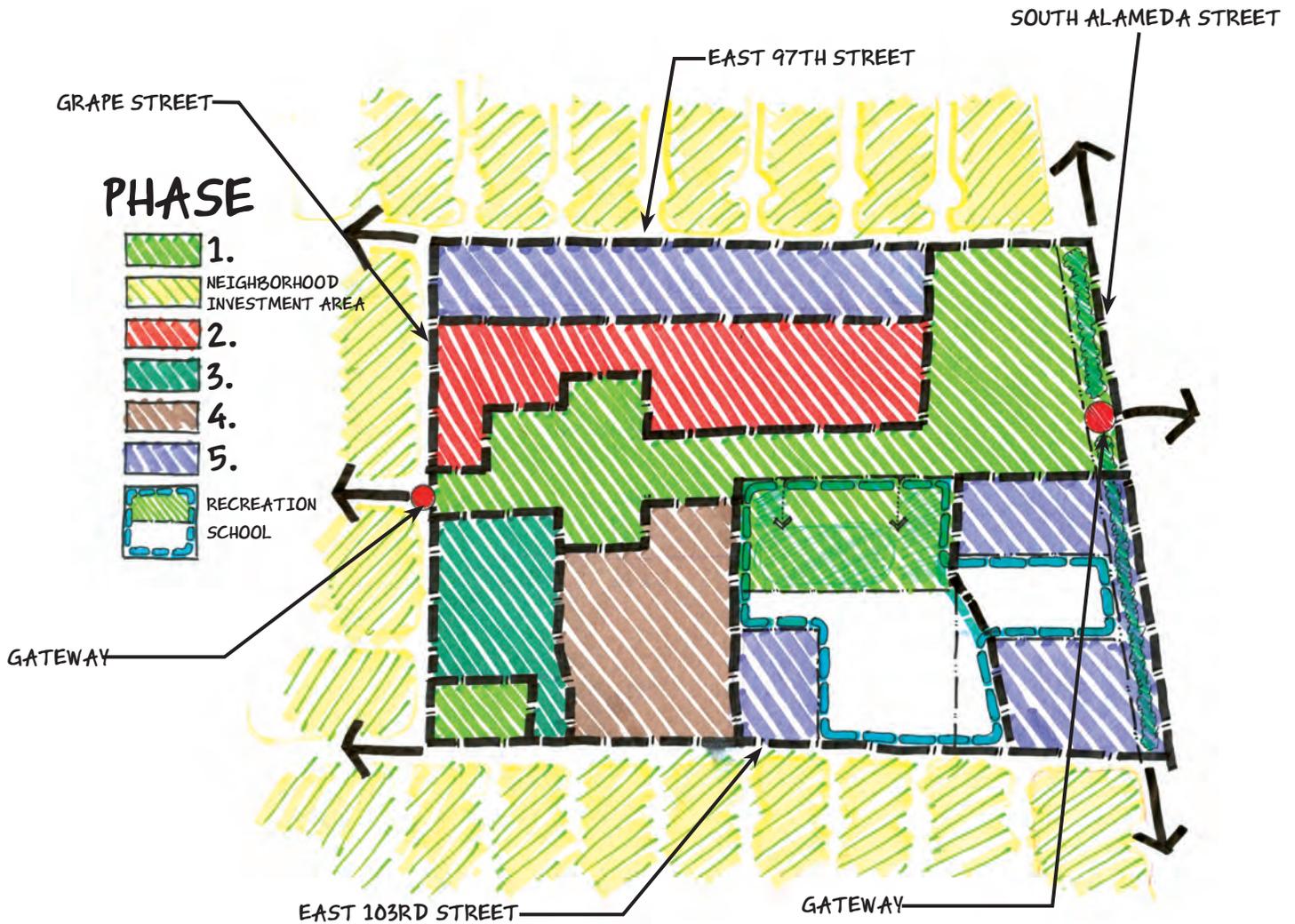
then in Phase 4, it would be replaced either as a freestanding building or integrated with housing above. The new facilities must also contain a state-of-the-art technology center for use by residents of all ages.

The balance of the existing community facilities would be relocated and constructed as part of Phase 1 on the newly acquired HACLA land. In marketing the community, having these facilities in place early in the revitalization process will be important as well as providing immediate improvements and enhancements to the quality of life of current Jordan Downs residents.

Overall Phasing Plan for Jordan Downs' Revitalization

For many reasons, including financing availability, market considerations, and on-site relocation, the redevelopment of Jordan Downs will need to be a phased development. The rate of turnover of units on site and the success of the off-site acquisition and development opportunities in the neighborhood will affect timing of phasing.

Despite the financing and economic crisis, many things can go forward now. HACLA



and all of its partners should take the first steps immediately.

The following is the panel's view of *one way* to approach the phasing of the construction. Other variations could be equally successful.

Phase 1

On site: One of the initial phasing principles should be to strengthen the core of the community. This goal can be accomplished by building the Century Boulevard connector to Tweedy as the first real and symbolic step toward ending the isolation of Jordan Downs. Concurrent with creating the new Century Boulevard, which will serve as a Main Street for the community, the remediation of the adjacent acquired site should be included in the Phase 1 infrastructure project.

Because the remediation process may be lengthy, a site on Jordan Downs can be identified to allow

Phase 1 residential construction—LIHTC/public housing replacement for seniors—to proceed quickly. The area with the existing ballfield will be affected by the Century Boulevard construction and could be used for the development of housing for seniors. Located across from the current management office/community center, it will be a safe and central location for seniors. The panel recommends that through the initial construction phases, the current management office/community center be retained and its use continued as a center for residents.

The housing for seniors could take the shape of one 120-unit building or a 60- to 70-unit building with a companion building to follow in a later phase across Century Boulevard. First-floor uses in these buildings could include community gathering places, retail, or community services.

A conceptual phasing plan for the redevelopment of Jordan Downs. Initial phases focus on redevelopment of those areas that can provide the much-needed vehicular and pedestrian links and gateways into Watts from Alameda Street and on establishment of the Art Park as the central organizing feature. Later phases focus on consolidation and redevelopment of nonresidential areas along Alameda. All phases correspond with simultaneous revitalization efforts in the Neighborhood Investment Area.

As part of Phase 1, the maintenance and community buildings on Grape Street and the open space/ballfield should be relocated to the western side of the remediated site, adjacent to the building housing seniors. As units turn over in the existing Jordan Downs housing because residents move to housing for seniors and the off-site housing acquisitions, the 23 units adjacent to the maintenance facility should be vacated to create the vacant development parcel for the next phase.

