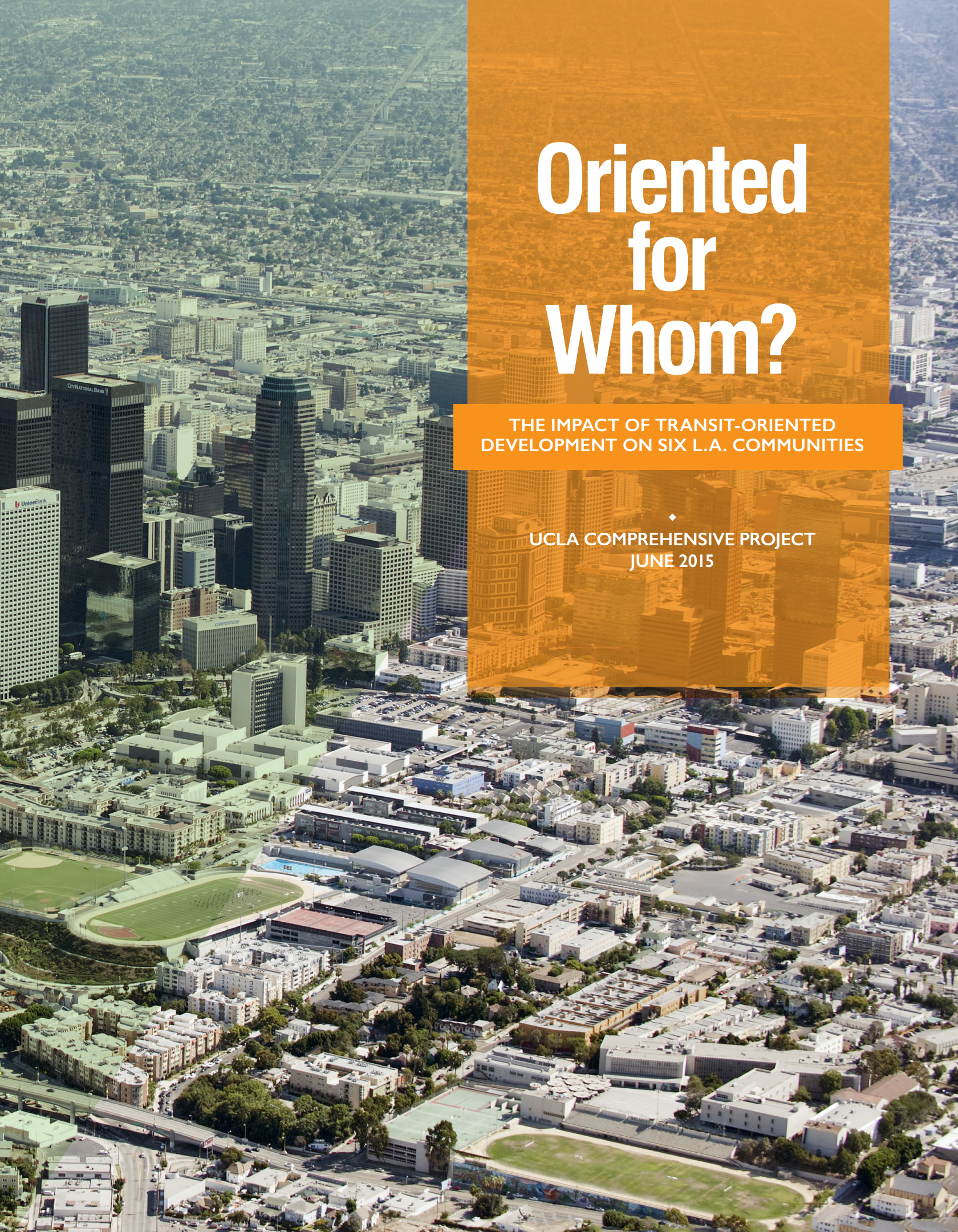


Oriented for Whom?

THE IMPACT OF TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT ON SIX L.A. COMMUNITIES

UCLA COMPREHENSIVE PROJECT

JUNE 2015

Contents

A comprehensive project submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Urban & Regional Planning by:

Jake Cranor
Chi Dang
Mark Friedlander
Matt Hom
Mariana Huerta Jones
Laura Krawczyk
Erica Lee
Sheila Nem
Katie Olson-Kenny
Aaron Ordower
Mark Simpson
Allyson Ujimori
Vicky Wu
& Darryl Yip

Executive Summary

This 2015 Comprehensive Project is part of a wider effort funded by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to explore the impact of transit-oriented development (TOD) on low-income communities. The project's client is the Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC). Financial and other support were provided by UCLA's Department of Urban Planning, the California Endowment, the California Community Foundation, UCLA's Center for the Study of Inequality and UCLA's Institute of Transportation Studies.

