

WILSHIRE CENTER BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
A Sustainable Future



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Executive Summary

After conducting site analysis through available resources and site visits, a comprehensive recommendation has been proposed for the area.

The proposal is to create a spine of parks following the 100 year flood plain. The street intersections along the spine will be highlighted to create a sense of place. Major street improvements are proposed along Vermont Ave, Normandie Ave, Western Ave, 6th Street, 8th Street and Wilshire Boulevard. These would include greening these streets with elements like pervious paving for peripheral lanes, planting California native trees and bulb outs and solar light installations. Road diet system has been proposed for some of the wide residential streets.

The park sites have been chosen such that they overlap with the 100 year flood plain map, are in proximity to the schools in Wilshire Centre and also preserve buildings of historic importance. The design elements for each of these parks will be presented through toolbox. These will be general recommendations but the final design will be developed through public participation process. The design has great impact on watershed restoration while providing much needed park space to the community. The improvements will become a regional draw and will lead to a boost to the area's economy.

Acknowledging the threat posed by gentrification, there is a proposal for 40% low income housing in the new developments. Wilshire Centre will be provided with an opportunity to benefit in terms of the economy, environment and equity. This will further enhance the sustainability of this vibrant part of Los Angeles.

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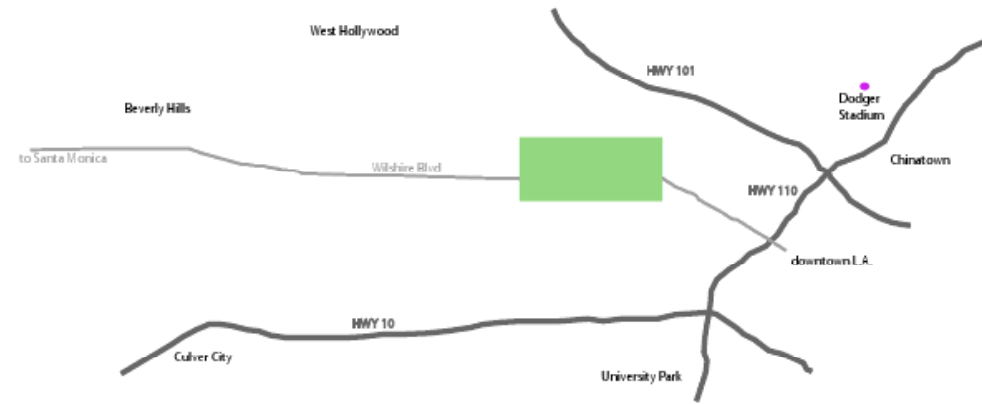
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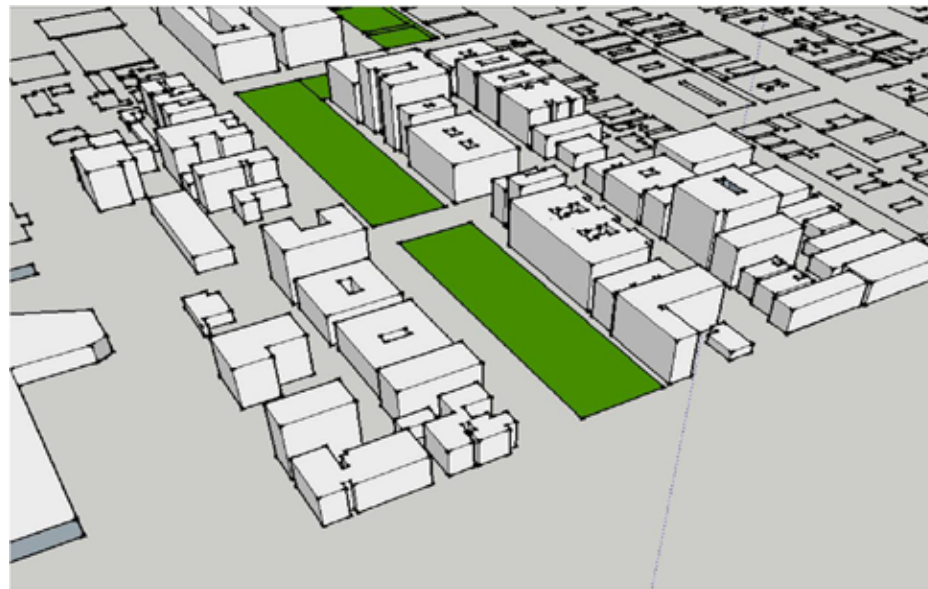
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Regional Location of the BID



Sketch Up of the Proposed Park

Why This Project?

The fact that the project boundary lies within CRA's Redevelopment Project Area and the State Enterprise Zone makes it special. The business improvement district has a key role to play in the redevelopment proposals for the area. The BID has started a Cool District initiative to make the area sustainable. The existence of various plans for the area by different organizations in the city justifies its importance to the city. The center is vital to the city as it is culturally, historically and socially significant to the city.

The proposal is to make Wilshire Center sustainable in terms of environment, economy and equity.

It intends to achieve the following:

Environment

- Address watershed issues
- Incorporate elements consistent with "Cool District Plan"

- Educate community as well as provides them with much needed open space

The large amount of open space will reduce the amount of surface runoff and increase infiltration of water to the water table.

- Incorporate other environmental elements throughout entire district yet all connected to park
- Improve existing infrastructure to be more sustainable

Economy

- Opportunity for residential real estate market along park
- Mixed use development around park
- Harnesses the new green space as an amenity

1. This will translate into the market value of the land
2. The site will be attractive to existing development

- Creates an attractive site that will generate visitors
- Increase in overall property values
- Concerts and activities can increase tourism: regional park/ attraction

Equity

- Creates a free open public space for all to use
 1. Increase the acreage per thousand residents
 2. Provide access to a densely populated urban area
- Gives Wilshire Center a shared identity
- Become a tool in communicating connections to nature via programming and school-based outreach
- Public transit to be connected and linked to park for access to all people

- Improves quality of life and air quality for entire community
- Park can have philanthropic purpose
- Art, culture, history, environment education opportunities for all

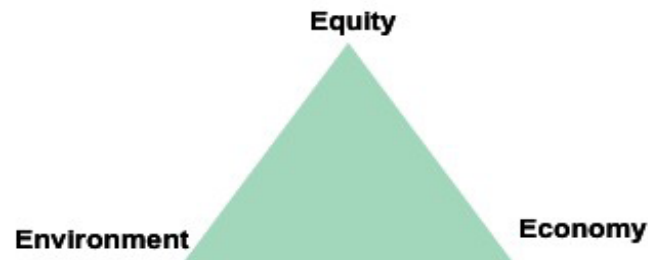
Picking the Design

The idea of the proposal is to reclaim the land that the flood plain occupies and return it to a more natural state with vegetation and open space. A series of parks have been envisioned for the area. The main idea behind selection of sites for park is to put sites on the flood plain and in close proximity to the cultural buildings and school sites.

Construct pathways following natural watershed contours. The purpose of the design is to connect cultural buildings, schools and residential neighborhood through a series of parks. Many of the parks have been proposed on vacant land or under-utilized land.

The 3 E's

Principles: The 3 Es of Sustainability



The Wilshire Center Community Park Plan will operate under the framework of the 3 Es of Sustainability and definition developed by the Brundtland Commission in 1987, which states that:

Sustainability is “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their need”. (Brundtland, 1987)

In accordance with this definition, the Wilshire Community Park plan addresses the issues of sustainability

through a holistic approach that prioritizes society, physical environment, and economic development, collectively. The plan is guided by an understanding that there is a clear and direct correlation between level of urbanization and the quantity/quality of water runoff. Furthermore, it is recognized that community involvement and education are integral elements to creating a sustainable district. These critical elements must be applied with a clear comprehension that short-term fixes are not better than long-term solutions.

Vision

Guided by the principles of Equity, Environment, and Economy, the vision for the Wilshire Center is that it will be a connected community that:

- Reduces its environmental impact in regards to water and air quality,

- Reaps economic benefits from sustainable practices within the understanding of energy and water savings, and
- Better utilizes space for the benefit of the community.

The Wilshire Center should strive for high community engagement, be forward thinking in its development practices, and serve as a progressive model of sustainability for the entire region of Southern California. This vision for the Wilshire Center will require commitment from political, business, and community leaders and will only be successful if members of the local and regional community can fully come to understand the importance of the project.

Mission

The vision for the Wilshire Center BID will be accomplished by exposing the opportunities for sustainable change and seize them by using the leadership

of the BID and other community leaders who are in a position to connect the culture of the area to a holistic model of sustainability. Driving the mission forward are several key findings, which reveal a great need within the Wilshire Center community. Data provided by the City of Los Angeles Commission on Children, Youth and Families and a study conducted by The City Project study reveal that the Wilshire Center as a whole lacks parks and green open space in comparison to other parts of the City.

The Wilshire Center community is comprised of City Council Districts 4, 10, and 13, which comparatively rank as some of the lowest in terms of park acreage/1000 persons.

The charts and graphs on the following pages, showing data from 1996 and 2006, respectively, further reveals that over the period of ten years, few increases have occurred.

This disparity is alarming and closely tied other factors such as air quality and health, which greatly impact quality of life within the Wilshire Center. The need to create park space for the community is of the utmost priority to this mission.