When Century Boulevard is complete, the Number 117 bus line should be rerouted along Century to Grape Street to 103rd Street. This change will immediately provide improved transit access for residents to shopping at Martin Luther King Plaza and access to the Metro Blue Line. Because school students use the public bus for transportation, a new entrance to Jordan High School must be created next to the Jordan High track.

Off site: HACLA should acquire and rehabilitate foreclosed properties in the neighborhood investment area. To maximize effectiveness, HACLA should form partnerships with city agencies, including the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, and lending institutions to identify property available in the neighborhood. These same partners may have access to capital to assist in acquisition and rehabilitation of the properties for use by renters or potential homeowners among the existing residents in Jordan Downs. At the same time, private property owners in the neighborhood investment area who want to improve their properties should be provided access to loan or grant funds for renovations. NSP funds should be specifically targeted. As the economy improves, HACLA should develop partnerships with local developers and contractors to construct public housing replacement units on scattered sites in the neighborhood.

HACLA should also partner with city code enforcement agencies to target properties that are not being maintained in the neighborhood. A strong neighborhood is essential for success, and the neighborhood residents need to understand

that HACLA supports neighborhood improvement—not just Jordan Downs improvement.

Phase 2

On site: Construction should proceed with new residential buildings on the vacated site bounded by the newly acquired and remediated HACLA property, Century Boulevard, Grape Street, and 99th Place (or to 97th Street if vacancies allow relocation of residents from the buildings on the corner of Grape and 97th streets). Assuming a site of approximately eight acres is available, at a density of 35 units per acre, approximately 280 to 300 units could be built. This higher density, incorporating some commercial live/work spaces, would be appropriate in this location because of its proximity to the main street of the new community.

This phase should also include a strong entry statement, internal circulation streets, open space, and a mix of unit types.

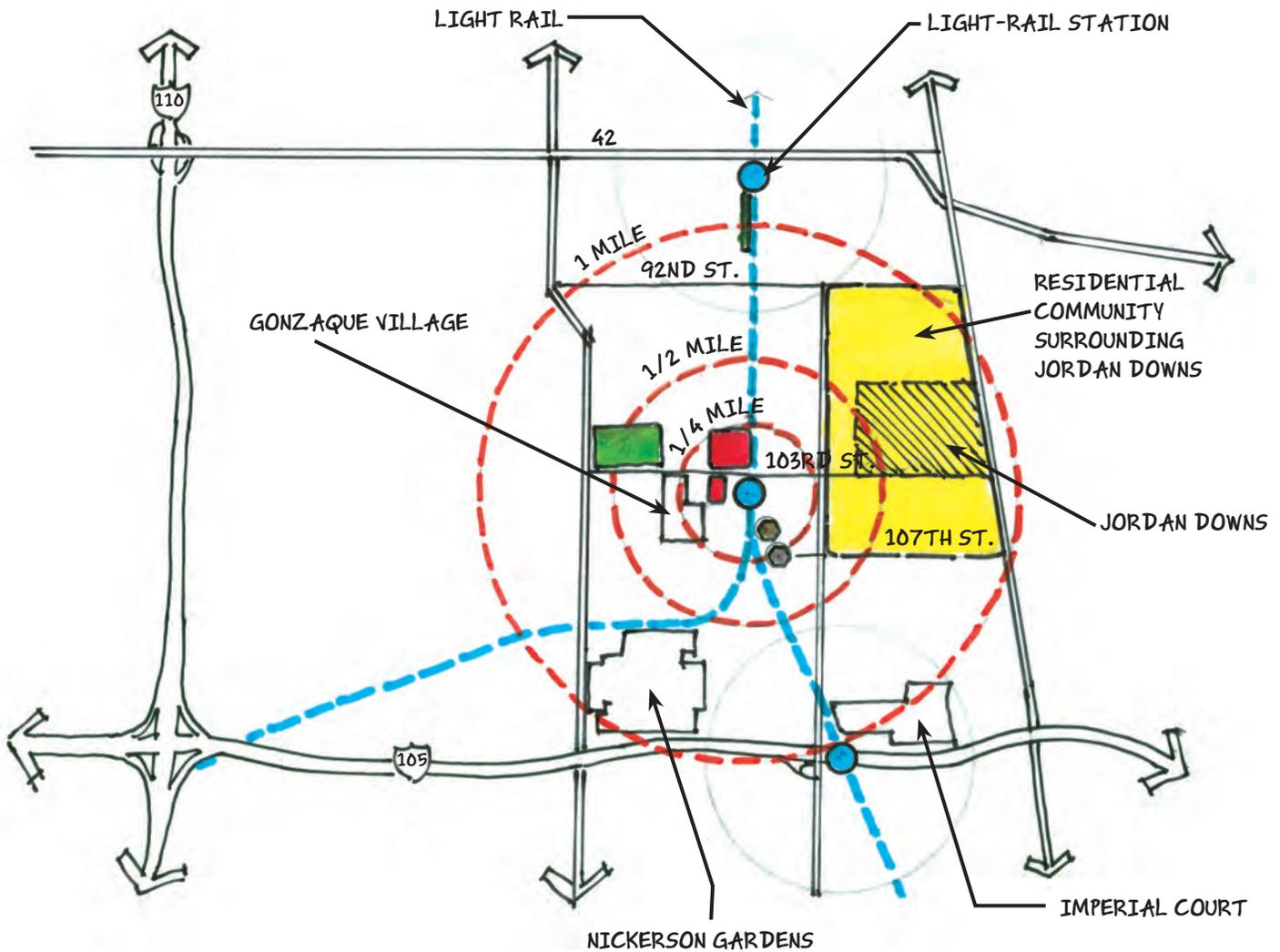
Off site: HACLA should continue its off-site program of acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, and targeted code enforcement.

Phase 3

In response to several factors, the panel recommends that the next phase of construction move south toward 103rd Street and the community gardens. The panel learned in the interview process that this portion of the site experiences the highest crime rate, which should be addressed. Furthermore, because 103rd Street is a major business street serving residents, redevelopment would help increase safe access.

On site: Approximately 140 to 160 units could be constructed in this four-acre area at a density of 35 units per acre. Internal circulation streets, open space, and a mix of unit types would be provided in this phase.

Off site: HACLA should continue its off-site program of acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, and targeted code enforcement.



Phase 4

This phase would build out the remaining site area in the southern portion of the site between Phase 3, Jordan High School, and the new Century Boulevard.