The project collected primary data in six Los Angeles neighborhoods to develop a grounded understanding of how stakeholders (transit riders, small and ethnic businesses, and community institutions) and the physical environment have experienced neighborhood change. The neighborhoods are diverse in their location around Los Angeles, the duration of time since the Metrorail station opened, and their demographic profiles. All six are disadvantaged communities. The six Metrorail station areas profiled in this study are:

- 103rd Street/Watts Tower (Blue Line opened 1990),
- Chinatown (Gold Line opened 2003),
- Highland Park (Gold Line opened 2003),
- Hollywood/Western (Red Line opened 1999),
- Mariachi Plaza (Gold Line opened 2009), and
- Vermont (Expo Line opened 2012).

The analyses of TOD impacts are organized in four chapters, each with a specific focus and unique methodological approach.

Chapter 2

This chapter presents the survey results of over 600 rail users. The responses were categorized to identify those living near the transit station and those living in other neighborhoods. The data show that 35 percent of those surveyed were local TOD residents. About half of all riders were low-income, on average have used Metro rail for at least 5 years, and primarily used rail to commute to work. Survey data also revealed disparities in rail transit usage and accessibility and proximity of the station to buses, employment, businesses, and housing. From the findings, three strategies were developed to advance equitable development near rail stations.

- First, the City of Los Angeles should develop plans near transit stations to encourage new housing and preserve existing low-cost housing.
- Second, the City of Los Angeles should incentivize employers to implement public transit subsidy programs for workers who commute by transit.
- Third, Metro should expand its public-private partnerships with community-based organizations or nonprofits to implement fare assistance programs to serve low-income clients.

Chapter 3

This chapter examines TOD impacts through the lens of third places— public spaces with a retail and social component as represented by local coffee and donut shops. The chapter focuses on one research question: How does rail transit affect the commercial sector? Data and information were collected through customer surveys, an observational exercise, and a business owner survey. The multi-pronged approach contributes to a holistic understanding of the third place sector. The analysis indicates that retail establishments in the case-study neighborhoods are diverse, with some targeting either a high-income or low-income clientele, or a mix of both. New and longer-term residents near rail transit have different demographics. Established residents are older, predominately Latino, and more likely to shop locally. Conversely, new residents are typically younger, more likely to be non-Hispanic White or Asian, and are less likely to shop locally. The findings indicate a need for holistic community development that is inclusive of the commercial sector, the context of the commercial district, and the value of community-serving retail. Specifically, community developers should: recognize the commercial sector as an important aspect of neighborhood change; acknowledge and preserve the diversity of TOD commercial districts; and protect community-serving retail.

Mariachi Plaza Station

Photo Credit: GTD Aquitaine

Chapter 4

This chapter presents the results of systematic visual observations of the built environment in the case study neighborhoods, focusing on indicators of physical and social change that are often assumed to go hand-in-hand with residential and commercial gentrification. The research team utilized two observational groundtruthing instruments to catalog land use and infrastructure investments as well as the relative quality of those buildings at the street-block (98 blocks) and parcel level (180 parcels). The surveyors assessed observable land uses, visible public infrastructure, types of individuals present, observed social diversity, physical disorder, indicators of ethnic commercial presence, and property and landscape renovations. The observations indicate that areas experiencing early stages of gentrification appear differently than areas in late stages of gentrification. The observational results provide nuance and context to quantitative data used in studying neighborhood change. Given the usefulness of this tool to further document the extent of gentrification, the following recommendations can help identify areas of inequitable development in the formal planning process.

• First, stakeholders, such as community groups and city planners, should use groundtruthing in conjunction with secondary data that may not capture subtle characteristics of gentrification.
• Second, groundtruthing tools are most useful when they are context-sensitive and developed with stakeholder input who are familiar with a neighborhood and the perceived changes.
• Third, groundtruthing should be a longitudinal process to allow for comparative analysis based on a benchmark to allow for these changes to be quantified and taken into consideration in promoting equitable neighborhood development.

Chapter 5

This chapter examines four questions related to equity in TOD:

❶ *How have communities changed since the building of a transit station?*
❷ *What is the relationship between community-based organizations (CBOs) and public agencies in the planning process?*
❸ *How is equity considered in the TOD planning process?; and*
❹ *How are CBOs and public agencies planning for and advancing equitable TOD?*

Information was collected through 31 interviews with CBOs and public agencies to understand the role that each stakeholder plays in TOD. The questions were structured to gather information on the challenges, opportunities, and best practices to minimize the negative externalities of TOD. Analysis of the interviews shows a number of trends.

• First, new residential and retail developments are emerging and serve different populations than previous establishments.
• Second, CBOs pursue opportunities to make TOD more equitable, but are often limited by restrictions placed by public agencies.
• Third, public agencies utilize land use planning to encourage TOD, but these plans need to be reevaluated and improved to better meet the needs of the neighborhood.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations should be implemented to bring about equitable TOD and increase collaboration between stakeholders.