Council District	Park acreage	Children 0-17	% children 0-17	Total population	Park acreage/ 1000 children	Park acreage/ 1000 persons
1	179.78	67,779	29.6	228,686	2.65	0.79
2	346.83	57,880	24.5	236,537	6.00	1.47
3	327.12	50,714	21.8	232,829	6.45	1.40
4	175.30	37,970	16.0	236,973	4.62	0.74
5	268.25	33,512	14.2	236,414	8.00	1.13
6	218.82	38,797	16.8	231,516	5.64	0.95
7	141.66	68,905	29.8	231,545	2.06	0.61
8	91.74	67,056	29.0	230,289	1.37	0.40
9	77.26	78,903	34.3	229,853	0.98	0.34
10	70.48	57,832	25.6	226,142	1.22	0.31
11	411.34	41,927	17.7	236,846	9.81	1.74
12	532.44	53,432	22.6	236,497	9.96	2.25
13	88.81	58,714	25.4	231,588	1.51	0.38
14	192.38	60,568	26.8	225,852	3.18	0.85
15	264.17	72,487	31.1	233,157	3.64	1.13

Inner City District

Source: City of Los Angeles Commission on Children, Youth and Families, 1996

Goals

This plan seeks to carry out its mission by establishing a set of achievable goals. They are as follows:

- Reprioritize the natural ecology
- Create shared open spaces
- Increase green space throughout to a ¼ mile radius of proximity to all residents
- Improve walkability and reduce overall car trips
- Initiate cultural connectivity
- Enhance economic vitality

The 3 Es of sustainability (equity,

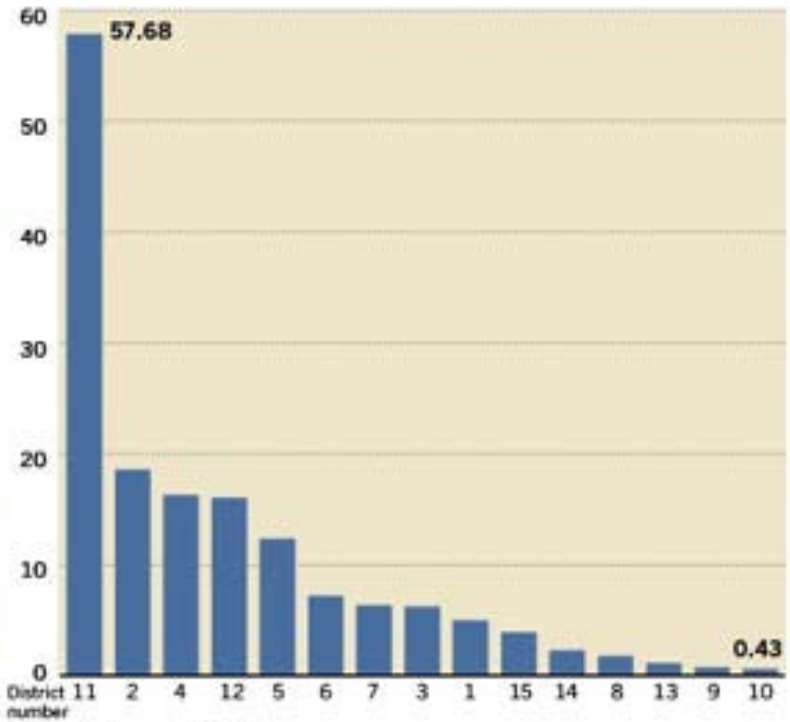
Los Angeles parkland

The amount of park acreage available to L.A. residents varies widely from one part of the city to another. Nationally, some park planners recommend six to ten acres of parks per 1,000 residents.

City Council districts



Acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, by council district



Note: Includes city parks, Angeles National Forest and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

Source: The City Project: "Healthy Parks, Schools and Communities," 2006

BID is part of CD's 4, 10, & 13

Los Angeles Times

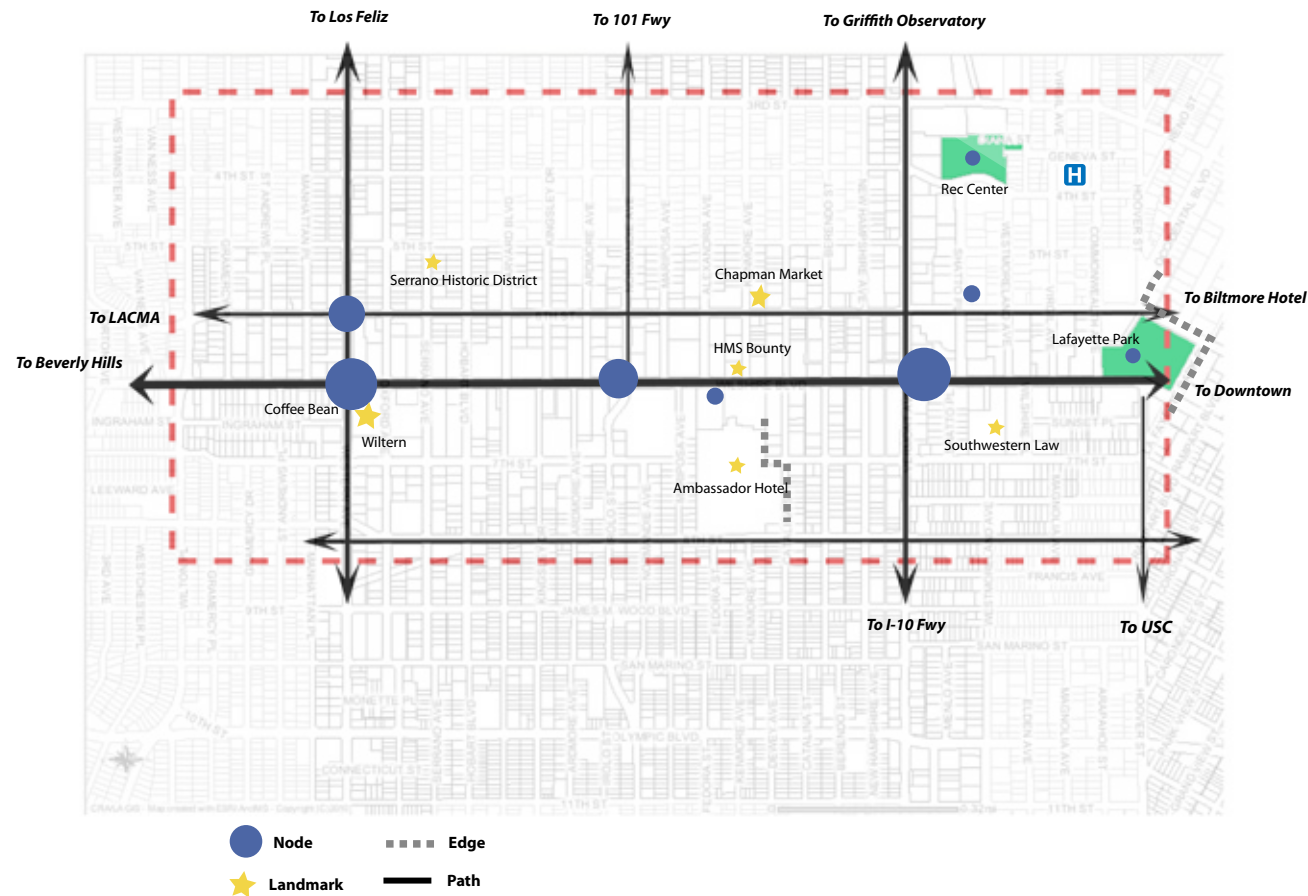
environment, and economy) remain at the forefront of this and can be each achieved through each goal.

Lynch Map

The map to the right highlights the Wilshire BID as a whole. As a concept, Lynch maps are a conceptual diagram of an area's legibility and overall identity.

Main paths, or thoroughfares, were identified as well as nodes of dense activity and some identifying district-wide landmarks. This snapshot of the Wilshire Center identifies Wilshire Boulevard, 6th Street, Western, Normandie, Vermont, and Hoover as main paths in the BID.

Nodes were located mainly around the 3 Metro stops, but a few others were found in the community. Those were along commercial corridors and the 2 public spaces in the BID. The main landmarks identified include the Wiltern Theatre and Southwestern Law School.



Wilshire Center has street network system that allows for great connectivity to the various nodes and landmarks. It is this connectivity that makes the Wilshire Center a regional destination and great place within Los Angeles.

Physical Conditions

Environment: The Watershed
Ballona Creek is a nine-mile long flood protection channel that drains the Los Angeles basin, from the Santa Monica Mountains on the north, the Harbor Freeway (110) on the east, and the Baldwin Hills on the south. The Ballona Creek Watershed totals about 130 square miles. Its land use consists of 64% residential, 8% commercial, 4% industrial, and 17% open space.

The developed nature of the land that flows into the watershed is a concern due to the increase in runoff and the impacts that this has further downstream. The inability to



Historic Ballona Watershed

accommodate the runoff generated by average precipitation disrupts the hydrologic cycle and does not allow for natural filtration through infiltration. This is exacerbated by the function of existing storm water runoff infrastructure, which mainly consists of concrete-channelized tributaries. The result is an increase in non-point source pollution in bulk and in type.

Current conditions have necessitated the use of nets at the discharge point in Santa Monica Bay in order to reduce the amount of solid wastes carried into the ocean.

A solution to this is to increase the amount of open land to increase the rate at which water is able to infiltrate through to the water table. This will result in less storm

water impact, increases in the existent water table, less environmental impact on habitats, allow natural hydrologic function and decrease in pollution carriage potential.

Topography

The landscape is characterized by a slope of a maximum of approximately 260 feet down to about 190 feet moving generally from northeast to southwest.