On site: This eight-acre parcel extends to Century Boulevard and would include the construction of new management and community facilities along Century Boulevard. Because the new community image would be well on its way to being accepted, this phase could include some higher-density units constructed over the community uses in the heart of the new Jordan Downs; however, the bulk of the units in this phase would be lower-density townhouses with an overall density of approximately 20 units per acre. This phase would contain 180 to 200 units as well as internal circulation streets, open space, and a mix of unit types.

Off site: HACLA should continue its off-site program of acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, and targeted code enforcement.

Phase 5

The final phase would complete the revitalization at the northern edge of the site from 99th Place to 97th Street.

On site: At 16 acres, the size of this area would allow construction of 300 to 325 units at 20 units per acre as well as internal circulation streets, open space, and a mix of unit types.

Off site: HACLA should continue its off-site program of acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, and targeted code enforcement.

The Watts neighborhood, including Jordan Downs and the other HACLA residential developments of Gonzaque Village, Nickerson Gardens, and Imperial Court, with the light-rail line and its associated stations shown in blue. The concentric circles shown in red represent the relative distance of major features from the light-rail station at 103rd Street. The proposed Neighborhood Investment Area, suggested as part of the panel's phasing and implementation strategies, is highlighted in yellow.

Table 8
Suggested Redevelopment Program for Public Housing Units in Watts

Community	Existing Units	New Units		Total Units
		On Site	Off Site	
Jordan Downs	700	400	200	1,300
Gonzaque Village	182	218	0	400
Imperial Court	498	0	100	598
Nickerson Gardens	1,054	282	200	1,536
Totals	2,434	900	500	3,834

Other HACLA Communities

All four existing communities represent 2,434 units. The goal stated in the RFP is to create 1,400 incremental units (2,100 RFP goal less 700 existing at Jordan Downs) for a total future inventory of 3,834 units. As stated in the Jordan Downs section, the panel does not believe that all 1,400 incremental units could or should be provided at Jordan Downs. Some of those units can be provided in neighborhoods surrounding Jordan Downs, but the remainder needs to be provided within and adjacent to the other three HACLA communities.

The panel is intrigued by the potential in the near term of including Gonzaque Village concurrently with the first phase of Jordan Downs in the two- to three-year time frame; in any event, redevelopment of Gonzaque Village absolutely should be completed within the three- to seven-year time frame to meet the desired objective of transforming all the communities by 2025. Gonzaque Village has 182 units and is strategically located in the immediate vicinity of the Blue Line station, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Shopping Center, the library, the post office, and the hub of other commercial activities. The site has tremendous potential for transit-oriented development. In fact, this site's ideal location lends itself to a higher-density housing type different from the lower-density housing recommended for Jordan Downs. With the immediate transit orientation and the consequently reduced need for a car, the potential of doubling the density at least would be appropriate to consider. Doubling the density at Gonzaque Village would yield an additional 182 units, and tripling the density would yield an additional 364 units.

With the 400 incremental units provided on site at Jordan Downs and the potential of 200 units off site in the neighborhood, the goal of 1,400 incremental units could be more readily achieved. The remaining units needed to meet the goal established would then be addressed at Imperial Courts (498 existing units), Nickerson Gardens (1,054 existing units), and their surrounding neighborhoods. The total 1,552 existing units plus the remaining additional units necessary to meet the goal would necessitate a very small increase in density at both of these properties, which the panel believes could be analyzed to see if more units beyond the stated goal is possible.

Because of the size of Imperial Courts and its proximity to the Green/Blue Line station by the 105 freeway, the panel believes it would be next in logical sequence for redevelopment, followed by Nickerson Gardens, which also has transit orientation to the Green Line station within a half mile as well as Central Avenue. Nickerson Gardens also has the largest amount of playing fields, and this space might be considered for expansion because recreational areas are always needed in a community, especially one as underserved as Watts. Both of these developments would be sequenced in the seven- to 15-year time frame. Because of their location, Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts, and Nickerson Gardens are gateways into Watts and thus should be given special attention in the effort to improve the overall image of the community.

Implementation

In addition to suggesting a possible development plan in five phases, the panel has devised a concurrent set of phased implementation strategies to facilitate the full 15-year process. The redevelopment of Jordan Downs currently enjoys tremendous political support from Mayor Villaraigosa, Councilwoman Hahn, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, and U.S. Representative Waters. The implementation tactics seek to harness this auspicious political alignment by achieving early, strategic, and realistic successes that advance the project so that any future changes to the political dynamics will not hamper the momentum. The implementation phases consist of the first three years, years four through seven, and years eight through 15. Before beginning to ponder implementation, however, the panel believes that a clear leadership charge is imperative to the success of the redevelopment process.

Watts' Leadership Charge

The panel recognizes that the people who live in Watts comprise the community's greatest asset. However, for Jordan Downs specifically, the panel believes that the dynamic support of the previously mentioned political leadership constitutes the development's greatest community asset. These public servants are spearheading an effort to transform Jordan Downs into a vibrant urban village. To achieve this goal and to keep the process moving forward, the panel believes HACLA must immediately embrace and encourage the following leadership charge:

- Designate a single point person with absolute authority for the Jordan Downs redevelopment process;
- Centralize leadership and management responsibilities under a single agency;

- Engage a for-profit development partner, not a consultant, but a single entity vested with redevelopment authority; and
- Participate annually in the Declaration of Wealth statement (discussed below) for Jordan Downs.

Implementation Plan, Years 1–3

The first three years constitute the most critical component of the implementation timeline. These recommendations should be pursued immediately so the project does not stumble.

Organizational Capacity

Mayor Villaraigosa has a commendable vision for housing, specifically, his commitment to seeing Jordan Downs become a 21st-century sustainable community. Tasked with the challenge, HACLA, under the leadership of Rudy Montiel, has done an outstanding job of visioning and preparing for this catalytic development thus far. All of the players have rallied together and are ready to move forward. This cooperation is to be celebrated! However, through interviews, the panel learned that an opportunity exists to better coordinate various government agencies and departments and to improve organizational capacity. Not everyone involved is always clear about who has specific responsibility and who functions as the point person for this redevelopment.

The panel recommends that all parties involved—from the politicians to HACLA to the residents—must consider a more effective and efficient manner in which to facilitate the management and execution of the development. Furthermore, the redevelopment needs a single authority with centralized leadership and management responsibilities. The panel calls for a Jordan Downs czar, preferably someone from HACLA, who is

empowered by the city leadership to make decisions and assume responsibility for the overall development efforts on a regular basis.

