



*FINAL REPORT*

**Making Transit-Oriented Development Work in  
Low-Income Latino Neighborhoods:  
A comparative case study of Boyle Heights, Los  
Angeles and Logan Heights, San Diego**

---

NITC-RR-762 ■ December 2016

*NITC is the U.S. Department of Transportation's national  
university transportation center for livable communities.*





**Making Transit-Oriented Development Work in Low-Income  
Latino Neighborhoods:  
A comparative case study of Boyle Heights, Los Angeles and Logan  
Heights, San Diego**

**Final Report**

**NITC-RR-762**

by

Gerardo Francisco Sandoval, PhD

University of Oregon

Department of Planning, Public Policy & Management

for

National Institute for Transportation and Communities (NITC)

P.O. Box 751

Portland, OR 97207





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This project was made possible with funding from the National Institute for Transportation and Communities (NITC).

## **DISCLAIMER**

The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors, who are solely responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the material and information presented herein. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Transportation University Transportation Centers Program and OTREC in the interest of information exchange. The U.S. Government and the sponsoring parties assume no liability for the contents or use thereof. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the U.S. Government or OTREC. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Executive Summary.....	7
2.0	Introduction: Mitigating for TOD-initiated gentrification.....	10
3.0	Literature Review: Sustainability and gentrification.....	12
4.0	Theoretical Framing and Method: A comparative case study of two neighborhoods.....	15
5.0	Getting to know Boyle Heights, Los Angeles.....	16
5.1	Demographic changes in Boyle Heights.....	17
5.2	Story of Aliso Pico and Mariachi Plaza.....	26
6.0	Getting to know Logan Heights, San Diego.....	29
6.1	Demographic changes in Logan Heights, San Diego.....	31
6.2	Story of El Mercado Del Barrio project.....	39
7.0	Boyle Heights Findings.....	42
7.1	Public housing vs affordable housing.....	43
7.2	How affordable is affordable housing?.....	46
7.3	Resistance and activism in Boyle Heights.....	47
8.0	Logan Heights Findings.....	55
8.1	Activist organizations that transformed TODs.....	56
8.2	Chicano Park’s role in shaping TODs.....	58
8.3	Artist and Latino cultural identity.....	60
8.4	Resistance and self-determination in Logan Heights.....	62
9.0	Conclusion and Recommendations.....	64
10.0	References.....	68
	APPENDIX I: Letter to Interviewees.....	72
	APPENDIX II: Interview Guide.....	74

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Total Population for West Boyle Heights and the City of Los Angeles.....17  
Table 2: Total Population for Historic Core Area in Barrio Logan and the City of San Diego.....31

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: TOD Across the Street from Aliso/Pico Development.....	16
Figure 2: Latinos in Boyle Heights vs. City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010.....	18
Figure 3: Income in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1990-2010.....	19
Figure 4: Poverty in Boyle Heights vs the City of Los Angeles, 1990-2010.....	20
Figure 5: Immigrants in Boyle Heights vs the City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010.....	21
Figure 6: Year Immigrants Arrived in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles.....	22
Figure 7: Rent in Boyle Heights vs the City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010.....	23
Figure 8: Cash Rent in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1990-2010.....	24
Figure 9: Education Attainment in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010...25	
Figure 10: Crimes in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1997 to 2011.....	26
Figure 11: Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights.....	28
Figure 12: Chicano Park Mural.....	29
Figure 13: El Mercado Del Barrio Development Project in Boyle Heights.....	30
Figure 14: Latinos in Logan Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010.....	32
Figure 15: Income in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 1990 to 2010.....	33
Figure 16: Poverty in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 1990-2010.....	34
Figure 17: Immigrants in Logan Heights vs San Diego, 1990 to 2010.....	35
Figure 18: Immigrants' Arrival in Logan Heights vs City of Los Angeles.....	36
Figure 19: Rent in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 1990-2010.....	37
Figure 20: Cash Rent in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 2000-2010.....	38
Figure 21: Educational Attainment in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 1990 to 2010...39	
Figure 22: Mercado Del Barrio Apartments Across the Street from Chicano Park.....	40
Figure 23: New Latino-themed Grocery Store in the Mercado Del Barrio Development.....	41
Figure 24: Aliso/Pico Apartment Complex with New Urbanist Design Principles.....	44
Figure 25: Lowrider Show at Plaza Mariachi in Boyle Heights.....	50

Figure 26: Murals at Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights Next to TOD Development.....51  
Figure 27: Music Festival at Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights.....52  
Figure 28: Murals Incorporated into the Mercado Del Barrio Apartments.....58  
Figure 29: Chicano Park as Public Space in Logan Heights, San Diego.....60  
Figure 30: Barrio Arts Crawl that Brings in Logan Avenue at Logan Heights.....61

## 1.0 Executive Summary

An urban sustainability ethos has taken hold of the planning and transportation fields and, hence, investments in public transit, housing density, and creating walkable and biking neighborhoods is now changing our cities. But these changes come with risks as neighborhood investments make these spaces more lucrative and residents with higher incomes start to move into these communities. These rapid changes in neighborhoods have led to some backlash from community activists who see these projects as Trojan horses that are spurring gentrification and ultimately displacing, via market forces, current low-income residents. The purpose of this report is to help urban planners and transportation policymakers better mitigate gentrification risks and create more equitable outcomes from large-scale transit-oriented development (TOD) projects in low-income Latino/barrio neighborhoods.