The specific area that the project will focus on is a depression in the northeast quadrant of the district in between Vermont Avenue and Kenmore Avenue just north of Wilshire and terminating at 4th Street. This depression is approximately 30 feet lower running north/south and provides an excellent geographic opportunity for storm water catchment that will have significant effects on levels of runoff and pollution as well as providing open space.

Open Space

As well as being an issue of concern for environmental reasons, the issue of open space is of great concern to advocates of social justice. As can be seen from the table provided earlier, the distribution of open space finds Wilshire Center with an incredible lack of open space that informs social equality as well as health and quality of life issues. Lafayette Park and the 4th Street Rec Center are the only two formal open spaces in the BID. This adds up to a scant 0.38 acres.

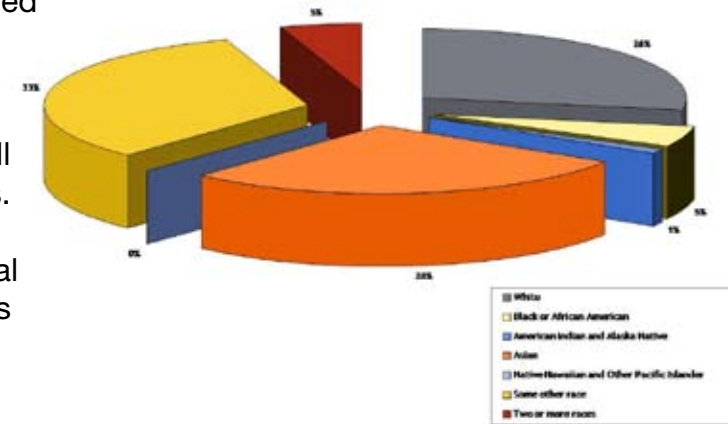
Our project hopes to establish a better sense of balance for those in the community as well as those who will be able to access it due to its location (being both central geographically and accessible by multiple modes of public transit).

Social Conditions

Demography

Compared to Los Angeles, the

Wilshire Center follows the general trends seen in the greater area characterized by great ethnic diversity, but also by a large



percentage of residents living near and below the poverty line.

The following chart illustrates the ethnic breakdown for the Wilshire Center as reported in the 2000 Census.

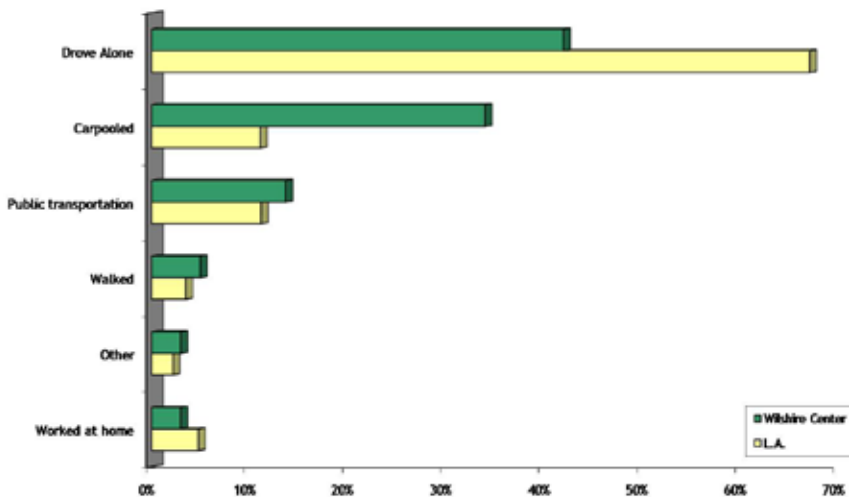
Important to note is that the median income in the Wilshire Center is

around \$20,000 while Greater L.A. has a median income of \$48,000 (Census 2000). This translates to 35% of Wilshire Center residents living below the poverty line. The income level is also underpinned by significant differences in the level of educational attainment and poverty. This is seen in a 10% decrease in the amount of population with Bachelor's Degrees (19%).

Greater importance must be placed on community amenities such as parks and a strong transportation network in order to ease the wage gap and provide equal opportunities for all residents.

With all of those factors, it is positive to note that the Wilshire Center is more sustainable in terms of transportation than the rest of L.A. More people carpool, walk, or use public transportation compared with Los Angeles as a whole.

COMPARED TRANSIT USES



Economy
 The bulk of the corridor located along Wilshire consists of mid-to high-rise office space. As of mid-2009, the vacancy rate stood at 12%, which is average for Los Angeles. Wilshire Boulevard remains

the main economic corridor in the Wilshire Center.

Key Problems and Constraints

There are issues of maintenance in the area. Broken sidewalks lead to drainage issues and also lead to an unpleasant pedestrian experience. A lack of recreational areas in the area is also a problem of equity. The water accumulation along with cracks in pavements has led to vegetation growing in the sidewalk and along the curbs. There is a lack of trees in the area. These lead to problems related to the environment and increased amount of runoff. During rains, parts of the area almost flood.

The surface parking lots lead to an increase in the amount of runoff generated in the area. Even though the project area has a strong network of public transit in the form of buses and metro rail, it still lacks amenities for its users. There is a lack of bus shelters, public telephones, information tables

for bus schedules, etc. This creates issues of equity in the area. There are issues of vendors putting all their merchandize on the sidewalks.

Strengths

Wilshire center is a diverse area by all means. The diversity is vivid in its architecture, culture and even in the building types that exist in the area. This provides the center with several strengths and sites of opportunity. There are areas in the Wilshire Center which are categorized as the 100 year flood plain. These sites have the capacity of becoming one of the potential redevelopment areas.

Historic resources make this area special. New developments in the form of mixed use buildings and updated infrastructure show the progress in the area. The design improvements lead to a boost in the economy and equity.

The residential areas north of Wilshire Boulevard present a well kept neighborhood within this larger area. The clean sidewalks, well maintained lawns and building fronts create a sense of place. These show the physical features act as strength for the three Es of sustainability as they boost all the other. Cultural resources like churches and community center bring benefit to the area.

A strong transportation network connects Wilshire Center to the other parts of the city and region. Almost all of the area is within walking distance to one of the metro stops. Also the fact that the land use in the area is diverse is strength as it allows for a self contained, sustainable community.

A strong commercial core on Wilshire Boulevard is vital to the area's economy.

Strengths: A Visual Analysis



Transit Network



Cultural Resources



Community Resources



Commercial Core & Landmarks



TOD Station



Historic Housing Stock

Problems: A Visual Analysis



Flooding



Trees Cracking Sidewalks



Run-off



Broken & Missing Sidewalk Segments

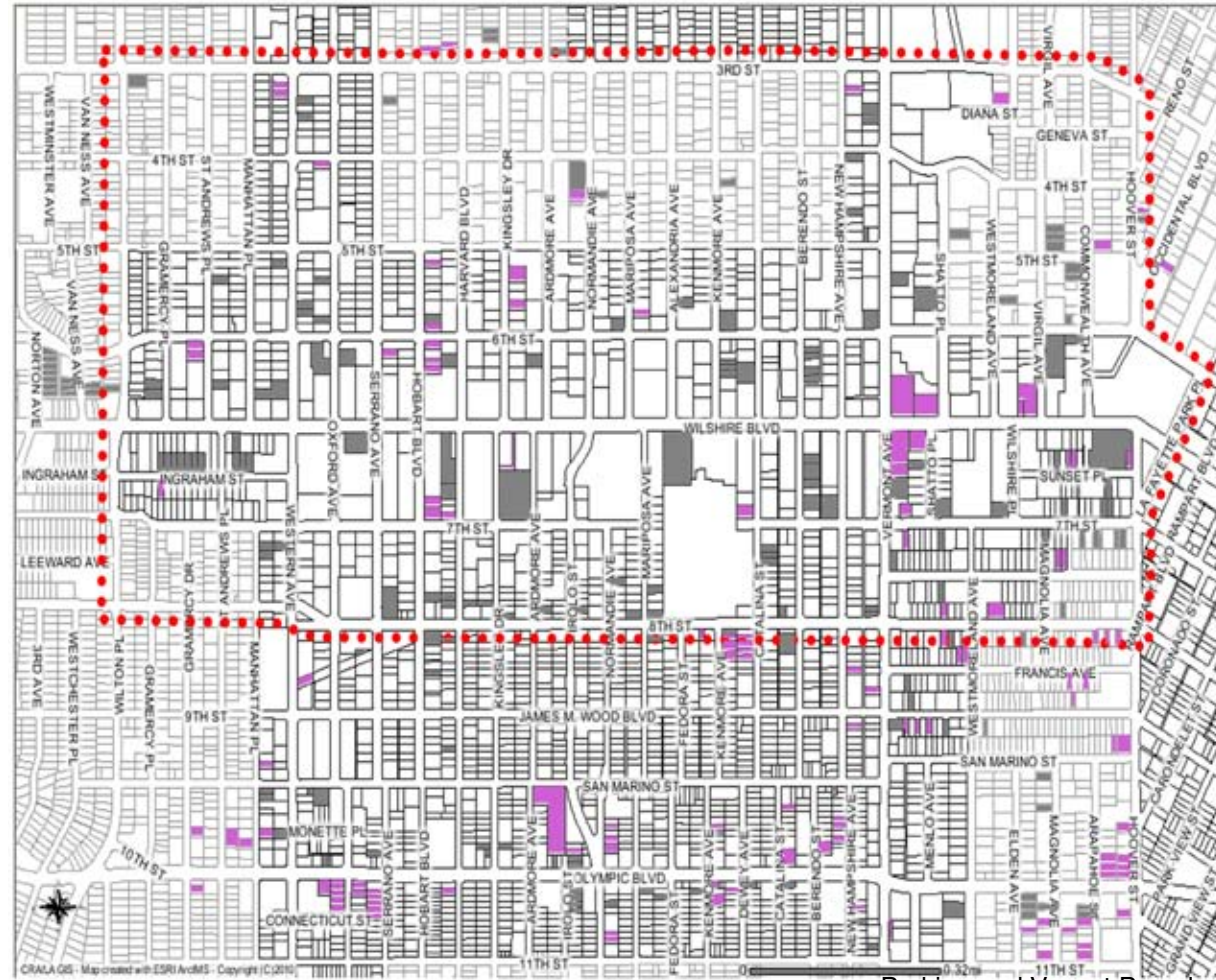


Lack of Street Trees & Amenities

Opportunity Areas and Possible Solutions

The underutilized sites in the form of vacant land and surface parking lots are a huge opportunity site for the area. They are shown in the diagram to the right as grey and purple parcels. The 4th street bike corridor program is an opportunity that can be expanded throughout the area. The wide streets in the residential areas provide space for programs like road diet and greening. A detailed table on all street widths is included in the Appendix.