HACLA's team for Jordan Downs, comprising Larry Goins, Jennifer Thomas, John King, and Krista Williams-Phipps, has demonstrated competence and commitment to Jordan Downs. Their knowledge, passion, relationships, and accomplishments to date are evident in their work. To strengthen the team further while complementing it, the panel strongly urges HACLA to engage a for-profit development partner. This partner should not be a consultant, but rather a single entity just as vested in the redevelopment as HACLA, the city, and the community. This partnership needs to happen *now* because the development partner should have input to the planning process as soon as possible. This partner should possess a record of accomplishment and the capacity to execute as well as the ability to source financing. The development partner will work in tandem with HACLA and provide the development expertise needed to manage the project through predevelopment, financing, development, construction, and buildout.

Cultural Integration

The demographic shift to a Latino majority among Jordan Downs' residents mandates new strategies to engage and empower Latino community members. Currently, Jordan Downs' community involvement and leadership has limited Latino participation. The panel's research confirms a large Latino population in Jordan Downs that appears hesitant in assuming any formal roles within the community. Most are Spanish-speaking, transitory, recent immigrants, as evidenced by ongoing residential turnover within Jordan Downs. Among others, tactics such as the use of bilingual materials and smaller, less-intimidating group sessions should be considered to elicit greater inclusion of the growing Latino population within Jordan Downs.

Branding and Imaging Campaign

The redevelopment will require a branding and imaging campaign focused on creating a new

identity that embraces the community's rich cultural history, affirms its assets, and celebrates a bright future. The campaign will articulate communication and branding considerations for both internal community investment and ownership and external awareness within the greater Los Angeles market. The goal of the campaign will be to fundamentally reposition Jordan Downs, and in so doing, Watts as well, to achieve a positive perception internally and externally.

Immediate branding efforts should include renaming Jordan Downs. The panel recommends a community-led renaming competition. This process can include community-generated ideas as well as those from private marketing firms, but the community should make the decision. Graphic designs for the new logo can involve local community artists as well.

In addition to creating a new name and brand, the community should immediately improve public relations. Good things happen in Jordan Downs and Watts, yet the public usually receives only negative news. The community needs to take an active role and flood the immediate neighborhood, broader Los Angeles, and the world with positive news.

Other key initiatives such as the Declaration of Wealth, Youth and Art Plan, and Keep Watts Beautiful will require the community's leadership and participation and complement the branding and imaging efforts.

Declaration of Wealth

The city and county of Los Angeles and the residents of Watts intertwine in a great partnership of undeclared unified wealth. Although the media and others might portray Jordan Downs and Watts as a community replete with gangs, crime, poor housing, inadequate schools, high unemployment, and racial strife, enormous undeclared wealth abounds, awaiting recognition. On an annual basis, the mayor, along with other political leaders and residents, should convene a public press conference in Watts to issue a Declaration of Wealth statement listing all community assets and achievements. The community-wide celebration should feature

a publication noting all partners and a list of achievements. The Declaration of Wealth statement should include, but not be limited to, recognition of education, leadership, youth development, beautification, senior citizens, building development, partnerships and alliances, arts, recreation, and new business.

Monumental Gateways

As part of the rebranding, the community should establish several monumental gateways to signal arrival in Watts. These entrances will reflect the new image and invite residents, visitors, and potential residents to join the vitality of Watts. A competitive process involving the Youth and Art Plan will culminate in the design of the gateways.

Youth and Art Plan

The Youth and Art Plan will facilitate engagement of the youth of the community in creating the visual identity of Watts. They will have an opportunity to create public art for use at strategic locations throughout the community.

Economic Development

The proposed expansion of high-quality housing opportunities identified in this report confirms the concurrent need for greater coordination of an active, comprehensive group of strategies to retain and attract new business operators within the greater Watts area. Successful and consistent business development efforts represent an essential factor in the short- and long-term prospects for success of the Jordan Downs redevelopment plan. Focused outreach efforts to major economic generators in the South L.A. area to expand employment opportunities in Watts, in particular, will mandate a need for high-quality rental and homeownership opportunities.

Job creation is the key economic driver that affects this project in a multitude of ways. Jobs will bring exponential benefits to all aspects of the evolving Watts community. Active implementation of consistent efforts to cultivate and expand existing job opportunities as well as new business enterprises are an investment in en-

hanced financial security and quality of life for all current and future Watts-area residents.

Strategic efforts should include several key targets of opportunity:

- **Cultivation of new job creation opportunities through active engagement of economic development staff of both the city and county of Los Angeles** with selected regional employers and stakeholders for greater coordination of marketing and outreach initiatives. Included in this effort should be a recommendation that existing civil service employment threshold requirements be analyzed to determine whether policy changes are warranted to facilitate increased placement of Watts-area residents in positions for which they qualify, but from which they are precluded because of stale or irrelevant employment requirements.
- **Reopening of the now-closed King/Drew Hospital complex** to restore vital medical services for the Watts community. New operations should be structured to include a comprehensive medical training curriculum, with potential direct connection to a satellite training operation to be established at the Jordan Downs High School campus or within an expanded Jordan Downs Community Center as a major new employment initiative for the area.
- **Coordination with local financial institution partners and community-based Community Development Financial Institution business lenders** for increased engagement of local industrial business entities to supply technical assistance and possibly lending resources to assist with potential expansion opportunities for those entities. Increased access to new, responsive business loan financing will be essential in lieu of the significant limitations currently experienced in the prevailing financial industry markets. Core potential resources for those efforts include Small Business Administration (SBA) portfolio programs, micro lender programs, New Market Tax Credit loans, and corporately funded, mission-related investments.

- **Direct discussions with major corporate operators conducting businesses in the Port of Los Angeles and at Los Angeles International Airport to identify existing and planned employment needs** for dissemination through local Watts public and direct information networks. These discussions will also help shape job training initiatives for implementation by Watts-area educational and vocational training sites and community colleges serving the area.

Neighborhood Stabilization Plan

Implementation of the expanded development model proposed in this report includes the initial strategy of acquiring single-family detached home sites in the neighborhoods surrounding Jordan Downs. They will serve for temporary placement of Jordan Downs residents during construction activities on the site and ultimately as future homeownership opportunities with priority focus on current and future Jordan Downs residents. With a total proposed acquisition of approximately 200 homes within the expanded project site for the inclusive Watts area, home sites earmarked for strategic acquisition should be prioritized in two categories:

- Real estate owned (REO) home sites owned by lending institutions that qualify for use of newly enacted federal government stimulus funds, as organized under the NSP and the Troubled Asset Recovery Program (TARP). Use of these identified monies requires coordination of housing counseling services with a housing agency certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- Home sites, primarily vacant and in need of partial or substantial rehabilitation before ultimate sale as a homeownership opportunity.