Hence, this report provides an understanding of this TOD/gentrification debate and how to mitigate gentrification in low-income neighborhoods where TOD investments have begun to transform these neighborhoods. I tackle the following research questions in this report: What strategies and tools are available to planners and urban transportation policymakers to help them mitigate potential gentrification from their TOD investments? What can urban planners learn from the experiences of neighborhood change in these two Latino neighborhoods?

I have written a previous NITC report titled, *Transit-Oriented Development and Equity in Latino Neighborhoods*. In that report, I documented in detail how the TOD projects in MacArthur Park (Los Angeles) and in Fruitvale (Oakland) were transformed by neighborhood activists to gain more community benefits. Hence, this report will take the findings from that initial report and apply them to the Boyle Heights and Barrio Logan cases to see if the findings are relevant beyond those first two cases. Both reports in fact complement each other and serve as multiple case studies that help transportation planners working in low-income neighborhoods where there are investments in TOD and pressures of gentrification.

In a recently published book, Karen Chapple, Professor of City Planning at UC Berkeley and author of *Planning and Sustainable Cities and Regions* (Routledge Press), underscores the importance of figuring out ways to mitigate for gentrification as transit-rich, low-income neighborhoods are at the top of the at-risk list for gentrifying. She states that, “understanding how these processes [of public investment in low-income neighborhoods] unfold, as well as organizing proactive community responses, is critical if we want to take advantage of rare opportunities for more equitable development,” (Chapple, 2016: 153). Investing in large TODs will bring new capital and resources to neighborhoods. The question really becomes how to design a process within these TOD project that helps low-income neighborhoods benefit from these large-scale transportation projects.

Hence, this report contributes to answering Chapple’s call and provides a better understanding of how to encourage equitable outcomes in TODs by providing a meaningful role to residents and activists that will contribute to development benefits rather than displacement. It provides a detailed account of the process and how the community-driven transformation occurred within both of these barrios. It takes an assets-based approach to understanding the various forms of social, political, and cultural forms of capital that exists in these barrios, and how those assets

helped Boyle Heights and Logan Heights residents and activists transform these TOD projects to gain some community benefits. The report provides a better understanding of how neighborhoods can proactively respond to these emerging changes in our cities.

The key recommendations that emerged from all the case studies include focusing on the endogenous forms of capital in the neighborhood; building on the social, political, economic, and cultural forms of capital in the neighborhood; and emphasizing the public participation processes that actually have an impact on how the TOD project is being implemented. In other words, TOD projects have the opportunity to really make an important contribution towards revitalizing and improving low-income neighborhoods, but this depends on residents *authentically guiding the development process and the building upon barrio assets within the context of the neighborhood.*

Specific strategies for advancing equity are identified in both case studies. For the Boyle Heights case, the key tool used to advance equity was affordable housing. The neighborhood has been transformed from having the largest concentration of affordable housing west of the Mississippi River to now being a more mixed-income neighborhood. There are still strong efforts to develop affordable housing along light rail transit stops. But those affordable housing projects might not be meeting the needs of the most vulnerable and low-income residents. The other lesson learned from Boyle Heights is to invest in Latino placemaking, which is creating a Latino culturally relevant public space as a way to spur vibrancy in a neighborhood. In Boyle Heights, that was done by creating Mariachi Plaza that also brought a kiosk from Mexico. This has created a vibrant urban ambiance with many Latino cultural elements attached to place. Music and cultural festivals, urban farmers markets, lowrider shows, and other social and cultural events have also re-activated and contributed to economic investments along First Street.

A key lesson in Logan Heights is the critical role Chicano Park has played in both revitalizing and protecting the neighborhood. Chicano Park is protected by activists, which represent a strong supply of political capital. This stems from the important community activist organizations in the neighborhood such as Barrio Station, the Environmental Health Coalition, and the Chicano Park Steering Committee. This political capital can be harnessed at any time to create protest or other community actions if the neighborhood is being threatened. And that has gone a long way to serve as a form of resistance to the pressures of gentrification and neighborhood turnover.

Yet another strategy that was used by planners in Logan Heights was to invest in public art via the muralist at Chicano Park. Both TODs, El Mercado Del Barrio and COM 22, commissioned local Chicano Park artists to provide public art at their development. Collaborating with these community artists is another example of the type of equity links these TODs have with the surrounding neighborhood.