The current initiatives like Cool District by the Business Improvement District, Redevelopment Project Area of the Community Redevelopment Area of Los Angeles, State Enterprise Zone are all an opportunity to develop the area further.



Parking and Vacant Parcels



Based on the previous analysis of the site's watershed data, demographic profile, and the physical conditions of the Wilshire Center, a set of recommendations have been identified.

These are based on our main principle of holistic sustainability as well as a several key goals which were mentioned in the introduction and reiterated below:

- Reprioritize the natural ecology
- Create shared open spaces
- Increase green space throughout to a ¼ mile radius of proximity to all residents
- Improve walkability and reduce overall car trips
- Initiate cultural connectivity
- Enhance economic vitality

The vision is for Wilshire Center to be a well-connected community that not only reduces its environmental impact, but also reaps economic benefits and better utilized space for the benefit of the entire community.

With that in mind, we propose a 12-acre Wilshire Community Park to be a multi-

use space for the Wilshire Center as well as offering regional opportunities for concerts and events.

In addition, we propose a Street Improvement Overlay project in order to address physical connectivity issues. By adding street amenities, such as bus shelters, trash cans, permeable paving, etc. we hope to increase overall walkability and further the goal of district sustainability.

Park Features:

- 12 acres of public space
- Passive recreation
- Space for active recreation
- Dog park
- Ecological component
- Amphitheater for events
- Safe space to gather

Choosing A Site

When looking into park placement, a few criteria were developed in order to help that process:

- Provides greatest impact on

watershed restoration

- Adds much needed park space to community
- Leaves historic sites intact
- Close proximity to schools and residents
- Adjacent to commercial corridors

Overall Site Plan



- Proposed Park
- Decorated Intersections
- Street Improvements
- Park Spine

Overlapping with Flood Plain



- Flood Plain
- Proposed Park

Location of Existing Parks



- Existing Parks
- Proposed Park
- Conceptual Spine

Nearby Historic Sites



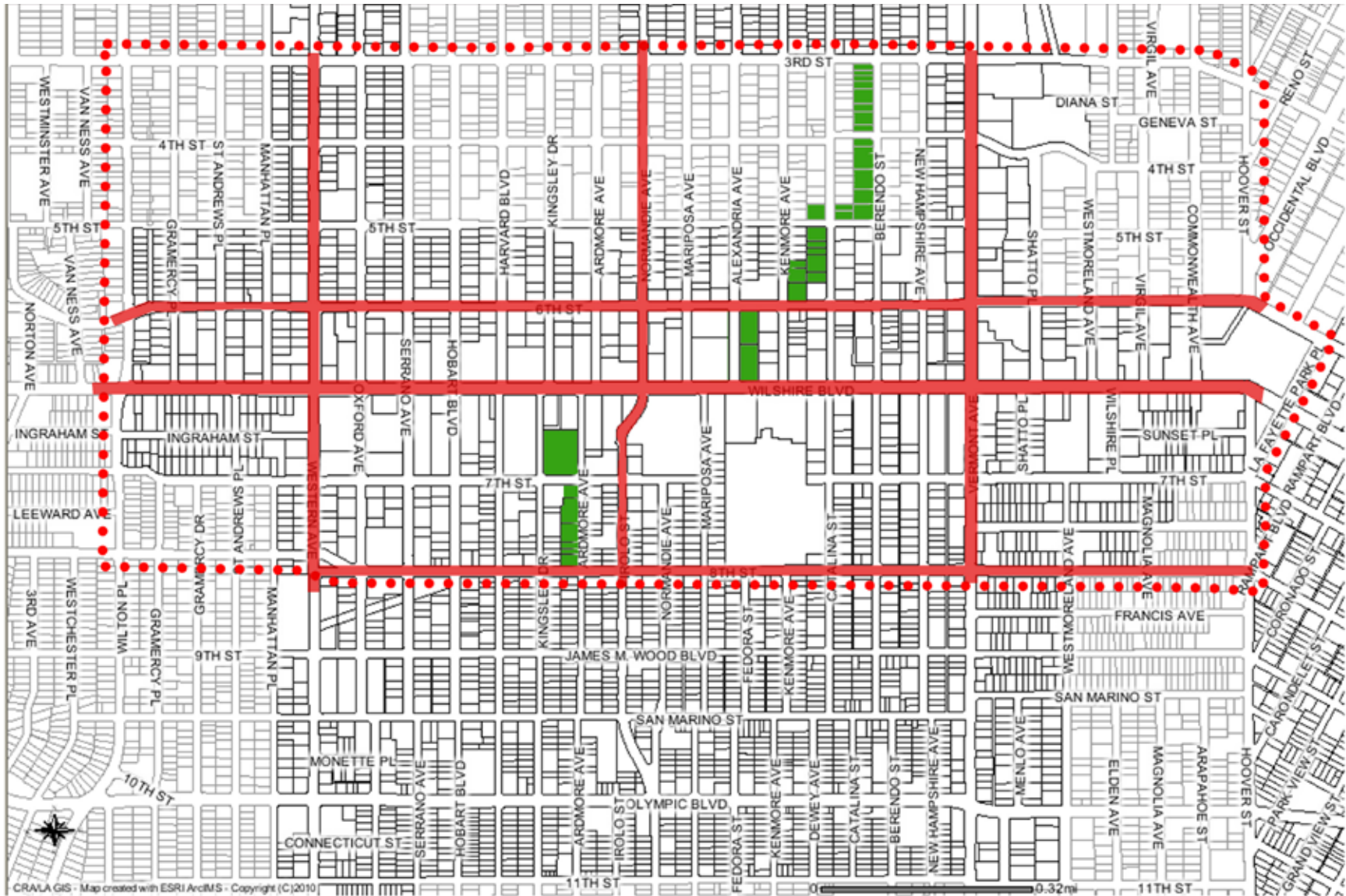
- Nationally Registered
- Proposed Park
- Locally Registered