• *First, the City of Los Angeles should define characteristics of equitable TOD in order to craft a citywide TOD plan with measurable equity objectives.*
• *Second, LA Metro should make equal investments in bus service in TODs with high bus ridership.*
• *Third, Los Angeles public agencies should frequently engage with CBOs outside of the public hearing process.*

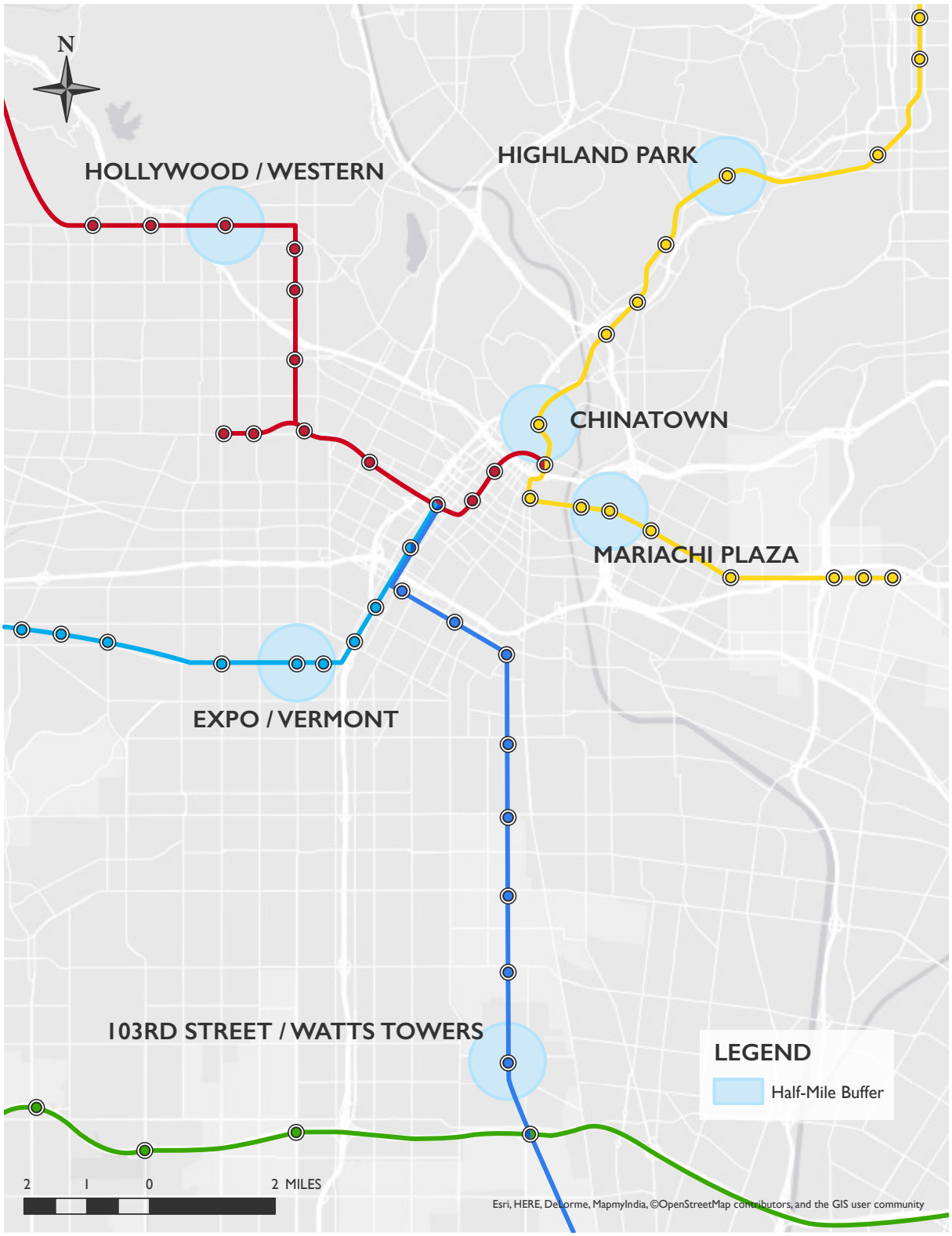
Conclusion

This report provides new insights into the impacts of TODs on disadvantaged neighborhoods. Given the resources and time constraints, the project covers only a few aspects of the phenomenon. Despite these limitations, the project has produced useful information and empirical results that complement other efforts to assess the consequences of TODs. A major cross cutting findings from the project is that the neighborhood changes are complex, occurring over many years and varying across places.

Moreover, there appears to be a need for a well-conceived, better coordinated, and adequately funded collaborative effort to promote equitable development around transit stations. One key element to successful implementation is ongoing and real-time monitoring of changes and performance, using the findings to make any necessary modifications to policies, plans and programs in order to ensure equitable outcomes. Transit investments are public investments; therefore, there should be a public obligation to ensure that all stakeholders share in the direct and indirect benefits.

Figure 1:

Case Study Neighborhoods



SOURCE: Created by Rosalie S. Ray for this project

Introduction / CHAPTER 1

As regions across California finalize their first Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS), communities are increasingly concerned about how new transit investment and related new development around transit stations will affect the lives of existing residents and businesses, particularly in low-income communities of color. Surprisingly little empirical analysis has been conducted about the relationship between transit-oriented development (TOD) and social equity in Los Angeles.[1] This 2015 Comprehensive Project[2] is part of a wider effort funded by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to explore the impact of transit-oriented development on low-income communities.[3] With funding from the California Endowment and the California Community Foundation, Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC) served as the client for this project. UCLA's Department of Urban Planning sponsored the course. Additional support came from UCLA's Center for the Study of Inequality and UCLA's Institute of Transportation Studies. The findings help develop a fuller understanding of the nature, magnitude and cause of TOD-related displacement.