TOD projects that pay close attention to local neighborhood needs and incorporate endogenous forms of capital into the planning and design may produce positive and equitable outcomes in these low-income neighborhoods. They can serve to contribute to the revitalization of the barrios by bringing needed economic investments and increased access to public transportation. However, these new transportation infrastructure investments will also increase pressures of gentrification. Therefore, this report offers specific strategies and tools that planners can apply to help these neighborhoods upgrade while also mitigating for gentrification risks. Mitigation

strategies learned from these case studies include building affordable housing, supporting Latino culturally relevant public spaces, investing in community-based public arts, and collaborating with activists in the neighborhoods to make these TODs more community oriented.

All four case studies demonstrate how these particular neighborhoods were able to transform these TOD projects and actually gain some community benefits. They have done this because these are special spaces. Barrio spaces that maintain strong forms of social, economic, political and cultural capital. The residents, local business owners, and activists pushed back and resisted these large-scale projects. And by that resistance they were able to improve their neighborhood as they influenced the planning transportation process.

## 2.0 Introduction: Mitigating for TOD-initiated gentrification

Inner-city neighborhoods in the U.S. are undergoing rapid transformations. Investment in active transportation infrastructure is providing opportunities for people to leave their auto-dominated lifestyles. These investments are characterized as transportation sustainability investments that include bike infrastructure, investments in more walkable neighborhoods, and improving access to public transportation (Golub et al., 2016). Land use changes that increase housing and commercial density are also being linked to active transportation investments such as bus rapid transit stations, light rail stations and subway stations.

These sustainability transportation investments have the potential to also bring needed resources to low-income communities of color. Investments in transit-oriented development have the potential to improve access to transit-dependent communities; encourage economic development; facilitate affordable housing projects; and even relocate social services near stations, which all relate to an equity lens of sustainability (Sandoval, 2015). However, there are risks associated with using TODs as catalysts for revitalizing low-income communities of color. These new transportation infrastructural investments make these neighborhoods more lucrative for higher-income residents and can increase pressures of gentrification.

This report tackles the TOD/gentrification debate. Do TODs improve access to transportation and help to catalyze neighborhood revitalization, or do these projects serve as catalysts for neighborhood gentrification? The report is based on two California Latino neighborhood case studies: Boyle Heights in Los Angeles and Logan Heights in San Diego. In both neighborhoods, the investments around TODs served as the catalysts for neighborhood revitalization and both neighborhoods are also experiencing pressures of gentrification.

The purpose of this report is to help urban planners and transportation policymakers better understand how to mitigate for potential gentrification in low-income neighborhoods where TOD investments have begun to transform these neighborhoods. The report will answer the following research questions: What strategies and tools are available to planners and urban transportation policymakers to help them mitigate potential gentrification from their TOD investments? What can urban planners learn from the experiences of neighborhood change in these two Latino neighborhoods?

The two neighborhood case studies are rich with detail, but for the purpose of this report the focus will be outcomes of the projects to help planners understand what is possible and how equity can be designed into these TOD projects. The focus is directly on how transportation planners can mitigate gentrification and encourage community benefits in these barrios. The report is intended for urban planners and transportation policymakers who hope to both invest in these barrios via TODs but also make sure those investments actually benefit current residents.

In a previous NITC report, I documented in detail how the TOD projects in MacArthur Park and in Fruitvale were transformed to gain more community benefits. This second report should be read in conjunction with the first. The two case studies in this report complement the MacArthur Park and Fruitvale report. That research project revealed that large-scale TOD projects have the

potential to lead to neighborhood revitalization and equitable outcomes in low-income communities. But these positive outcomes depend on both the process and context of these particular neighborhoods, and how transportation planners incorporate the various forms of political, financial and cultural capital that exist in these communities into the planning and implementation process of TOD projects. We uncovered how TOD projects in Latino neighborhoods had the potential to improve access to regional transportation systems, increase the number of affordable housing units, support local and diverse Latino retail businesses, and build upon existing social services. In that first report, we concluded that TODs can help serve as catalysts for revitalization in low-income neighborhoods by paying attention to and building upon endogenous forms of cultural, political, financial and built capital that exist in these neighborhoods, and encourage more bottom-up participatory forms of decision-making and activism in neighborhoods (Sandoval and Herrera, 2015). Hence, this new report will take the findings from the first report and apply them to the Boyle Heights and Barrio Logan cases to see what of those findings are relevant to these barrios. Both reports complement each other and can serve as case studies that help other low-income neighborhoods where there are investments in TOD and pressures of gentrification.

### **3.0 Literature Review: Sustainability and gentrification**

The first report compares MacArthur Park to the Fruitvale Transit Village. It provides a detailed literature review on the current TOD literature. The report reviews the various definitions of transit-oriented development (Cervero et al., 2002; Dittmar and Ohrland, 2004; Lefaver, 1997). That report's literature review also goes into key debates about measuring the impacts of TODs (Boarnet and Crane, 1998A; Salvensen, 1996; Still, 2002; and Bernick and Cervero, 1997). It also introduces and explains the relevance of social capital to the transportation planning literature. The social capital framing is key to understanding how local community assets can be built upon to create planning interventions that provide meaningful forms of participation for community residents into these large-scale transportation infrastructure projects. In the initial report, I incorporated Cornelia Flora's Community Capitals Framework to understand how social capital networks were built upon to make these projects more equitable.