Proximity to Schools



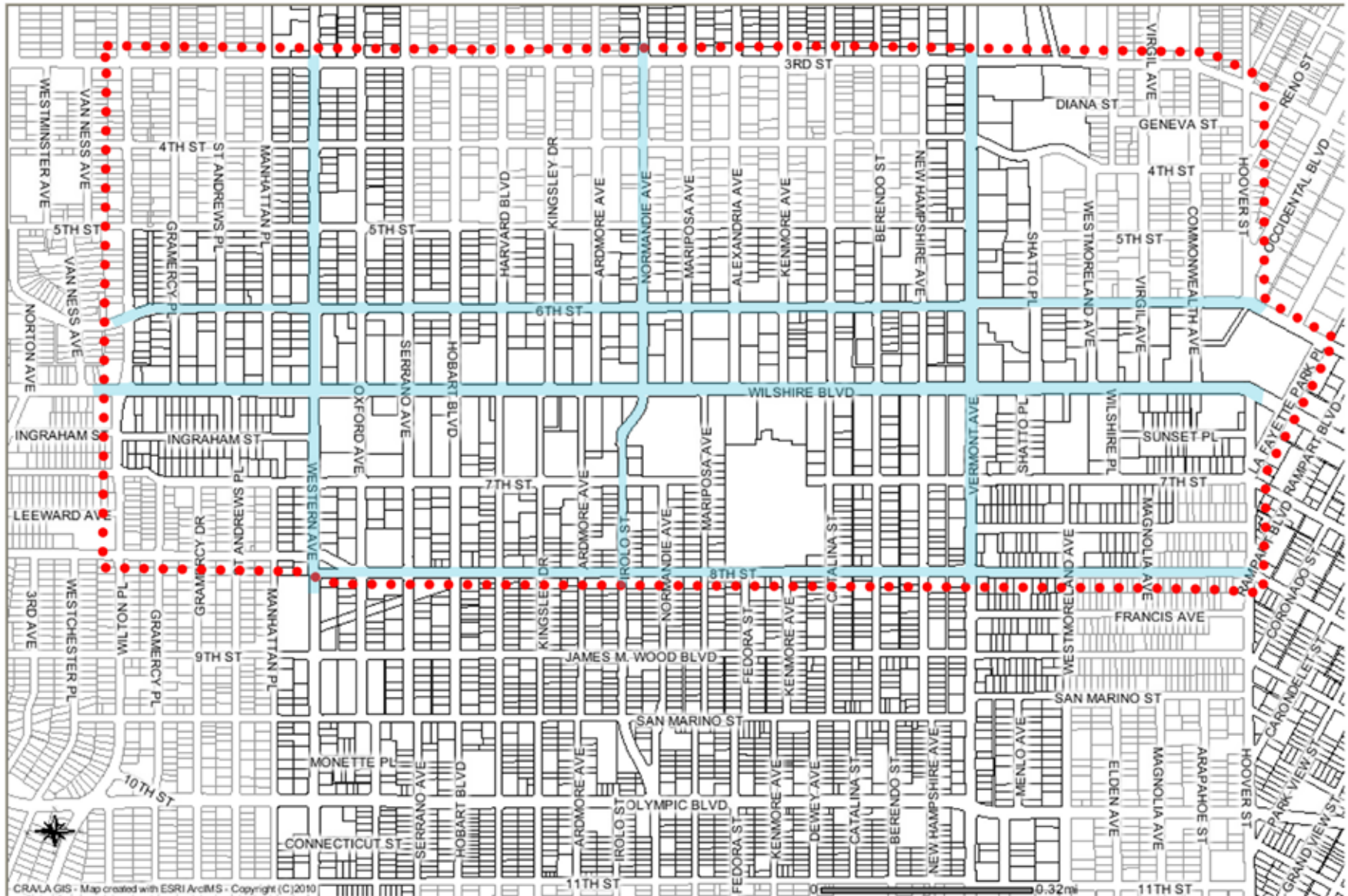
- School
- Proposed Park

Proximity to Commercial Corridors



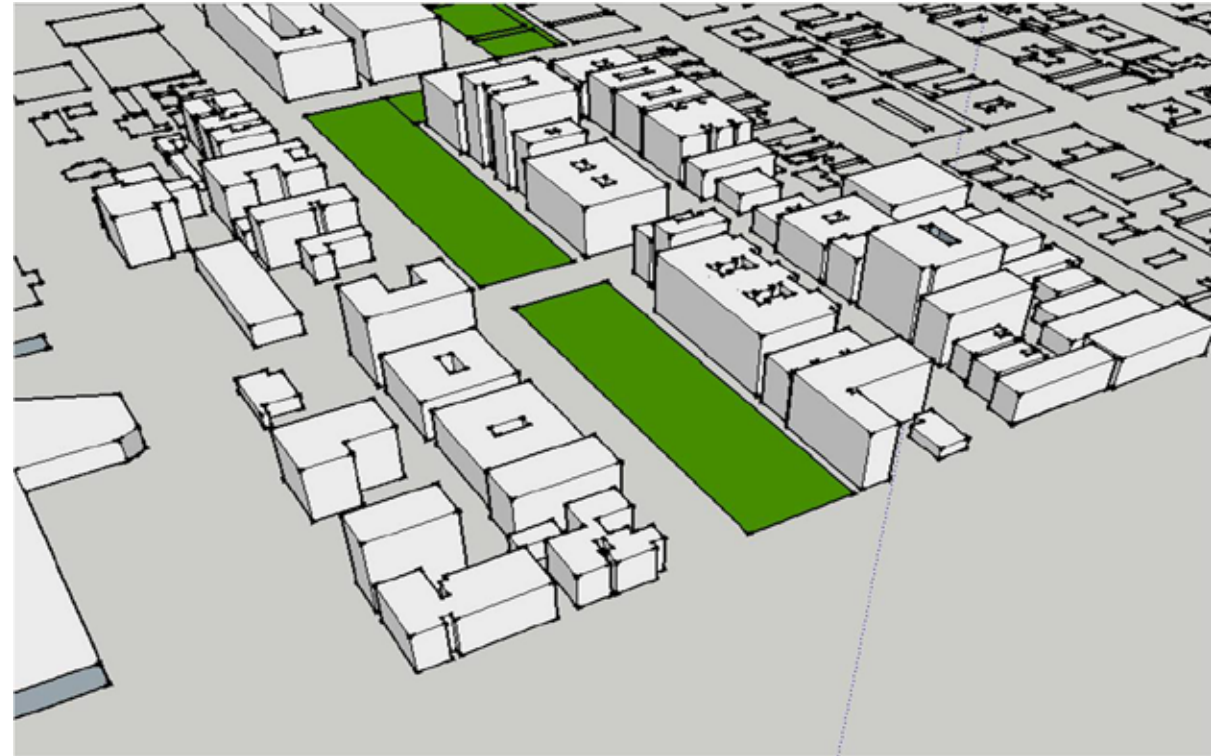
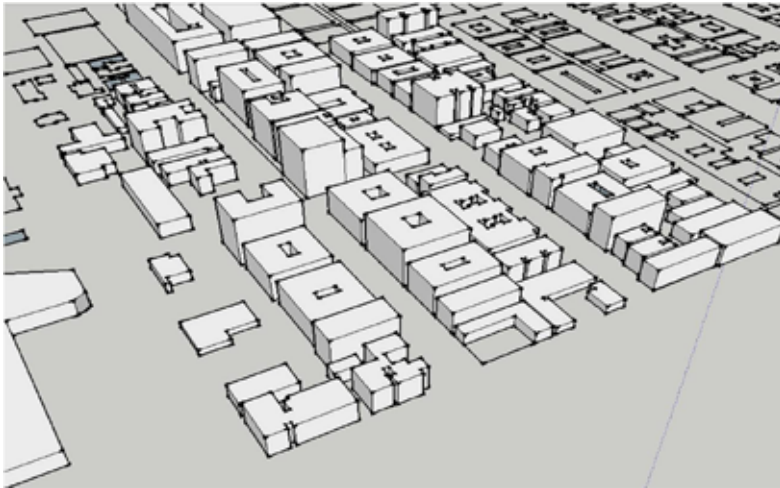
-  Commercial Corridor
-  Proposed Park

Street Improvement Overlay



Corridors for Street Improvements

Before and After



This view, done in SketchUp illustrates how the park will be situated in the northern part of the Wilshire Center as well as shows how increased density could look.

Park Toolbox: Building A Park

Because of the need for community involvement, the recommendations in this proposal do not specify an exact design for the park. Instead, different areas of the park have been designated as sites for various types of activities: gathering nodes, active recreation areas, passive recreation areas, and ecological interpretive areas. In order to provide some vision for the future of the park site, these typologies contain a “toolbox” of potential options that could be used for inspiration or chosen by the community for inclusion into the final park design.

Gathering Nodes

Gathering nodes are located in park areas adjacent to transit stations, and contain a mixture of uses, including open space, residential, retail, and mobile kiosk uses. These areas are each intended to serve as a gateway, to the park, the BID, and the transit stations. High levels of design and aesthetics are to be featured to create an iconic sense of place, and large

sculptures, signature buildings and other intentionally unique features are recommended for inclusion in these designated zones.



Active Recreation Areas

An active recreation area features athletics facilities and playgrounds. These areas are intended to provide athletic field space for local youth and adult sports leagues, and could even be used by area schools. Soccer fields, tennis courts and playground equipment are encouraged for inclusion due to local need for these facilities. Sustainable and eco-friendly design and materials should feature prominently as well.



Kellogg Park, New Orleans



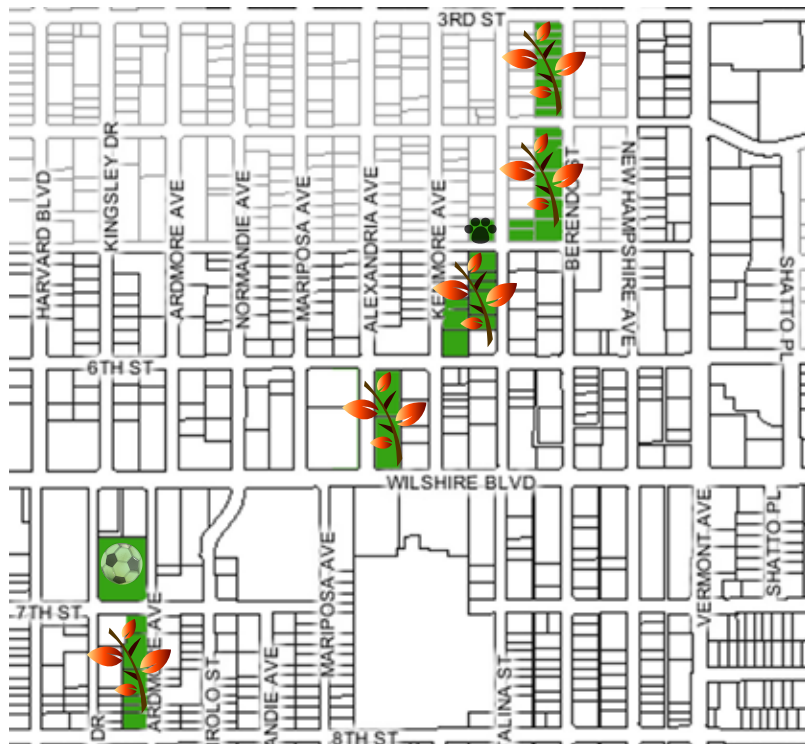
Passive Recreation Areas

Passive recreation areas are the largest zones in the park proposal as they consist of walking paths, gardens, benches, picnic tables and gazebos or pergolas. These features are meant to provide a place of relaxation. These areas are suggested for location near commercial and residential areas so as to provide an urban oasis from the hustle and bustle of the surrounding area.