Case Study Neighborhoods

As part of this project, students collected primary data in six Los Angeles neighborhoods to arrive at a grounded understanding of how stakeholders (transit riders, small and ethnic businesses, and community institutions) and the physical environment have experienced neighborhood change. The communities were selected in consultation with the Southern California Research Advisory Committee for the wider CARB project and the project client. The neighborhoods are diverse in their location around Los Angeles, the duration of time since the Metrorail station opened, and differ in terms of demographic profiles. All six are disadvantaged communities. The six Metrorail station areas profiled in this study are:

- 103rd Street/Watts Tower (Blue Line opened 1990),
- Chinatown (Gold Line opened 2003),
- Highland Park (Gold Line opened 2003),
- Hollywood/Western (Red Line opened 1999),
- Mariachi Plaza (Gold Line opened 2009), and
- Vermont (Expo Line opened 2012).

All six case study neighborhoods are located in the City of Los Angeles, California (See Figure 1). The Metrorail stations located in each neighborhood opened between 1990 (103rd Street/Watts) and 2012 (Expo/Vermont). The neighborhoods have a median household income below the county average and more than half of the populations in the areas are residents of color.

103rd Street/Watts Tower • Blue Line

Located at the intersection of 103rd St and Grandee Ave, this grade-level station is located the neighborhood of Watts in South Los Angeles. Given its location in historical South Central Los Angeles, popular media has characterized the areas a predominately Black and associated with poverty; however, as an area in transition, it is now predominately Latino. The economic distress of the area has increased over the years. Opened in 1990, the station is the oldest of case studies.

Chinatown • Gold Line

Chinatown Metrorail station is an elevated light rail stop located at North Spring Street and College Street in the Chinatown neighborhood of downtown Los Angeles. The station opened in 2003 as an eastern extension of the Gold Line, which connects Pasadena, Downtown Los Angeles, and East Los Angeles. The Chinatown neighborhood is the result of the construction of the nearby Union Station in the 1930s. It is the single case study with a majority Asian demographic.

Highland Park • Gold Line

Highland Park is one of Los Angeles' oldest residential neighborhoods, and is often considered one of the city's first suburbs. The area is defined by single-family residential housing. The neighborhood has been predominantly Hispanic or Latino since the 1960s. The Metrorail station opened in 2003 and is at grade.

Hollywood/Western • Red Line

The Hollywood/Western Metrorail station is located near the intersection of Hollywood Boulevard and Western Boulevard in East Hollywood. The neighborhood is a densely populated, in moderately diverse area of the city. The neighborhood is notable as the home of ethnic enclaves such as Little Armenia and Thai Town. The area is known for the Barnsdall Art Park, Los Angeles Community College, as one of Los Angeles' largest hospital districts. The area's heavy rail subway station opened in 1999.

Mariachi Plaza/Boyle Heights • Gold Line

Boyle Heights is a predominantly Hispanic working class neighborhood, located directly east across the river from downtown Los Angeles. Referred to as the "Ellis Island of the West Coast," the neighborhood has historically been home to minority groups, often the result of spatial and racial segregation. Mariachi Plaza is at the commercial center of this neighborhood and is surrounded by a number of established Mexican restaurants and stores along the First Avenue corridor. Its underground Metrorail station opened in 2009 as part of the Eastside Gold Line subway extension.

Vermont • Expo Line

The Expo/Vermont Metrorail station is an at-grade light rail stop located in the West Adams neighborhood of Los Angeles. Major destinations near the station include the University of Southern California (USC), Exposition Park, the Natural Museum of History, and the Memorial Coliseum, which hosted the 1932 and 1984 Olympic games. USC has invested in the redevelopment of the area in recent year as University Park and has created several new amenities for its students. Aside from students, Latino renters comprise the majority of the residential demographics.

Chapter Outline

The analyses of TOD impacts in the six neighborhoods are organized and reported in four chapters. Each chapter has a different focus and unique methodological approach, and includes recommendations based on the empirical findings, along with technical appendices and references:

- Chapter 2: Consideration of Transit Riders
- Chapter 3: TOD Impacts on Third Places
- Chapter 4: Groundtruthing Gentrification
- Chapter 5: Fostering Equitable Transit Oriented Development