The first report also provides a comprehensive review of the historical assessment of transportation infrastructural projects in low-income communities of color (Mohl, 1993; Avila 2014). Within this literature, a review of the current transportation justice and equity literature is provided (Bullard and Johnson, 1997; Litman, 2002; Dittmar and Ohland, 2004) which is relevant to these new case studies. The key point of that review is to show that large-scale transportation infrastructural projects have had very destructive consequences for communities of color in the U.S. The construction of freeways is one key example as it directly relates to both Boyle Heights and Chicano Park. In fact, both of these neighborhoods have been defined by freeways that have displaced and segregated these neighborhoods (Avila, 2014). Boyle Heights has five freeways cutting into the neighborhood, and Logan Heights was cut into four sections by Interstate 5 and the Coronado Bridge. The consequent segregation and displacement of neighborhoods because of freeways is well documented within the urban studies and planning literature (Mohl, 1993; Avila, 2014).

It is important to recall this literature when studying the impacts of TODs because the risks of displacement and community turnover that had historically threatened these neighborhoods could easily manifest itself in today's transportation infrastructural projects. In fact, this is the key risk that TODs in low-income communities play and why there seems to be a backlash to TODs or even bike lanes (Hoffmann, 2016), bike share (Golub et al., 2016), and other sustainable transportation infrastructural projects in low-income neighborhoods. The investments are not seen as actually benefiting the current residents in those neighborhoods, but instead are seen as catalysts to improving the accessibility of these neighborhoods to draw in more affluent populations (Lobitow et al., 2015). Hence, gentrification is a real issue in these neighborhoods because historically a lot of government transportation investments have actually hurt these communities (Lee, 1997; Stolz, 2002).

There is a wealth of literature on gentrification in the urban studies and planning fields (Glass, 1964; Freeman, 2001; Chapple, 2016; Vale, 2013). There are debates related to definitional issues where scholars view gentrification from cultural to economic views. To the point, gentrification is "the process by which higher income households displace lower income residents in a neighborhood, changing the essential character and flavor of that neighborhood"

(Kenney and Leonard, 2001). In other words, gentrification is residential or commercial displacement due to the increase of exchange value of land (Logan and Molotch, 2007). However, others view it as the change in ethnic demographics or a change in the income or education of neighborhood residents. For example, some take a cultural view and define it as an increase of artists in the neighborhood. The key issue is whether the residents or local business owners will not be able to afford the rent due to these other social cultural changes. Hence, the change in rent value seems to be the key variable.

Related to the definitional issues is the operationalization of gentrification. That is, how do you actually measure gentrification? There is also a wealth of literature in this regard (Gould, Ellen and O'Regan, 2011; Freeman, 2005; McKinnish, Walsh, and White, 2010). These researchers want to have a definitive line to be able to pinpoint where gentrification is happening and use that as a baseline for discussions of gentrification. Some even develop indicators based on ethnicity or income to identify at-risk neighborhoods. Others develop typologies of gentrifying neighborhoods (Chapple, 2009). These studies are useful to policymakers as they try to implement policies that impede gentrification. However, gentrification is a condition inscribed within our changing market economy that is related to cities' overall economic and cultural changes that might even be tied to global relationships. Hence, measuring gentrification in particular neighborhoods does not identify the causes of what is driving the gentrification and therefore limits an understanding of the larger economic and political structural forces shaping the process. In other words, gentrification is tied to larger policies and real estate conditions that go beyond a city's boundary and beyond the impacts of particular projects like TODs. Hence, measuring gentrification seems to be conceptually very limiting, but might be politically useful for groups advocating for anti-gentrification campaigns. For the purposes of this study, I focus on the reactions of neighborhood groups to an increase of gentrification risks but do not link any causal claims to what is driving gentrification.

The most relevant gentrification debates related to TODs have to do with the changes in land value due to the new investments in these neighborhoods (Blackwell, 2000; Hodge, 1980). If the point of building TODs in these neighborhoods is to improve access to a regional transportation system and also link increased housing and commercial density, then those changes will most likely increase the value of that land. Karen Chapple's quantitative study on gentrifying neighborhoods in the Bay Area found that those neighborhoods more susceptible to gentrification were those that had, "availability of amenities and public transportation" (Chapple, 2009). She states that those are important findings as "public investment and funding supports these factors [access to public transportation], creating an obligation to ensure that the broad public benefits" from those investments (Chapple, 2016). An emerging literature on green gentrification nicely links to Chapple's empirical work on sustainability and equity. This greening of urban policy and planning links sustainability practices to gentrification and the consequent transformation of low-income neighborhoods (Gould and Lewis, 2017). These authors argue that "although greening is ostensibly intended to improve environmental conditions in neighborhoods, it generates green gentrification that pushes out the working-class, and people of color, and attracts white, wealthier in-migrants" (Gould and Lewis, 2017). This literature is useful as more urban infrastructural projects will be using a sustainability lens, and low-income neighborhoods might not be directly benefiting from these projects.