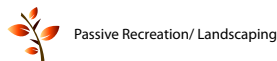
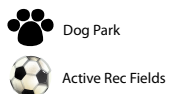


Ecological Interpretive Areas

Ecological interpretive areas are to be located near important ecological features within the Wilshire Center BID, and they are to provide educational resources on various environmentally-focused subject matters. The Ballona Watershed, conservation, stormwater runoff, vernal pools, daylight creekbeds and other natural features will be highlighted in these interpretive areas.



General Park Use Map



The proposed Wilshire Community Park Plan will create new and enhanced identity features for the entire Wilshire Center District. These new features will add character and connectivity to the community while at the same time addressing goals of equity, environment, and economy.



Recommendations: Detail Plans

Section 1.5

Street Level Plans: Before & After



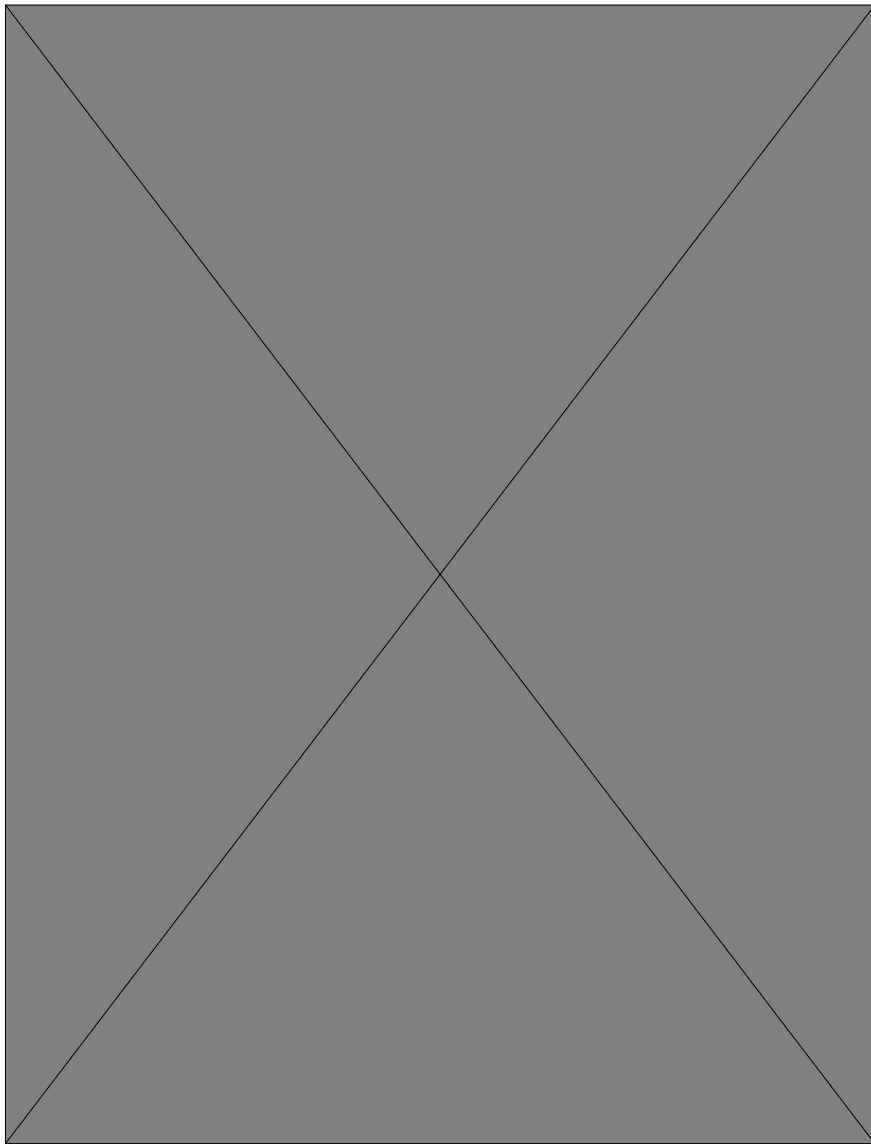
These images demonstrate how small changes can make the physical environment in the Wilshire Center a lot more pleasant and green.

Another of the recommendations builds off an existing plan to turn 4th Street into a bicycle corridor throughout the Wilshire Center BID. This recommendation calls for the conversion of both 4th Street and 5th Street west of Vermont Avenue into parallel one-way streets with angled parking and wide bicycle lanes. Under this proposal, 4th Street would be reserved for westbound traffic, and 5th Street would carry eastbound traffic. The rationale for this is that these are low-volume residential streets that pass through a portion of the BID in great need of improved bicycle infrastructure. Additionally, the one-way streets could result in increased traffic flows at certain intersections due to simplified traffic movements.

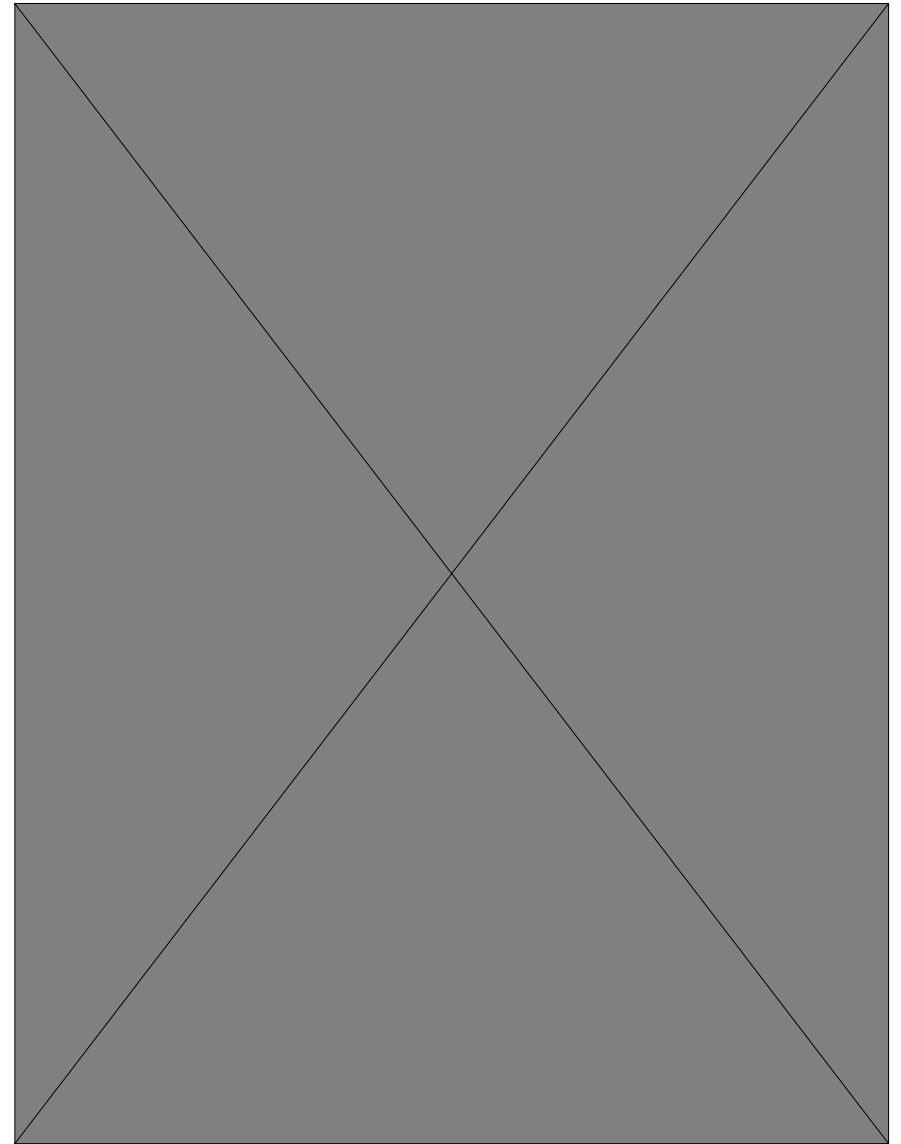
The roadways are 38 feet wide, and the new proposal calls for a cross-section of an 11-foot wide interior two-way bike lane, an 11-foot wide automobile lane, and a 16-foot wide area reserved for angled parking. Angled parking can fit in such a small space by utilizing a

30-degree angle, which is not only space-efficient, but also aids drivers in opening and closing car doors without knocking those of cars in neighboring bays.

Other components to this recommendation include improved landscaping, revised exterior curb and gutter work, new striping, and new signage. Net effects including increasing multi-modal opportunities by giving cyclists roadway priority, traffic calming through the narrowing of lanes, and maintained local access and parking. The following diagrams show before and after images on 5th Street, and 4th Street would share this cross-section as well.



Before



After

Project Precedents

The use of precedent projects is an important component of creating recommendations for a planning project. Precedents can both inspire ideas and provide real-world examples of the validity and relevancy of recommendations. To this end, three precedent projects contributed to the recommendations for the Wilshire Center BID.

Indianapolis Cultural Trail

The Indianapolis Cultural Trail is a recent addition to downtown Indianapolis, connecting the central downtown to historic neighborhoods and activity nodes in the surrounding area. The use of decorative crosswalks, sustainable plantings, and robust cycling amenities provided inspiration for the connector pathways between various park segments. The Cultural Trail also features placards explaining important historical features of

Indianapolis, and this idea migrated to the recommendation to provide educational placards on historic, cultural and ecological resources within the Wilshire Center BID.

Central Park

Central Park of New York City is a very similar park project to this proposal. Inserted into an already-developed urban environment, Central Park is one of the cherished amenities of New York City. Both a tourist attraction and an oasis from the hustle and bustle of New York City life, Central Park and its surrounding development represent some of the highest land values within the city. Constructing an urban oasis in the Wilshire Center BID would most likely have similar outcomes.