103rd / Watts Tower Station

Photo Credit: Chi Dang

Chinatown Station

Photo Credit: Prayitno Hadinata

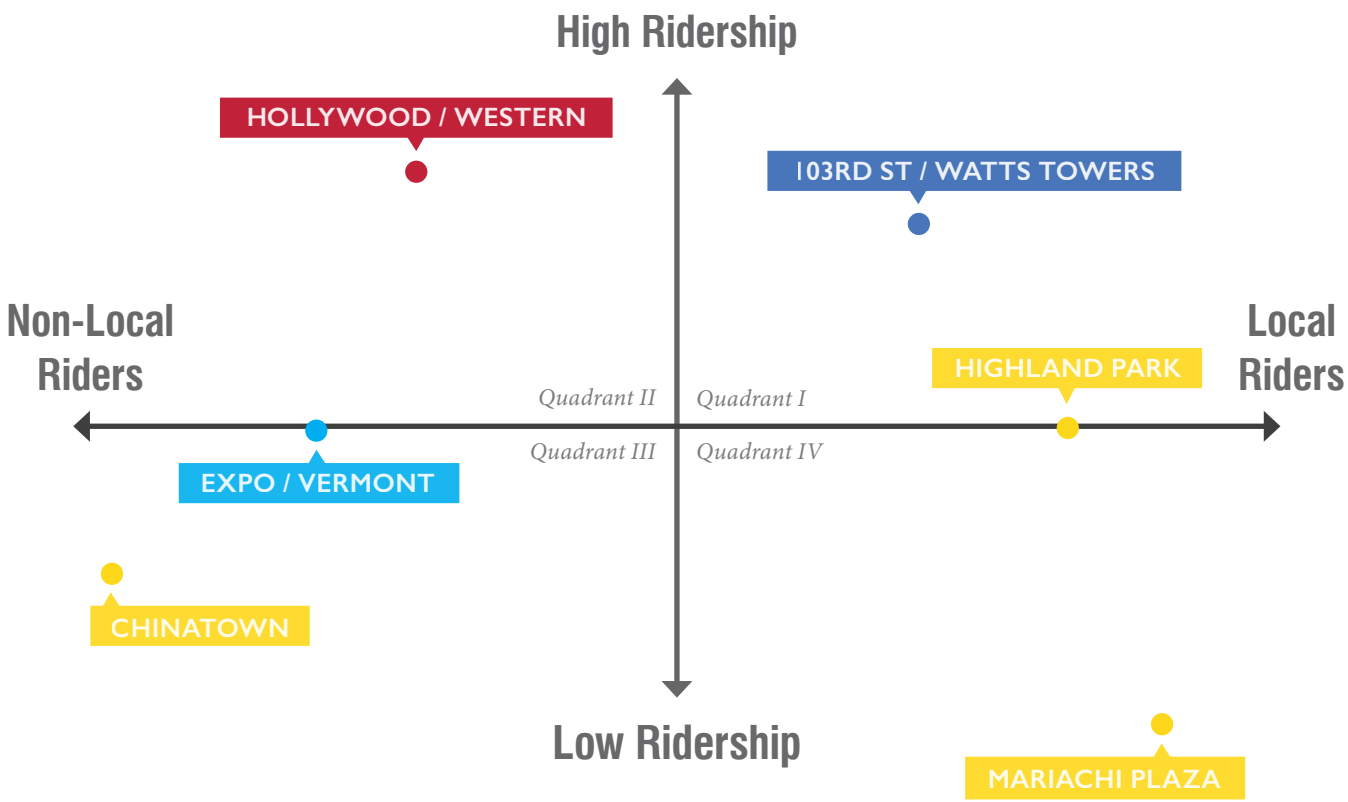
[1] For a review of the literature on TODs, gentrification and displacement see Zuk, M., Bierbaum, A., Chapple, K., Gorska, K., Loukaitou-Sideris, A., Ong, P., & Thomas, T. (2014). Gentrification, Displacement and the Role of Public Investment: A Literature Review. University of California, Berkeley. Manuscript on file.

[2] A comprehensive project is a two-quarter planning studio in which students work together to respond to a specific, real-world planning problem. Each project is sponsored by a client organization. Students work with their faculty adviser(s) and the client to establish the scope of work. They then organize themselves to assemble and analyze data, and to develop recommendations—policy and planning proposals, design guidelines etc. –to address the problem.

[3] The wider project is titled "Developing a New Methodology for Analyzing Potential Displacement," and is led by a team of UC Berkeley researchers, and professors Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Paul Ong at UCLA.

Figure 2:

Axis of Ridership Usage and Scale of Non-Local and Local Users at Each Station



SOURCE:
Data from UCLA Equitable TOD Study 2015 • Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority 2015

Consideration of Transit Riders / CHAPTER 2

Metro ridership data provides information about people who use public transit, and Census data provide information on the people who live near transit; however little is understood about the overlap between these groups. To fill this research gap and understand the extent to which local residents are riding rail transit. Chapter 2 presents the results of almost 700 surveyed rail users. The chapter examines one dimension of social equity and TODs by addressing three primary research questions:

❶ *Who are riders of Metro Rail?*
❷ *Why are transit-riders using rail? And,*
❸ *Who benefits from TOD investments?*

Methodology

The team used a closed-ended survey to collect data on rider demographics, trip purpose, and participants' average use of Metro. A total of 664 surveys were collected, with more than 100 surveys per station. The responses were weighted to reflect 2014 Metro Ridership patterns, and to account for sampling design and differential response rates. The responses were categorized to identify those living near the transit station and those living in other neighborhoods.