The key literature this report helps contribute toward relates to making these urban sustainable transportation projects work for low-income neighborhoods of color. There is not a lot of transportation planning literature directly on this topic. In fact, Karen Chapple's new book, Planning Sustainable Cities and Regions: Towards more Equitable Development (Routledge Press) calls for more case studies that explore issues mitigating gentrification around public transit investments. Strong market areas are "experiencing an unprecedented demand for higher-density, transit-oriented communities, this will put gentrification pressures on traditional city neighborhoods, which will not be able to build infill development fast enough. Even if displacement has been slow to date, it will undoubtedly accelerate under this growth pressure. But understanding how these processes unfold, as well as organizing proactive community responses, is critical if we want to take advantage of rare opportunities for more equitable development," (Chapple, 2016: 153).

In order to understand how these TOD projects unfolded in Latino neighborhoods, the cultural milieu that exists in these neighborhoods needs to be explored: the barrio. The barrio is the Latino cultural milieu within these important historically Latino neighborhoods, and represents the spatial and symbolic relationships that bind Latinos to place (Villa, 2000; Diaz, 2005; Avila, 2014). Although barrios were created as spaces of segregation via discriminatory urban policies, barrios are also spaces with strong levels of social capital and community-based networks which are used as a form of resistance (Diaz and Torres, 2012). Boyle Heights and Logan Heights are important barrios, as they represent symbolic sites for a broader community beyond even the residents who currently live in these spaces. The barrio can be seen as an important form of Latino placemaking that draws on everyday lived experiences via forms of social, political, and cultural capital that exist in these neighborhoods (Arreola, 2004; Valle and Torres, 2000). Situating the barrio within an assets framing sheds light on how community residents were able to meaningfully guide the implementation of these TODs, and gain community benefits from these projects that initially threatened their barrios. The study tries to answer Chapple's call to shed understanding on how neighborhoods can proactively respond to the risks that come from transit investments which might lead to displacement via gentrification.

#### **4.0 Theoretical Framing and Method: A comparative case study of two neighborhoods**

The theoretical framing used in this study builds from the first study of MacArthur Park and Fruitvale. Cornelia Flora's Community Capital Framework (CCF) is a useful framing to understand the resources and assets that exist in these barrios. Flora argues that communities encompass various forms of capital, such as political, cultural, social, financial, human and built capital (Flora, 2013) that these communities rely on to improve their quality of life.

The research used a comparative case study approach. Initially, I had written my dissertation on neighborhood changes in MacArthur Park in Los Angeles. I later went on to write a book on urban revitalization in immigrant neighborhoods based on my dissertation. I then initiated another study focused on TOD and equity issues that took what I learned from MacArthur Park and applied it to the Fruitvale Transit Village. Then this study builds on all those findings yet expands them into two more case studies: Boyle Heights and Logan Heights.

What makes these case studies similar is that they are all in California, so are working under a similar policy public transportation domain. They are all in historically Latino neighborhoods, barrios. Fruitvale might be more multicultural and MacArthur Park is comprised of both Mexicans and Central Americans. But Boyle Heights and Logan Heights have very similar demographics and, interestingly, a similar history of large-scale freeways cutting off and segregating both communities. All of these neighborhoods have initially pushed back against large-scale TOD projects that seemed to threaten the neighborhoods. But then residents and neighborhood activist worked with urban planners to reshape these projects to gain more community benefits from the new investments. Hence, I am interested in understanding how this process occurred and the more equitable outcomes that come out of the projects.

I interviewed about 100 stakeholders in total. That is 100 people in all four neighborhoods. These were usually in-depth interviews that lasted about one hour. In some cases, I interviewed key informants for longer times. For example, one interview lasted six hours in Logan Heights. Another interview in Fruitvale lasted three hours, and I had another interview in Boyle Heights that also lasted three hours. In Macarthur Park, I formally interviewed key stakeholders more than once as I had to update that study. I actually interviewed my key informant in MacArthur Park three times during a 10-year period for that study.

To analyze the interviews, I transcribed them and coded them as themes emerged that linked all four cases together. For example, one important theme was neighborhood activism. I then identified other subthemes within neighborhood activism, like the role woman played in transforming the projects, to help me see the connections between all four projects. I then organized my analysis by understanding the key story behind each neighborhood that related to the TOD. That gave me a good way to organize the emerging themes and yet point to some concrete outcomes that transportation policymakers and urban planners could learn from.