Developing relationships with HUD-certified housing agencies will foster enhanced services directed toward Jordan Downs residents. In addition, funding for these proposed acquisitions under the NSP and TARP initiatives represents funding beyond that available under the proposed future use of HOPE VI Program monies for the project and will serve to enhance exist-

ing housing stock in ultimate support of that future HOPE VI application.

Relocation Plan

The Housing Authority of Los Angeles must develop a Jordan Downs Relocation Plan consistent with HUD Handbook 1378 on real estate acquisition and relocation policy and guidance, the primary source of policy and procedures when implementing HUD-funded programs.

Infrastructure Improvements

Infrastructure improvements will include addressing the right-of-way and extending Century Boulevard to Alameda, as well as new streetscape, landscape, lighting, and signage at strategic locations throughout the Watts neighborhood. The extension of Century will produce a linear, parklike streetscape and one of several monumental entrances to the community.

Land Remediation

Concurrent with the infrastructure improvements to Century Boulevard, the remediation process should get underway.

Federal Funding

The housing authority should submit an application for HOPE VI Program funds. However, the HOPE VI application should not preclude other potential federal funding options such as the TARP and stimulus package. Although the stimulus package details are unclear, the housing authority should begin extensive research of the package to take advantage of potential funding allocation, such as for transportation and infrastructure.

Housing for Seniors

The panel believes that the first phase of residential development should comprise housing for seniors because it will provoke little or no resistance. The housing for seniors will consist of 60 to 120 units, possibly divided into two phases.

Keep Watts Beautiful Community Maintenance Initiative

The Keep Watts Beautiful Community Maintenance Initiative, a collaborative effort among

HACLA, the city of Los Angeles, and others, aims to employ community youth to keep Watts clean and free of litter. It has a recycling program component along with a seven-day workweek effort that pays minimum wages to area youth, ages 14 through 17.

Implementation Plan, Years 4–7

Successful progression of several components of the project implementation phasing during the fourth to seventh year will rely heavily on actual recovery of the vibrancy of prevailing financial markets and consumer confidence. The identified project components included are discussed in the following subsections.

Commercial/Retail Development

Construction of approximately 100,000 to 115,000 square feet of commercial/retail space on ten to 12 acres is currently projected along the Alameda Corridor. Project ownership is envisioned as a private/public partnership, in large part because of the special expertise and experience requirements inherent in generating successful retail development. Leasing rates should include a small business “incubator” surcharge, to work hand in hand with previously referenced small business technical assistance and SBA financing programs.

This development assumes that environmental remediation and infrastructure construction of the Century Boulevard/Tweedy Boulevard connection and acquisition negotiations have been completed for the contiguous parcel along Alameda owned by Los Angeles Unified School District. This work is essential for rerouting existing public transportation services, which is necessary to increase traffic flow and create critical mass so that optimum opportunities exist for a successful retail project.

Community Center Expansion

Completion of substantial rehabilitation, utility upgrades, and expansion of the existing Jordan Downs Community Center is envisioned during this period. This project would follow completion of the nearby proposed 100- to 120-unit housing complex for seniors. Expansion of the commu-

nity center would potentially include a medical services satellite office, working in conjunction with the King/Drew Hospital facility, whose re-opening is also proposed, for increased access and service to those nearby senior residents.

HOPE VI

Construction of the initial phase of new Jordan Downs public housing replacement units is anticipated to begin during this period, subject to a formal HOPE VI Program funding award. Construction should focus on project buildings situated along the southern perimeter of the project site. Proposed unit designs should include higher-density units, incorporating building designs with ease of access to supportive services for Jordan Downs residents.

Second Phase of Rental Housing

Completion of the next segment of rental housing under Phase 2 of the total project will incorporate unit and massing designs consistent with the previously completed public housing units and include live/work design opportunities to facilitate neighborhood-based services for nearby residents.

For-Sale Market-Rate Housing

Feasible development of high-quality, market-rate, for-sale housing at this time faces the challenge of prevailing market and financing conditions, which currently show little sign of abatement or short-term prospects for this product. Recovery of national and local financing markets, coupled with proposed enhancements to the existing housing stock and retail/commercial services access for the immediate Watts area, will determine the pace and acceleration of viability for timely marketing efforts for any for-sale housing component within the Jordan Downs project and the immediate Watts market.

Implementation Plan, Years 8–15

Planning for years eight through 15 poses a tremendous challenge, given the difficulties in the market. Nevertheless, plans should be crafted pending results in the first two implementation periods.

Special Implementation Focus: Financing

In the second half of 2008, the finance world began a period of major upheaval. The credit crunch and financial meltdown of the global market have affected the timing of all current and future real estate development transactions. This reality means obtaining financing today is extremely different. A two-year factor should be added to a project's timetable for securing financing.

Despite this reality, because of the project's political leadership, this financing obstacle can be mitigated through various nontraditional sources. The following outline indicates the various financing options for consideration.

- I. Identify and engage the finance/development officer
- II. Review all Jordan Downs financing assumptions
 - A. Staffing needs and capacity
 - B. Existing development commitments
 1. Environmental
 2. Legal
 3. Financial
- III. Identify predevelopment financing
 - A. Site control
 - B. Communications/branding
 - C. Entitlements
 - D. Consultants
- IV. Identify core funding strategy and sources
 - A. Private financing
 1. Banks
 2. Insurance companies
 3. Pensions
 4. Foundations
 5. Private equity
 6. High-net-worth individuals
 - B. Public financing
 1. Federal sources
 - a. HOPE VI
 - b. New Market Tax Credits
 - c. LIHTC
 - d. HOME Investment Partnership Program
 - e. Stimulus package
 - f. TARP
 - g. Community Development Block Grants
 - h. Rental assistance program
 - i. Mortgage insurance financing
 - j. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac
 - k. Federal Home Loan Bank
 2. State sources
 - a. California Housing Finance Agency
 - b. Business, transportation, and housing agencies
 3. Local sources
 - a. City direct
 - b. Bond financing
 - c. Tax abatement

Conclusion

The journalist H. L. Mencken once said, “For every complex and difficult problem, there is an answer that is simple, easy, and *wrong*.” In that spirit, the panel approached its assignment with respect for the enormity of this project. The simple answer to the redevelopment of Jordan Downs is to tear down the old housing and put up new housing. This task is complicated by myriad urban and social issues, such as safety, access to employment, urban design, ethnic and racial concerns, and the site’s reputation.