Half of riders are of low-income
Half of riders use rail commute to work
35% of riders are TOD residents

Findings

The results show that 35 percent of those surveyed were local TOD residents. About half of all riders were low-income, on average have used Metro rail for at least 5 years, and primarily used rail to commute to work. Survey data also revealed disparities in rail transit usage and accessibility and proximity of the station to buses, employment, businesses, and housing. For example, Hollywood/Western has high ridership and both Chinatown and Expo/Vermont experience low ridership, but all three stations show high ridership among non-local riders. The low volume riders, particularly local riders from Chinatown and Expo/Vermont, indicate that local residents underutilize these stations. Therefore, strategies that increase low-income and local ridership can ensure equitable access to TOD investments.

Recommendations

From the findings, three strategies were developed to advance equitable development near rail stations. These strategies can optimize benefits from TOD investments, increase transit ridership, and reduce or maintain transportation costs for local, low-income transit users:

- *The City of Los Angeles should develop plans near transit stations to encourage new housing creation and preserve existing low-cost housing;*
- *The City of Los Angeles should incentivize employers to implement public transit subsidy programs for workers who commute by transit;*
- *Metro should expand its public-private partnerships with community-based organizations or nonprofits to implement fare assistance programs to serve low-income clients.*

Figure 3.1:

Demographic Characteristics of Residency Types

A. Age Category	Established		Newer		Other	
	Frequency	% of Total Resident Category	Frequency	% of Total Resident Category	Frequency	% of Total Resident Category
Under 24	4	24%	3	27%	7	21%
25 - 34	3	18%	6	55%	14	42%
35 - 49	3	18%	2	18%	10	30%
50 +	7	41%	0	0%	2	6%
Total	***17***	***100%***	***11***	***100%***	***33***	***100%***
B. Race/Ethnicity	**Established**		**Newer**		**Other**	
	Frequency	**% of Total Resident Category**	**Frequency**	**% of Total Resident Category**	**Frequency**	**% of Total Resident Category**
White (Non-Hispanic)	1	6%	3	27%	7	21%
Black	0	0%	1	9%	4	12%
Hispanic/Latino	15	94%	5	45%	14	42%
Asian	0	0%	2	18%	8	24%
Total	***16***	***100%***	***11***	***100%***	***33***	***100%***

Figure 3.2:

Shopping Habits of Residency Types

A. Additional Shopping in Neighborhood	Established		Newer		Other	
	Frequency	% of Total Resident Category	Frequency	% of Total Resident Category	Frequency	% of Total Resident Category
Yes, Additional Shopping	15	88%	9	82%	18	60%
No Additional Shopping	2	12%	2	18%	12	40%
Total	***17***	***100%***	***11***	***100%***	***30***	***100%***
B. Shopping Pre-Opening of Rail Station	**Established**		**Newer**		**Other**	
	Frequency	**% of Total Resident Category**	**Frequency**	**% of Total Resident Category**	**Frequency**	**% of Total Resident Category**
Yes, Shopped Before Rail Opened	14	82%	7	64%	11	33%
No, Did Not Shop Before Rail Opened	3	18%	4	36%	22	67%
Total	***17***	***100%***	***11***	***100%***	***33***	***100%***

TOD Impacts on Third Places / CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 examines the impact of TOD through the lens of third places— public spaces with a retail and social component. Specifically, this study focuses on local coffee and donut shops. Coffee shops are often viewed as symbols of gentrification, whereas donut shops, which are comparable in function, usually are not. The chapter aims to understand the experience of local businesses by addressing one primary research question:

❶ *How does rail transit affect the commercial sector?*

Methodology

The chapter is informed by three complementary field methods: customer surveys, an observational exercise, and a business owner survey. The customer survey aims to identify the demographics of consumers and highlight relationships between individuals' residency, shopping habits, and preferences for third-places. The observational exercise provides a more thorough understanding of the differences between coffee and donut shops by documenting the distinct physical characteristics of each venue. Only one survey of business owners was successfully collected; nonetheless, the instrument sheds light on an owner's perspective and concerns of neighborhood change. While not all three instruments were used at each establishment, at the very least, the three instruments provided the research team with options for collecting data. The multi-pronged approach contributes to a holistic understanding of the experience of the third place sector.

Findings

The complementary data indicates that retail establishments in the case-study neighborhoods are diverse, with some targeting either a high-income or low-income clientele, or a mix of both. A comparison of the characteristics of new and longer-term neighborhood residents near rail transit shows that established residents are older, predominately Latino, and more likely to shop locally. Conversely, new residents are typically younger, more likely to be Non-Hispanic White or Asian, and are less likely to shop locally.