## 5.0 Getting to know Boyle Heights, Los Angeles

Boyle Heights is the heart of Latino Los Angeles as one of the original barrios of LA. It is located east of downtown LA and west of East Los Angeles. The transformation of Boyle Heights has mainly occurred via government-provided or subsidized housing. Boyle Heights had the highest concentration of public housing west of the Mississippi River but that is drastically changing. The extension of the light rail system (built in 2009), the Gold Line, into East LA has contributed to those changes. The Gold Line and other public investments like a HOPE VI housing project in Aliso Pico have furthered this transformation.

The Pico/Aliso Station is located in the western part of the Boyle Heights neighborhood, and serves a high-density residential neighborhood. The station was built to allow residents easier access to downtown and the rest of Los Angeles. Downtown is just across the Los Angeles River. The station also provides access to the Mendez Learning Center, a new high school located across the street that was named in honor of the first couple to file an anti-segregation lawsuit against the Los Angeles Unified School District. The campus provides a science-based curriculum for two small schools focused on engineering, technology, math and science. Buildings and spaces throughout the complex have been designed to provide community residents after-hours access.



Figure 1: TOD Across the Street from Aliso/Pico Development

This study focuses on two light rail extension stops within Boyle Heights, Pico/Aliso and Plaza Mariachi, as they were the first two to serve as catalysts for the neighborhood's revitalization. The Gold Line going through Boyle Heights also includes Soto Station and Indiana Station (which borders East LA). Pico/Aliso TOD is linked to a large Hope VI project that has displaced residents of the previous public housing projects. This development is now a mixed-

income housing development that also contains market rate housing, a community center and some affordable subsidized housing units. The second station, Plaza Mariachi station, helped create a new public space with a Latino theme where cultural events and festivals take place. That station also serves to connect First Street, a vibrant commercial corridor that is experiencing revitalization similar to Logan Avenue in Logan Heights. Latino restaurants, arts studios, and cafes are creating a new type of Chicano hipster milieu in the neighborhood. Affordable housing is also linked to the TOD, as the East LA Development Corporation refurbished an existing residential building, the Mariachi Hotel, with affordable housing units. The community is increasingly worried about gentrification concerns with all the new public and private investments in the neighborhood.

## 5.1 Demographic changes in Boyle Heights

Boyle Heights is also at a crossroads. A historically Latino barrio, the area has a lot of sentimental value for the Latino community of Los Angeles. Interestingly enough, the demographic changes in the neighborhood are drastically similar to those in Logan Heights, the second case study in this report. The area is mostly Latino, about 90%, and mostly Mexican American. Income has basically remained the same as have poverty levels, although they decreased a little. In terms of immigration, there has been small changes. The key changes, which are also interestingly similar to Logan Heights, are changes in rent and educational attainment levels. Rents are drastically increasing and the population is generally better educated in the neighborhood than 20 years ago. The crime rates have dramatically dropped in the area, which is a key part of Boyle Heights’ story. Although these demographic changes do not point to dramatic shifts due to gentrification, some of the indicators point to the beginning of demographic changes in the neighborhood. And like Logan Heights, residents and activists are very concerned about the rising rents and the qualitative indicators that point to a context of gentrification.

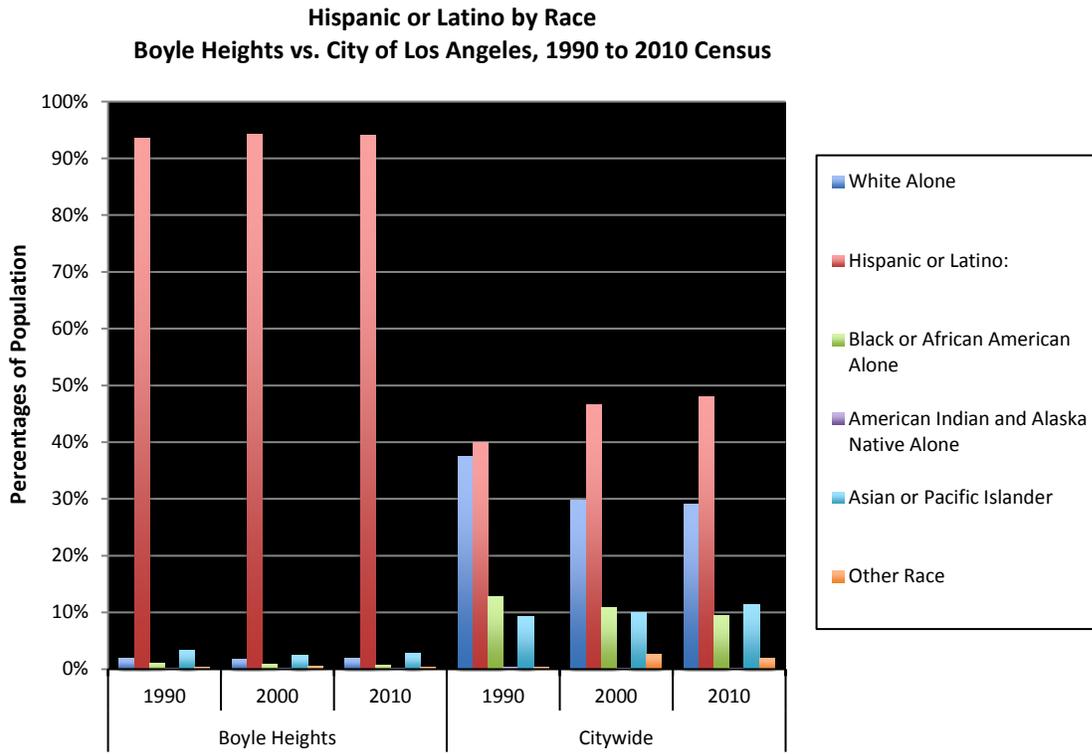
Table 1: Total Population for Boyle Heights and the City of Los Angeles.