In a careful and diligent manner, the city and HACLA have begun to approach this redevelopment opportunity correctly. They have set an overarching goal of achieving a *vibrant urban village* as a replacement for the Jordan Downs housing project. They have promulgated both urban design and community engagement initiatives to ensure high-quality design, to encourage public participation, and to build community support for the process. The ULI panel feels that the city and HACLA can go further, and a key to success is recognizing that this redevelopment effort begins with an urban regeneration process that is not just the Jordan Downs site but also the adjacent neighborhoods and eventually the entire Watts area.

The panel has suggested that leadership of the redevelopment effort be concentrated in one office and individual; that the project focus on sustainability from a social, economic, and environmental perspective; and that, given the extent of the task and the current economic situation, HACLA and the city accept a more realistic timeline. Moreover, the panel suggests creating Century Boulevard as a new Main Street that can act as a gateway both into and out of Watts. Neighborhood housing adjacent to Jordan Downs and community investment in general for Watts should also be given attention. Finally, the city’s ultimate goal should be to see redevelopment of the other three housing projects in Watts as catalysts of economic opportunity for Watts and the city of Los Angeles.

Appendix:

HACLA's Seven Questions

Question 1: Can RFQ #7495 and RFP #7496 be fined-tuned to better address the needs of the existing residents and still meet the mission and goals as set forth in the RFQ #7495 and RFP #7496?

- ULI strongly encourages HACLA to review as a baseline the HUD guidelines regarding citizen/resident participation.
- Establish a Joint Memorandum of Understanding with Jordan Downs residents that outlines responsibilities of HACLA and tenants regarding the RFQ.
- Establish or expand the Jordan Downs Citizen Advisory Committee with greater Latino representation.
- Broaden community outreach efforts to include representation from all area schools and churches.
- Hire a third party to conduct focus groups to ensure true Latino input.
- Participate in the mayor's annual Watts Declaration of Wealth statement.
- Increase tenant employment opportunities at HACLA.
- Develop a HACLA employee volunteer leader/mentorship program for 25 outstanding youths living in Jordan Downs.
- Have HACLA's CEO convene quarterly Jordan Downs Town Meetings to keep the residents informed of HACLA's efforts.

Question 2: How can RFQ #7495 and RFP #7496 be fined-tuned to address the overlap between the annexation process and the master-planning/specific-plan process?

- Partner with the county to refocus the process on a partnership, especially with regard to the Tweedy, Alameda, and Century street connections.
- Phase on-site units with a robust properties acquisition program for off-site REO.
- Deemphasize the annexation process; do not let it lead the redevelopment process.
- Team up with a single entity, private sector development partner.

Question 3: What are the financial assumptions that can be made in terms of potential funding available for the redevelopment of Jordan Downs?

- When the RFP/RFQ package was developed, no one could have anticipated the extraordinary changes that have occurred in the capital markets.
- Prepare for a delay in the availability of capital.
- Look for funding opportunities for various components of the overall program, such as Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds, remediation, and infrastructure. Also focus on HOPE VI because Jordan Downs is a likely candidate.

Question 4: What market indicators support the redevelopment of Jordan Downs and the potential to revitalize the Watts community?

- Growth in population and households will continue.
- Vacancy rates are still low, placing pressure on supply.
- Affordable housing will attract residents.
- Crime rates are down for Watts, and Jordan Downs in particular.
- Purchasing power is greater than documented income levels.
- Lack of high-quality retail in the Watts environs indicates a need for new retail establishments.

Question 5: How can HACLA engage other stakeholders who may not be directly involved in the master-planning/annexation process to see the vision, become informed, and support the redevelopment of Jordan Downs?

- HACLA and the city of Los Angeles have generated a praiseworthy level of stakeholder involvement.
- HACLA must continue to communicate, coordinate, and commit.
- Involve Watts' churches.
- Involve Watts' cultural community.
- Embrace new entrepreneurial opportunities, and solicit ideas from ongoing collaborators and new, credible stakeholders.

Question 6: Given that HACLA is doing a one-for-one replacement of public housing, what suggestions can the panel offer in terms of phasing the project so that residents experience a smooth transition?

- HACLA should develop a relocation strategy that includes the aggressive acquisition of units in the community through the NSP program.
- The replacement units should be both on site and off site. Off-site units will be in the Watts community. Make the off-site option attractive, for example, single-family dwelling units.
- Give residents the option to choose whether they want to remain on site or off site.
- Replacement housing options include housing for seniors, off-site single-family units within the Watts community, on-site rental housing, and both on-site and off-site for-sale housing.

Question 7: What is the value added by the Jordan Downs redevelopment to the overall development of affordable housing in Los Angeles in relation to the mayor's Five Year Housing Plan?

- It can immediately expand housing stock by committing funds to acquire the REO stock.
- Housing creation is the driver for new jobs and educational opportunities.
- Jordan Downs can be the model/blueprint to engage all stakeholders in the revitalization of Watts.

About the Panel

John McIlwain

*Panel Chair
Washington, D.C.*

As the Senior Resident Fellow for Housing, McIlwain's responsibilities include leading ULI's research efforts to seek and promote affordable housing solutions in the United States and other nations, including development and housing patterns designed to create sustainable future environments for urban areas.

Before joining the ULI staff, McIlwain founded and served as senior managing director of the American Communities Fund in Washington, D.C., a venture fund founded by Fannie Mae and dedicated to investing in hard-to-finance affordable housing. He was responsible for structuring, underwriting, and closing equity investments in more than \$700 million of residential and neighborhood retail developments in lower-income communities around the country. He also structured, negotiated, and closed more than \$100 million in historic tax credit and inner-city equity investments funds with Lend Lease, AEW Capital Management, and the Community Development Trust. Before taking that position, he was president and chief executive officer of the Fannie Mae Foundation.

Prior to joining Fannie Mae, McIlwain was the managing partner of the Washington law offices of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer and Murphy, where he represented a broad range of clients in the single-family and multifamily housing areas. McIlwain also served as executive assistant to the assistant secretary for housing/federal housing commissioner at HUD. He began his career in housing as assistant director for finance and administration, and deputy director of the Maine State Housing Authority.

McIlwain received a law degree from New York University and a BA, cum laude, from Princeton University.

Richie Butler

Dallas, Texas

Butler is partner and senior vice president of National Development at CityView. CityView is a national discretionary housing investor with \$2 billion of real estate capacity, focused on financing urban residential developments throughout the United States. Butler leads the company's business development strategy across all fund platforms and throughout the nation.