Recommendations

The findings indicate a need for a holistic community development approach that is inclusive of the commercial sector, the context of the commercial district, and the value of community-serving retail. Specifically, community developers should:

- *Recognize the commercial sector as an important arena of neighborhood change;*
- *Acknowledge and preserve the diversity of TOD commercial districts; and*
- *Prioritize protection of community-serving retail.*

Figure 3.3: **Surveys Collected**

Station	Coffee Shop		Donut Shop	
	Groundtruthing	Customer Surveys	Groundtruthing	Customer Surveys
Watts Towers/103rd	N/A	N/A	✔	✔
Hollywood/Western	✔	✔	N/A	N/A
Highland Park	✔	✔	N/A[1]	N/A[1]
Chinatown	✔	✔	✔	✔
Mariachi Plaza	✔	✔	✔	✔
Expo Vermont	✔	✔	✔	✔

Minor cosmetic upgrades to older homes (i.e. new door paint)

"Sell You House Fast!", Highland Park

"Stop Gentrification", Mariachi Plaza

Student rental housing at Expo/Vermont Station

Upscale landscaping on old apartment, Hollywood/Western

Vacant lot open for development, Hollywood/Western

SOURCE: Groundtruthing Research Team

Groundtruthing Gentrification / CHAPTER 4

Neighborhood change manifests itself through shifts in the demographic characteristics of residents and the built environment. Temporal research on neighborhood change often relies on quantitative data, but the subtle manifestations of change that alter the look and feel of the built environment often go unrecognized as these qualities are difficult to quantify and track. Chapter 4 presents the results of systevmatic visual observations of the built environment in the six case study neighborhoods.

The observations in this research specifically focus on indicators of physical and social change that are often assumed to go hand-in-hand with gentrification. Physical changes that signal gentrification may become noticeable through the construction of new or renovated commercial and residential properties that are visibly distinct from the surrounding area. Social changes may become apparent as the composition of the people who occupy and use these spaces also change. Both social and physical transformations have the potential to significantly alter a neighborhood's character.

Methodology

The research team developed two observational groundtruthing instruments to catalog overall land uses and infrastructure investments as well the relative quality of those buildings at the street-block and parcel level. The research team collected data for 98 blocks within one-quarter mile of the Metro stations and observed 180 parcels with registered new construction, renovations or sales between 2008 and 2013. The surveyors assessed observable land uses, visible public infrastructure, types of individuals present, observed levels of social diversity, physical disorder, indicators of ethnic commercial presence, and renovations to property and landscaping.

Findings

The observations indicate that areas experiencing early stages of gentrification appear differently than areas in late stages of gentrification. Surprisingly, stereotypical indicators of gentrification (such as upscale cafes or yoga studios) were observed infrequently in the neighborhoods where community groups are most concerned about gentrification. However, many more subtle indicators emerged in neighborhoods in early stages of gentrification, such as minor cosmetic residential renovations and higher-end landscaping. Signs of potential future neighborhood change included the quantity of vacant parcels and the share of parcels that are more visually appealing than the neighborhood average.

Recommendations

The observational results provide nuance and context to quantitative data used in studying neighborhood change. Given the usefulness of this tool to further document the extent of gentrification, the following recommendations are made to aid with identifying areas of inequitable development in the formal planning process:

- *Stakeholders, such as community groups and city planners, should use groundtruthing in conjunction with secondary data that may not capture subtle characteristics of gentrification;*
- *Groundtruthing tools are most useful when they are context-sensitive and developed with inputs from stakeholders that are familiar with a neighborhood and the perceived changes;*
- *Groundtruthing should be a longitudinal process to allow for comparative analysis based on a benchmark to allow for these changes to be quantified and taken into consideration in promoting equitable neighborhood development.*

Fostering Equitable Transit-Oriented Development / CHAPTER 5

Investment in Los Angeles' public transit system is at an unprecedented high. Current public policies, plans and expenditures are intended to promote a more transit-oriented future for Los Angeles. Chapter 5 focuses on the consideration of equity as Los Angeles transforms into a more environmentally and economically sustainable region. The chapter examines four questions related to equity in TOD:

❶ *How has Transit Oriented Development (TOD) impacted study areas?*
❷ *How effective have local communities been in controlling the outcomes of TOD?*
❸ *What is the relationship between CBOs and governmental agencies in the TOD process?*
❹ *What more can be done to allow station area residents and community groups to influence the TOD process from conception, design, and realization?*

Methodology

The research team conducted interviews with CBOs and public agencies to understand the role that each stakeholder plays in the TOD planning and development process. A total of 31 interviews were completed in-person or over the phone using a semi structured interview instrument over a period of four months. The questions were structured to elicit information on the challenges, opportunities, and best practices for minimizing the negative externalities of TOD.

Findings

Analysis of the interviews shows a number of trends. The first is that new residential and retail developments are emerging and that they are serving different populations than previous establishments. This is a concern because long-term, low-income residents are no longer able to afford the housing, goods, and services available in their neighborhood. The second finding is that CBOs pursue opportunities to make TOD more equitable, but are often limited by restrictions placed by public agencies. Lastly, public agencies utilize land use planning to encourage TOD, but these plans need to be reevaluated and improved to better meet the needs of the neighborhood.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following should be implemented to bring equitable TOD to communities in Los Angeles by promoting collaboration between stakeholders:

- *The City of Los Angeles should define characteristics of equitable TOD in order to craft a citywide TOD plan with measurable equity objectives;*
- *LA Metro should make equal investments in bus service in TODs with high bus ridership; and*
- *Los Angeles public agencies should engage more frequently with CBOs outside the public hearing process.*
- *Established CBOs with research expertise and greater advocacy capacity should share their resources with small CBOs to foster a stronger advocacy platform.*