	Boyle Heights			Citywide		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
White Alone	1,946	1,703	1,726	1,299,950	1,099,188	1,094,781
Hispanic or Latino:	96,041	87,550	86,216	1,386,233	1,719,073	1,813,852
Black or African American Alone	1,005	768	718	446,155	401,986	357,157
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	118	196	167	9,761	8,897	5,928
Asian or Pacific Islander	3,340	2,242	2,509	320,495	369,334	428,961
Other Race	270	462	331	9,595	96,342	71,797
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>102,720</b>	<b>92,921</b>	<b>91,667</b>	<b>3,472,189</b>	<b>3,694,820</b>	<b>3,772,486</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T13; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T15; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T14<sup>1</sup>

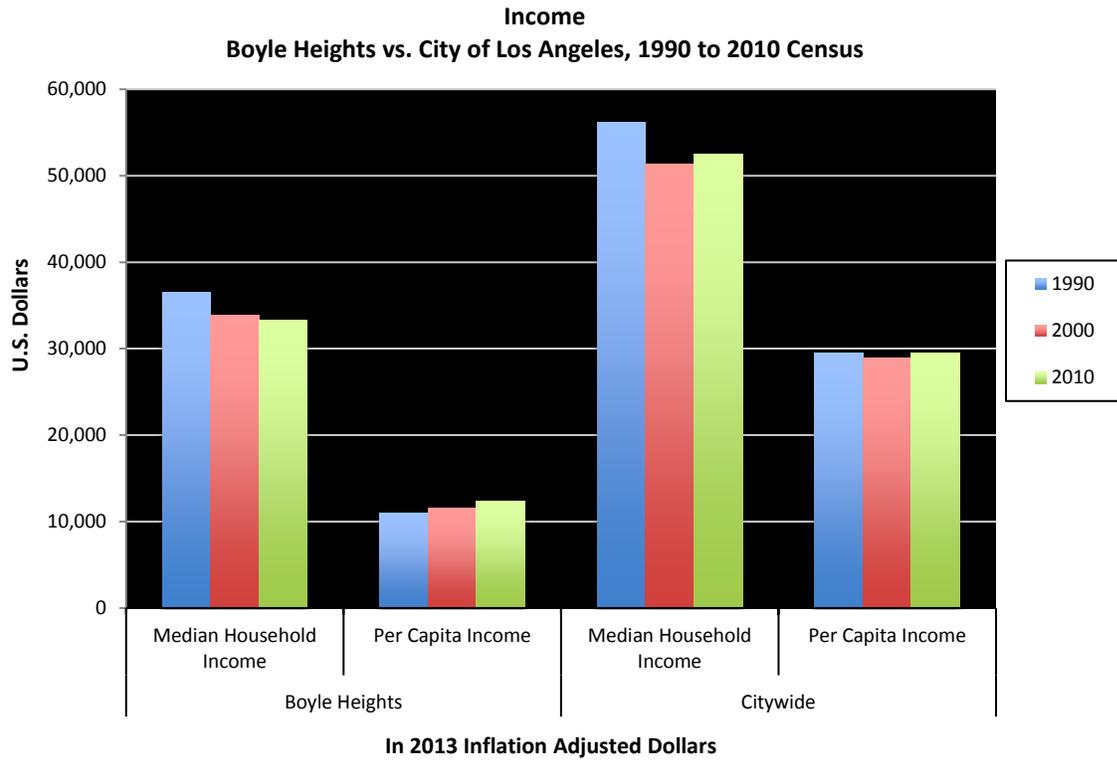
<sup>1</sup> See References Section for Census Tract and Block Group Information.