Augustus Hawkins Natural Park

Located in Compton, California,

Augustus Hawkins Natural Park is a recent, 8.5-acre addition to the City of Los Angeles. Built by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Recreation Conservation Authority, the park features native plant communities, rolling hills, riparian areas, a running stream, outdoor amphitheatre and a strolling path. The Evan Frankel Discovery Center also serves as an educational facility, with interpretive displays about sustainability and natural resources. These features served as inspiration for several of the specific recommendations for the Wilshire Center BID park proposal.

Indianapolis Cultural Trail



Central Park



Augustus Hawkins Nature Park



per incentives to increase building densities adjacent and near to the park.

Phase I (7 Years)

Phase I includes basic aesthetic and physical design improvements to the Wilshire Center BID, including upgrades and improvements to pedestrian paths and the cyclist street environment. This phase consists of the reconstruction of curbs, gutters, stormwater drainage, and other disposal systems. Landscaping and streetscape improvements are also included, such as upgraded bus shelters and wayfinding signage. Finally, Phase I includes the 4th/5th Streets bike lane conversions.

Phase II (5-15 Years)

Phase II builds on Phase I by focusing on strengthening the imageability of the area through the implementation of a strong, uniform design for the area and using public art and placards to educate park and trail users of the

cultural and ecological history of the Ballona Creek watershed and the Wilshire corridor. Improvements to the existing sidewalk network connecting to and bordering on the park, the installation of public art, and the construction of wayfinding signage and aesthetic design elements to define trail paths are also included in Phase II.

Phase III (10-20 Years)

Phase III consists of the design and construction of the park itself. This phase is slated to last 10-20 years, and is contingent on the successful acquisition of land. Construction of various park elements, the installation of park amenities, and extensive native species landscaping is included in Phase III.

Ongoing Phase

Key Objective:

1. Purchase land parcels in preparation for building the park

Timeframe:
15-17 years

Activities:

- Purchase of parcels for construction of park
- Form PPPs to build station area TODs
- Develop and implement developer incentives to increase area densities

Lead Agencies:

- Wilshire Center Conservation Authority
- Los Angeles City Council

- Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles
- Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Department of City Planning

Phase I

Key Objectives:

1. Improve aesthetics and physical design of pedestrian paths
2. Improve cyclist street environment

Timeframe:

7 years

Activities:

- Reconstructing curb, gutter, stormwater disposal systems
- 4th/5th Streets bike lanes conversion
- Streetscape/landscaping improvements
- Bus shelters upgrades
- Wayfinding signage installation

Lead Agencies:

- Wilshire Center Conservation Authority
- Los Angeles City Council
- Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Department of City Planning
- Wilshire Center BID
- Los Angeles Department of Transportation
- Department of Public Works
- Metro

Organizational Structure

Phase II

Key Objectives:

1. Provide a strong visual identity to the corridors linking the various park segments
2. Use public art and placards to educate park and trail users of cultural and ecological history

Timeframe:
5-15 years

Activities:

- Improvements to existing sidewalks bordering/connecting park
- Installation of public art
- Installation of wayfinding and aesthetic elements to define trail

Lead Agencies:

- Wilshire Center Conservation Authority
- Los Angeles City Council
- Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Department of City Planning

- Wilshire Center BID
- Los Angeles Department of Transportation
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Recreation and Parks

Phase III

Key Objective:

1. Build park and make it usable for community

Timeframe:
10-20 years

Activities:

- Constructing segments of proposed park
- Installing park amenities
- Landscaping

Lead Agencies:

- Wilshire Center Conservation Authority
- Los Angeles City Council
- Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles
- Los Angeles Department of City Planning
- Wilshire Center BID
- Los Angeles Department of Transportation
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Recreation and Parks

Existing Funding Sources

The Park project includes a variety of funding sources. The table identifies the source and amount of each.

SOURCE	AMOUNT
City of LA - Proposition O	\$8,000,000.00
City of LA - Proposition K	\$1,500,000.00
State of CA - Proposition 84	\$250,000.00
State of CA - Proposition 50	\$2,000,000.00
State of CA - Proposition 40	\$1,500,000.00
State of CA - Proposition 12	\$4,200,000.00
Quimby Fees	\$1,500,000.00
Federal - Clean Water State Revolving Fund	\$1,000,000.00
Federal - Community Block Development Grant	\$250,000.00
TOTAL	\$20,200,000.00

- Proposition 12 protects land around lakes, rivers, and streams and the coast to improve water quality and ensure clean drinking water; to protect forests and plant trees to improve air quality; to preserve open space and farmland threatened by unplanned development; to protect wildlife habitats; and to repair and improve the safety of state and neighborhood parks. This will be done under the Per Capita Grant for Recreational Areas provision

- Proposition 40 is the “California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002” The passage of Proposition 40 provided funds for local assistance grants.
 - o This is for Acquisition and Development under the Land, Air, Water Conservation and Parks and Recreation provisions.

- Proposition 50 is the “Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002”. Implementation of the Proposition 50 Chapter 8, bond funding is jointly administered by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board).

- o This will be for Planning and Implementation under the Integrated Regional Water Management provision.

- Proposition 84 is the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act”. Administered by DWR, the Proposition 84 includes funding for the IRWM Grant Program.

- o This will be for Planning and Implementation under the Integrated Regional Water Management provision.

- The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) has the primary objective of development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low- and moderate-income.
- Proposition O authorized the City of Los Angeles to issue a series of general obligation bonds to protect public health by cleaning up pollution, including bacteria and trash, in the City's watercourses, beaches and the ocean, in order to meet Federal Clean Water Act requirements.
 - o In addition, the measure will fund improvements to protect water quality, provide flood protection, and increase water conservation, habitat protection, and open space under the Storm Water Capture, Clean-up, Reuse provision.
 - o Funds may be used for Acquisition
- The passage of Proposition K

created a citywide assessment district that appropriates funds for the acquisition, improvement, construction, and maintenance of City parks, recreation facilities, and other projects. The primary purpose of Proposition K is to combat the inadequacies and decay of the City's youth infrastructure, which has resulted in serious unmet needs for park, recreation, childcare and community facilities.

- The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act or CWA), as amended in 1987, established the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program. The CWSRF program offers low interest financing agreements for water quality projects. Annually, the program disburses between \$200 and \$300 million to eligible projects.

Proposed Funding

The amounts reflected in the existing funding section will provide ample funding for planning and construction for the project and the proposed improvements. Some allow for money be used on acquisition. These include Proposition 12 and Proposition 84 from State bonds and Proposition O from City bonds. This however does not reflect the current and foreseeable land values of the land slated for the proposed project. In order to meet the requirements for funding in attaining this land, the project proposes two primary methods of land acquisition.

These are the development of a Transferable Development Rights ordinance (herein "TDR") and the implementation of a Tax Increment Finance program (herein "TIF").

The TDR will include the transfer

of the development capacity of the land proposed for the project to sites to be identified in the future for receipt. Because of the nature of developing these ordinances, the identification will be left for further study. However, the project assumes a few key provisions in the ordinance's implementation. These include:

- Location near and surrounding the project in order to leverage the increased amenity into real land value, making the development right more attractive.
- Customary deed restriction of the project parcels with the goal of preservation of open space.
- Usage as a non-capital intensive instrument of development potential in order to minimize costs.

The implementation of the TIF would leverage the attraction of the project through bonds that would be furnished

Deed Restriction
on future
development

Development Rights

Purchased right
beyond what is
allowed by
current zoning

by the collection of future taxes from increased traffic and usage. This will create financing for the development including acquisition and construction. It will be capped at the standard rate of 50% of the expected tax increment increase. The underlying philosophy will be that the increased traffic to the site by the amenity of the open space, general improvements and the development of TOD and TAD projects within the boundaries will allow for the TIF's feasibility.

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

In order to implement an effective land acquisition scheme, the project should seek a partnership with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. This state agency has been a leader in preservation and acquisition on a number of projects, including the development of Augustus Hawkins Natural Park. They have helped to acquire over 55,000 acres of land for preservation. This is done by buying land outright, donations and foreclosures.

In conjunction with the Conservancy, a

partnership would be formed to create the Wilshire Center Conservation Authority, which would act as the main administrative and overseeing body for the development and operation of the proposed park. This is done under the Joint Powers Act, which allows multiple government bodies to cooperate in order to preserve parkland.

They do this “by using unique techniques to acquire and improve open space and parklands, affording educational opportunities, and providing stewardship for a wide variety of public park and open space resources.” (SMMC)

Land Aquisition

One important factor to consider in the creation of a park in what is already a moderately-dense, urban area is land acquisition costs. Given the recent volatility of the real estate market in Los Angeles and Southern California as a whole, the determination of the cost of land acquisition can vary immensely, dependent on time and macroeconomic factors, location, and the types of parcels slated to be acquired. Because of these variables, determining even a ballpark figure can be a bit of an inexact science. To this end, and to provide a consistent metric for comparison, the figures for land acquisition have been obtained using the Zoning Information & Map Access System (ZIMAS) from the City of Los Angeles website. ZIMAS is a visual system, providing parcel-by-parcel information for a wide variety of criteria, though for the purpose of this project proposal, only addresses, assessors' parcel numbers (APNs), assessed land values, and assessed improvements values were used.