Highland Park Station

Photo Credit: Umberto Brayj

Conclusion / CHAPTER 6

This comprehensive project gathered primary data and information through surveys, systematic observations, and interviews to assess the impacts of transit oriented development (TOD) in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Los Angeles. The goal was to generate a better understanding about the nature of neighborhood change in order to enhance the effort to promote equitable sustainable development. Transit investments are public investments; therefore, there should be a public obligation to ensure that all stakeholders share in the direct and indirect benefits. While TOD has the potential of benefiting neighborhoods through positive change, there is considerable fear that TOD can also lead to rampant gentrification and displace more established local residents and businesses. Equity-oriented policies and plans are needed to ensure balanced development that benefits all stakeholders. Developing such policies and plans should be grounded in an empirical understanding of the nature and magnitude of changes around transit stations.

The project's study sites included the areas around six Metrorail station areas:

- 103rd Street/Watts Tower (Blue Line opened 1990),
- Chinatown (Gold Line opened 2003),
- Highland Park (Gold Line opened 2003),
- Hollywood/Western (Red Line opened 1999),
- Mariachi Plaza (Gold Line opened 2009), and
- Vermont (Expo Line opened 2012).

The neighborhoods are predominantly people of color and low-income residents. The research team collected 664 surveys of rail users, over 60 customer surveys, observational assessment of over 10 businesses, "groundtruthing" of 98 blocks and 180 parcels, and 31 interviews of community based organizations and public agencies.

Given the resources and time constraints, the project covers only a few aspects of the phenomenon. Despite these limitations, the project has produced useful information and empirical results, which are presented in Chapters 2 through 5. A major cross cutting finding from the project is that the neighborhood changes are complex, occurring over many years and varying across places. The diversity of outcomes is very apparent in the substantial variation in the level of transit usage across neighborhoods, resulting in disparities between those who benefit from transit investments. Hollywood/Western has experienced noticeable changes, and the challenge has been to influence development to ensure that local residents and businesses are not adversely affected. Other areas such as 103rd Street/Watts Tower have experienced little development, although it is an area that would benefit from more job-creation investments. This enormous heterogeneity leads to an important recommendation that is consistent with the often overused but nonetheless very appropriate cliché "one size does not fit all." Policies and plans must accommodate the specific circumstances, unique needs, and potential opportunities of each neighborhood.

At the same time, policies and plans must incorporate equity principles and goals, concrete and measurable equity objectives, and adequate resources and funding for full implementation. Some of these elements are in place, such as those included in SB 375, California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, which includes the promotion of affordable housing as a part of sustainable community strategies. The state has also set aside funds from its cap-and-trade program to assist disadvantage communities. We believe that such explicit legislative and funding commitments should be also widely adopted at the regional and local level (as well as the national level). This can be done by adopting best practices from other locations, such as the extensive social-equity TOD efforts in the Puget Sound region and the City of Seattle.

Moreover, there appears to be a need in this region for a well-conceived, better coordinated, and adequately funded collaborative effort to promote equitable development around transit stations. Comprehensive planning is challenging because responsibility and authority are divided among numerous public agencies. At its worse, planning becomes fragmented and disjointed efforts with only partial coverage. At its best, there is synergy and multiple sources of funding. Clearly the latter is desirable, and this will require leadership. A critical element of effective planning is meaningful participation by local stakeholders, who are in the best position to understand and articulate their concerns, priorities, and aspirations. Community-based organizations can play a critical role in representing neighborhood perspectives and advocating for social justice.

One key element to successful implementation of equity policies and plans is ongoing monitoring and evaluation of changes and performance. If done in a timely fashion, the findings can be used to make necessary modifications to policies, plans, and programs to ensure equitable outcomes. Some of the methods used in this project should be adopted as a part of the monitoring system. There are also other related analytical projects that complement the efforts of this project to assess the consequences of TODs. This includes the project "Developing a New Methodology for Analyzing Potential TOD Displacement," which is funded by the California Air Resource Board.

UCLA Masters of Urban Planning Comprehensive Project 2015

Client: Thai Community Development Center

Instructors

PAUL ONG
SILVIA JIMÉNEZ

Teaching Assistants

CHARLES JOSHUA GABBE
AUJEAN LEE

Students

JAKE CRANOR
CHI DANG
MARK FRIEDLANDER
MATT HOM
MARIANA HUERTA JONES
LAURA KRAWCZYK
ERICA LEE
SHEILA NEM
KATIE OLSON-KENNY
AARON ORDOWER
MARK SIMPSON
ALLYSON UJIMORI
VICKY WU
DARRYL YIP

Sponsors

UCLA DEPARTMENT OF URBAN PLANNING
THE CALIFORNIA ENDOWMENT
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
UCLA INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

#uclatod2015

Link to full report PDF —

http://tinyurl.com/uclatod15

Link to abridged report PDF —

http://tinyurl.com/uclatod15exec

UCLA Luskin School *of* Public Affairs
Center for the Study of Inequality

Cover Photo Credit: Paul Ong