His extensive real estate development and finance experience includes urban, single-family, multifamily, office, and mixed-use developments. Before joining the CityView team, Butler served as the managing partner of Solomon Partners, a boutique urban real estate development and consulting company that advised and developed over \$100 million of real estate projects. His most noted development was Unity Estates, a planned community sponsored by the African American Pastor's Coalition in Dallas, which supplied 285 single-family homes in the southern Dallas region. This development was the catalyst that spurred new housing development in the southern sector of Dallas.

Butler's other professional experience includes serving as a bank officer with Bank of America as well as serving as deputy political director for U.S. Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts. Butler regularly lectures on U.S. community economic development, real estate, and housing matters at national conferences and has made several presentations internationally in Africa.

Butler holds degrees from Southern Methodist University and Harvard University and has

engaged in extended studies at MIT in Urban Planning. He was a Ford Foundation Fellow.

Vicki Davis

Bethesda, Maryland

Davis is responsible for the acquisition, planning, design, implementation, and asset management of all Urban Atlantic real estate development projects. Before cofounding Urban Atlantic, she served as deputy director of the Maryland Housing Fund and Division of Credit Assurance for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Her professional experience also includes portfolio management for MNC Financial–South Charles Realty and multifamily development for Trammell Crow Residential.

Davis holds an MBA in finance from American University, an MS in engineering and construction management from the University of Texas, and a BS in civil engineering from the University of Maryland. She is the chair of the Green Building Committee of the Maryland–National Capital Building Association and a former instructor with the Johns Hopkins University Master of Real Estate Science program.

Richard J. Dishnica

Point Richmond, California

Dishnica is president of The Dishnica Company, LLC, formed in 1999 to pursue his individual investment goals; to develop infill housing, both for sale and for rent in the Bay Area; and to provide real estate consulting services. Current major development projects include obtaining entitlements for the final phase of a residential project next to the Lafayette BART station and the adaptive use and conversion of the San Francisco Armory, a building on the National Register of Historic Places located in the Mission District of San Francisco.

As executive vice president and chief operating officer of American Apartment Communities, a privately held REIT, from 1994 through March 31, 1999, Dishnica had responsibility for all

apartment operations, development, and rehabilitation. Until its merger with United Dominion Realty Trust in December 1998, American Apartment Communities owned and managed directly or through subsidiaries 54 apartment communities containing a total of 14,141 units in nine states with a \$787 million total asset value as of the date of the merger.

Since 1982, he was executive vice president of the Klingbeil Company, predecessor to American Apartment Communities, with operating responsibilities for the western United States. During this period, Dishnica was directly responsible for the development of 304 apartment units in San Francisco on the site of the former Winterland Auditorium and involved in developing three other apartment projects in the San Francisco Bay Area. He was responsible for obtaining lower floater tax-exempt bond financing for all of these projects, a new financing technique for financing apartments in the 1980s. All of these were infill projects. From 1989 to 1993, he also served as the chief financial officer and chief operating officer of K/W Realty Group, a Klingbeil-affiliated company in the for-sale housing business. His role in the company included overseeing the joint venture development of 42 subdivisions with more than 4,000 units of for-sale housing, most of which were located in three major metropolitan markets.

Earlier in his career, Dishnica was a principal of Comstock Ventures Limited, a real estate venture capital company; vice president of Fox and Carskadon Financial Corporation, where he was responsible for the solicitation, analysis, negotiation, and management of real estate development joint ventures; and assistant vice president with Union Bank in San Francisco, with responsibility in the areas of commercial lending, real estate construction lending, and loan workouts.

Dishnica served as an officer in the U.S. Navy. He received his MBA from the University of Southern California in 1974 and his BS from Ohio State University in 1968.

E. Peter Elzi, Jr.

Aurora, Colorado

Elzi has been with THK Associates, Inc., since 1981, and during that time he has assisted clients with development and financing decisions concerning all types of land uses, including golf course, residential, office, industrial, hotel/motel, and related opportunities. Elzi has completed more than 100 fiscal impact studies, Special District/TIF financing structures, and related assignments in his career. Over the last 20 years, he has examined projects in more than 50 major metropolitan areas around the nation. Elzi is especially adept at examining market potentials for various types of properties.

Recent projects include the analysis of damages related to a mismanaged golf course community in Tulsa, Oklahoma; revenue sharing between the town of Avon, Colorado, and Vail Associates to assess the viability of a gondola connecting Avon to the Beaver Creek Ski Area; and the financial feasibility and district financing options for the development of the Beaver's Lodge property in Winter Park, Colorado. Elzi also serves actively as part of THK's team assessing the economic effects to businesses and tax revenue generation resulting from proposed improvements to Highway 24 west of Colorado Springs.

Elzi was recently reelected to a four-year term on the board of directors for the East Cherry Creek Valley Water and Sanitation District. His role on the board involves setting district policy, strategizing regarding sources for new supplies of water for the district, and finding financing alternatives for major water projects.

Before joining THK, Elzi was involved in the real estate appraisal and brokerage fields. He is currently a State Certified General Appraiser, a benefit to many clients.

Marty Jones

Boston, Massachusetts

Jones is president of Corcoran Jennison Company, Inc., located in Boston, Massachusetts.

Corcoran Jennison is a full-service real estate organization with assets in excess of \$2.5 billion. The company is active in the development and operation of a wide range of properties including hospitality, housing, and commercial developments. The company's portfolio is primarily located on the east coast.

Since joining the company in 1979, Jones has been responsible for the development of over \$500 million in new properties for the company and for asset management of the company's multifamily housing portfolio. She became president in 1994. Most notably, she directed the redevelopment of the Columbia Point Housing Project, an ambitious revitalization effort undertaken in partnership with the Columbia Point Residents' Association. This effort transformed a blighted public housing project into Harbor Point—1,283 units of privately owned, mixed-income housing on 50 acres of Boston's waterfront.

In 1993, Jones managed the purchase of Corcoran Jennison's southeast affiliate, Westminster Company, from Weyerhaeuser Corporation. She continues to act as chief executive officer of Westminster Company.

A graduate of Brown University, where she received a degree in Urban Studies, Jones currently serves on the Board of Citizen's Housing and Planning Association and the Advisory Board of the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development. She is a trustee of the Urban Land Institute and vice chair of its Affordable Housing Council. She was a founding member of New England Women in Real Estate and in 2005 received its Leadership Award.

Stanley A. Lowe

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The managing partner in charge of Gulf Coast operations for Forth River Development LLC, Lowe directs development and consulting activities in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Gulf Coast communities. He is currently working with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Renaissance Corporation, Northrop-Grumman Ship

Systems, and the city of Pascagoula to develop Northrop Grumman East Bay shipyards into a 1,100-unit mixed-income residential community. Building on the Pascagoula East Bay Plan, this multimillion-dollar initiative will immediately provide housing for Gulf Coast workers. Lowe will also engage in opportunities for private/public partnerships involving Historic and New Markets Tax Credit projects.