Addresses

Addresses are an important consideration because the Wilshire Center Business Improvement District is moderately dense, with many multi-family residences and commercial developments. As such, multiple dwelling units or storefronts may exist, using different addresses, on the same parcel. Furthermore, due to lot consolidation, what may appear as multiple parcels on ZIMAS may actually be a single development with a single address. Including this information therefore allows one to develop a rough understanding of the social and economic impacts of obtaining a particular parcel, and simplifies the process of visualizing just what exactly exists on a particular parcel.

Assessors' Parcel Numbers

In addition to addresses, assessors' parcel numbers also aid in extrapolating the relevant impact data because multiple addresses can exist under a consolidated parcel. These two categories,

displayed in tandem, help in illustrating relative impacts on a per-development basis. Additionally, assessed land values and assessed improvements values are determined on a per-development basis. Each development, whether a single-family home, multi-family apartment building, or a commercial building, is assigned to a single APN. The use of both address listings and APN data can also provide limited information on lot owners versus tenants. ZIMAS does provide further information on development type, use, planning documents, and other legal information, but this goes beyond the scope of this report. To access all of the available information for a particular parcel, one can search the database using the APN.

Assessed Land Values & Assessed Improvements Values

Located under the "Assessors Information" data tab, these two values contain information relating to the property valuation used

by the City of Los Angeles for the purposes of property tax collection. Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, property assessment occurs at the point of sale or when extensive renovations are performed. As a result of this bifurcated assessment procedure, property valuation is listed as two separate values: assessed land value, and assessed improvements value. Of particular note is that Proposition 13 limits the annual increases of property taxes to 2% of the current tax rate outside of the aforementioned triggers, so during a real estate boom cycle or a period where inflation exceeds 2%, the assessed values of land and improvements may become undervalued over longer periods of time. Because of this condition, the figures pertaining to land acquisition should be used as a very rough estimate, as actual parcel values may vary greatly from the information contained in ZIMAS.

Determining the Acquisition Costs for the Park

As a result of the proposed park's location being spread throughout the eastern end of the Wilshire Center BID,

each segment of the park is listed independently. As a result, one can ascertain the estimated acquisition cost for a particular segment of park, and each segment is further broken down by APNs. The acquisition cost of a particular APN is determined by adding the assessed land value and the assessed improvements value; subsequently, the estimated acquisition cost of a particular park segment is the sum of all APNs within each proposed park segment.

Please see the following map for the approximate total acquisition value per park segment along with an estimated total land acquisition cost for the entire park, with the complete analysis located in the Appendix.

- \$19,946,568
- \$27,127,413
- \$1,817,255
- \$8,148,772
- \$12,379,762
- \$10,287,684
- \$36,814,168



\$116,521,622



Roles and Responsibilities

- Santa Monica Nature Conservancy (SMNC) – This California state-created agency will operate the Wilshire Community Park and lead efforts by:
 - o Providing leadership and direction to Los Angeles City Council
 - o Creating a localized Wilshire Conservation Authority
 - o Undertaking all land acquisition
- Wilshire Center Conservation Authority
 - Is a creation of the SMNC and will:
 - o Be comprised of leaders from BID, Neighborhood Councils, Schools, Cultural Organizations, and Individual Residents
 - o Serve as an advisor to the SMNC regarding all matters related to park; be active participants in planning, design, negotiations, land acquisition, park programming and maintenance
 - o Provide community outreach/public relations
- LA City Council will primarily serve to:
 - o Appoint at Hoc Committee to lobby for funds
 - o Give direction to LA City departments
 - o Represent community stakeholders
- LA City Council Ad Hoc Committee will:
 - o Be comprised of member of the City Council and Parks Commission
 - o Provide lobbying services on behalf of the City Council
- CRA LA
 - o Assist with land acquisition
 - o Provide additional sources of financing
 - o Participate development negotiations where appropriate
 - o Provide marketing services
 - o Lead efforts to create public art
- LA City Planning Department:
 - o Zoning, land use and design
 - o Will assist with transfers of development rights
- Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks
 - o Park management and maintenance
 - o Park programming
 - o Marketing/advertising to community
- LA City Department of Public Works
 - o Park construction
 - o Carry out all contracting operations
- LA Housing Authority

- o Assistance with relocations
- o Identify and secure funding sources for housing construction
- o Assist with affordable housing development activities

List of Pre-existing Projects

The Wilshire Community Park plan will not function independently of other important pre-existing plans. It is necessary both give recognition to these efforts and make attempts to complement and enhance their unique attributes. The following four plans have provided leadership, insight, and have served to inspire and inform the proposed Wilshire Community Park Plan:

- o Wilshire Center Cool District Plan
- o Carbon Master Plan
- o CRA Wilshire Center/Koreatown Redevelopment Project Area
- o Wilshire Community Plan

State Enterprise Zones

The Wilshire Center exists within one of the three State Enterprise Zones of the City of Los Angeles. State Enterprise Zones serve existing and potential new business by offering the following benefits and incentives that are not available in other parts of the City:

- Employer Hiring Credits
- Sales and Use Tax Credits
- Business Expense Deduction
- Net Interest Deduction
- Department of Water and Power Rate Discount
- Site Plan Review Fee Waiver
- Reduced Parking Ordinance
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The goal of these incentives is to create economic development and employment opportunities throughout the designated area. The proposed plan can leverage the State Enterprise Zone incentives to create a stronger, more wide-spread impact for the business community.

The implementation and construction of the park proposal is expected to bring many benefits to the Wilshire Center BID. In addition to the social benefits of increased open space in a park-poor area, the economic effects are expected to be positive. Although the exact benefit cannot be calculated, it is worth noting the positive impacts of urban park construction at various locations around the United States. In New York City, for example, the razing of developed land and the construction of Central Park brought rapid economic benefits to the city. At only 50% completion, Central Park began to generate revenue from area taxes, and in 1873 the income from the three wards surrounding the park contributed over \$4.4 million to city coffers. In Kansas City, Missouri, a 1910 report concluded that constructing the parks and boulevards recommended by noted landscape architect George E. Kessler resulted in a 43% increase in assessed real estate value in two nearby districts.¹ Parks have been shown to account for as much as 30% of land

values,² and in Indianapolis, the construction of the Monon Rail-Trail resulted in adjacent properties being valued at the equivalent of beachfront property.³ As a result, the Wilshire Center BID will see an increase in land values as a result of park construction, which will enable higher commercial rents and catalytic economic growth.

In keeping with the three Es of sustainability: Equity, Environment, and Economy, the proposed park plan aims to provide watershed restoration for the district, serve as an amenity for the community, and create synergy for economic development and revitalization. The goal of sustainability of is one that must be accomplished through a comprehensive approach to planning which prioritizes physical interventions and efficiency while at the same time considering the human dimensions. For communities like the Wilshire Center, this goal will require strong community commitment and engagement, time, and possibly significant changes in land use and design. The proposed plan recommends a large scale intervention that will dramatically impact the future of the Wilshire Center and bring recognition to the area for its leaps and bounds toward a more sustainable future.

“American FactFinder”. U.S. Census
2000. Data from 90020 Zip Code.

Ballona Creek. [www.ballonacreek.org/
maps/](http://www.ballonacreek.org/maps/)

“Ballona Creek Watershed”. LADWP.
[http://dpw.lacounty.gov/wmd/
watershed/bc/](http://dpw.lacounty.gov/wmd/watershed/bc/)

L.A. Green Map. [http://www.
lagreenmap.org/2_ballona.htm](http://www.lagreenmap.org/2_ballona.htm)

Wilshire Center. [http://www.
wilshirecenter.com/](http://www.wilshirecenter.com/)

Wilshire Center Cool District. [http://
www.wilshirecenter.com/cooldistrict/](http://www.wilshirecenter.com/cooldistrict/)

Footnotes on page 48:

¹ [http://findarticles.com/p/
articles/mi_m1016/is_n1-2_v97/
ai_9348344/?tag=content;coll](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1016/is_n1-2_v97/ai_9348344/?tag=content;coll)

² Kitchen, James and William Hendon.
“Land Values Adjacent to an Urban
Neighborhood Park”. *Land Economics*,
Vol. 43, No.3; Aug 1967. pp 357-360.

University of Wisconsin Press
³ <http://brucefreemanrailtrail.org/pdf/>

Right of Way Measurement Tables

Street Name	Street Width (ft.)										
	30	40	50	55	60	70	80	90	100	110	120
Major Streets											
3rd St				X			X				
6th St				X	X		X				
8th St				X			X				
Commonwealth					X		X				
Hoover St					X		X				
Irolo St		X			X						
Normandie Ave	X	X	X		X		X				
Vermont Ave					X	X	X		X		
Virgil Ave				X	X		X				
Western Ave			X	X		X	X	X			
Wilshire Bl						X			X		
Wilton Pl		X		X	X		X		X		

Minor Streets											
4th St		X		X					X		
5th St				X					X		
7th St				X					X		
Alexandria				X					X		
Ardmore		X	X				X		X		
Berando		X							X		
Catalina		X							X		
Geneva	X	X							X		
Gramercy Dr	X							X			
Gramercy Pl	X	X						X	X		
Harvard		X				X	X		X		
Hobart		X				X	X		X		
Ingraham		X						X			
Kenmore		X	X						X	X	
Kingsley		X					X	X		X	
Leeward		X							X		
Magnolia	X			X							
Manhattan Pl		X							X		
Mariposa		X						X			
New Hampshire		X							X		
Oxford		X					X				
Serrano		X					X		X		
Shatto Pl		X	X					X		X	X
St Andrews Pl		X							X		
Sunset Pl		X						X			
Westmoreland		X	X				X	X			
Wilshire Pl		X								X	

X Blacktop Width
 X Total ROW