Lowe was the first person to lead the National Trust's new Department of Community Revitalization, which brought together three of the Trust's most successful programs: its National Main Street Center, which worked with more than 1,500 communities in 50 states on the economic revitalization of downtown business districts; the Community Partners program, which assisted with the revitalization of historic low- and moderate-income residential districts through pilot projects in 16 communities; and the Preservation Development Initiative.

Lowe was formerly employed by Pittsburgh's mayor Tom Murphy as director, neighborhoods and policy planning, and as executive director of the city's housing authority. During his tenure as executive director, Lowe secured McKinsey Consultants to develop a strategic plan to remove the Pittsburgh Housing Authority from the HUD "troubled" list, obtained national accreditation for Pittsburgh Housing Authority Police Department, and secured \$3 million for a new police station. He secured over \$90 million in HOPE VI funding for public housing development, increased tenant employment from 3 to 15 percent, and secured a HUD "Moving to Work" designation.

Among his many other positions, Lowe served as vice president, Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation, where he managed a \$4 million neighborhood revolving loan fund. It leveraged \$25 million in neighborhood rehabilitation and was responsible for organizing a citywide conference regarding underuse of vacant buildings and land.

He has been a guest lecturer at several universities and a consultant to many preservation and community-based organization throughout

the country; has served on numerous boards of directors; and is the recipient of city, state, and national awards for his contributions to Pittsburgh's revitalization. A 1972 graduate of Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina, Lowe received a BA in history/education; he is a 1992 graduate of the National Development Training Institute of Baltimore, Maryland.

Michael J. Maxwell

Miami Shores, Florida

Nationally recognized for achievements as a developer and workout specialist, Maxwell has spent over 30 years acquiring and developing nearly \$1 billion in real estate assets, primarily in Florida and the Caribbean.

He is managing partner of Maxwell + Partners LLC, Miami, Florida, which offers both development and advisory services. The firm specializes in urban infill development and is noted for its innovative project solutions creating new market opportunities and products. The team has delivered more than 2 million square feet of mixed-use, office, retail, warehouse/distribution, resort hotel, residential, and specialty products. The firm provides consulting in market creation for urban redevelopment. As advisers, the firm's participation in workouts, restructures, asset management, construction completion, and disposition exceeds \$300 million. Expert witness services on asset evaluations, workout strategies and dispute resolution are also offered.

As a developer and adviser, Maxwell is known for visioning niche markets, sensitive place making, green/sustainable strategies, and exceptional architecture that create high-value-added commercial and residential products. A trained architect and urban planner, he is a licensed real estate and mortgage broker; holds the American Institute of Certified Planners designation; has earned awards for preservation, industrial, and redevelopment projects; and earned a BA, University of Texas, and a master of planning, University of Virginia.

He is an adjunct professor of business, Nova Southeastern University MBA Real Estate Program. A full member of ULI, Maxwell also serves on the ULI Florida/Caribbean District Council Executive Committee and ULI Inner City Council and has participated in several ULI Advisory Services panels. He is a member of the Greater Miami Urban League and founder of New Urban Development LLC, a not-for-profit affordable housing company.

Ralph L. Núñez

Southfield, Michigan

Núñez is president of the DesignTeam Limited, a full-service planning and landscape architectural firm with offices in Michigan and Texas. He directs multidisciplinary teams in broad-based problem-solving assignments. Each solution is developed through a highly interactive client-consultant relationship that balances client goals and financial objectives with environmental, regulatory, and market conditions. DesignTeam was specifically established to meet the demand for efficient consultant support.

Núñez founded the firm in 1984 in Houston, Texas. He has successfully designed, planned, and managed multimillion-dollar development projects and has a multidisciplinary background specializing in the fields of land planning, landscape architecture, and land development strategies. His responsibilities have encompassed the master planning of residential communities; park and recreation amenities; and commercial, office, and industrial campuses ranging from ten to several thousand acres. Designs focus on environmental sustainability. Núñez served as chairman for the State Board of Landscape Architects.

Since 1994, Núñez has been an adjunct professor at Southfield's Lawrence Technological University in the College of Architecture and Design. He teaches in the integrated design and visual communications studios. Núñez has served as a guest lecturer and design juror at many other universities and schools.

He received his BS from The Pennsylvania State University in 1976. Núñez has served on a number of Urban Land Institute Advisory Services panels, including *San Antonio, Texas: Southside Balanced Growth Initiative* and *Frisco, Texas: A Blueprint for the Future*.

John Ramirez

Phoenix, Arizona

Ramirez serves as vice president for economic development for Chicanos por la Causa, Inc., (CPLC) a position he has held since July 2008. He oversees CPLC's Small Business Loan Programs, New Market Tax Credit Program, Joint Ventures, and New Business Enterprises. Previously, he served as vice president for the Phoenix Housing Division, CPLC, from May 2003 through June 2008. He oversaw the development of single-family residential housing for CPLC's operations within the city of Phoenix and surrounding communities. CPLC's workforce housing programs include pre- and postpurchase housing counseling services and financial literacy training seminars through consistent and diverse first-time homebuyer outreach efforts throughout the Phoenix metropolitan area.

His previous 21-year career involved various aspects of consumer and commercial lending in positions with several financial institutions in Arizona. He worked as an oversight manager with the Resolution Trust Corporation, where he oversaw disposition contracts for large portfolios of real estate assets funded through Lincoln Savings and Southwest Savings.

Ramirez also maintained an independent consulting career, focused on the development of affordable housing. His latest position is the chief development consultant with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Phoenix Office. He assisted in organizing and managing the LISC-sponsored HOMESTART Program, which is a consortium of community development corporation developers, serving targeted neighborhoods for redevelopment efforts. It has resulted in the construction of more than 200 homes in the Phoenix area over a five-year

period. The program was awarded a “Best Practices” designation by HUD.

Currently, Ramirez is serving a three-year term as a member of the Federal Home Loan Bank Advisory Board for the 12th District (San Francisco), which represents affordable housing interests for Arizona, California, and Nevada. He has been named to the Phoenix Chapter of the Urban Land Institute Executive Council in the Urban Community Adviser position for specific focus on workforce housing issues. A native of Miami, Arizona, Ramirez is a 1975 graduate in business administration from Arizona State University and from the National Commercial Lending School in Norman, Oklahoma, in 1983.