Figure 2: Latinos in Boyle Heights vs. City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010



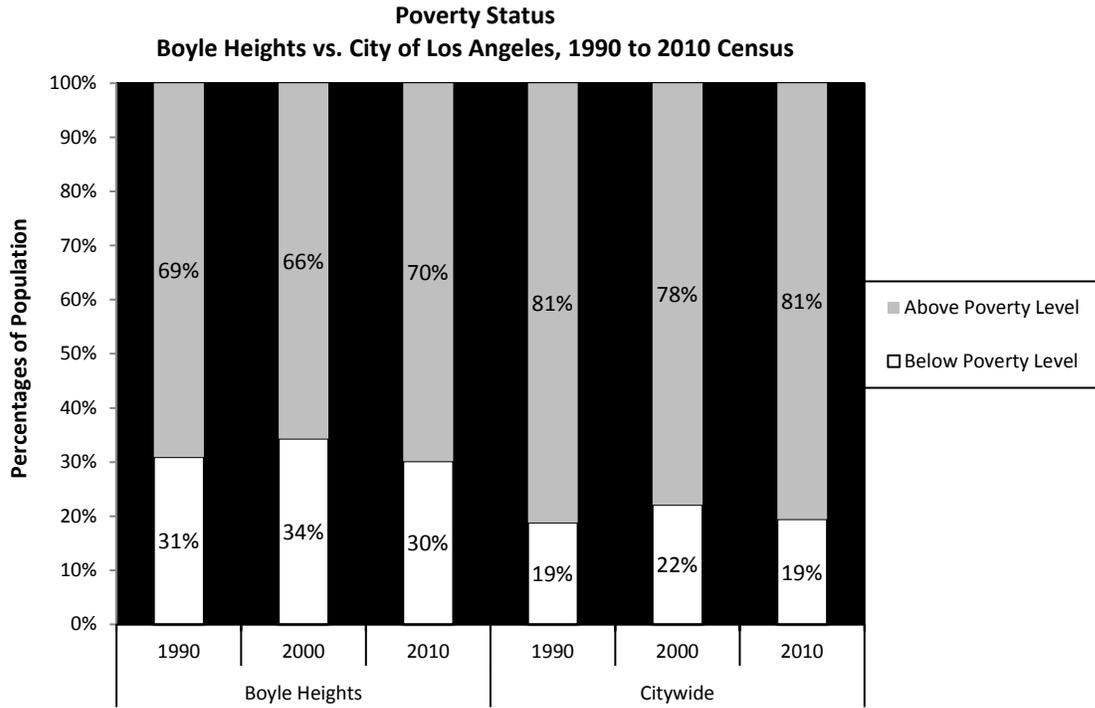
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T13; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T15; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T14

Figure 3: Income in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1990-2010



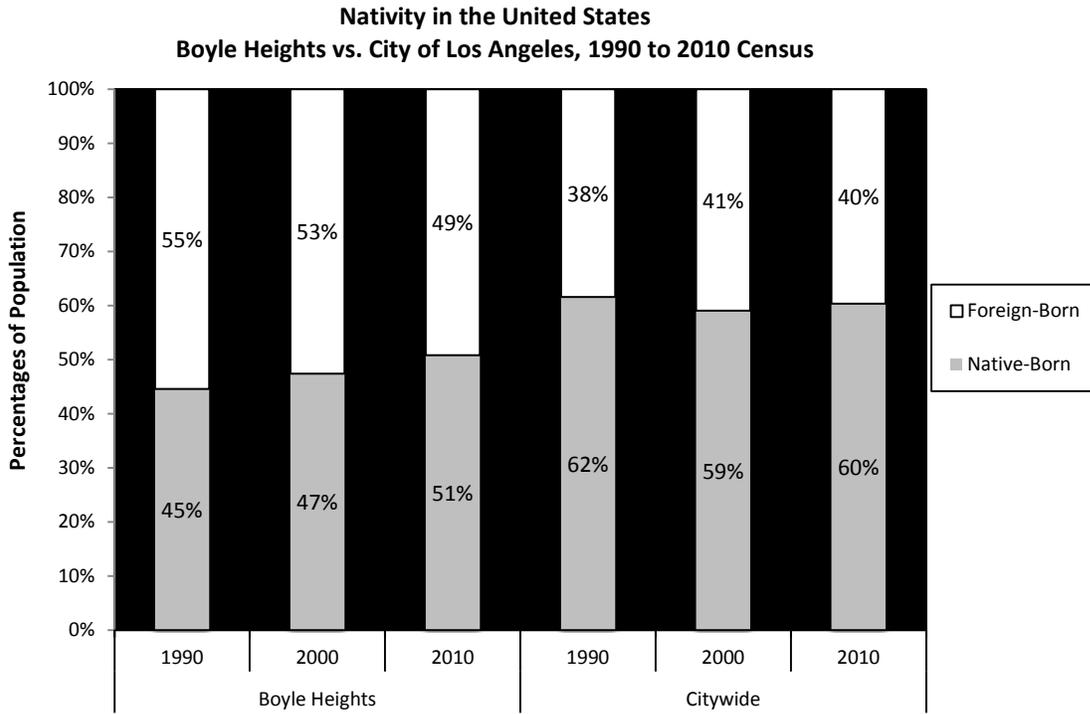
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T43, Table SE: T65; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T93, Table SE: T145; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T57, Table SE: T83

Figure 4: Poverty in Boyle Heights vs the City of Los Angeles, 1990-2010



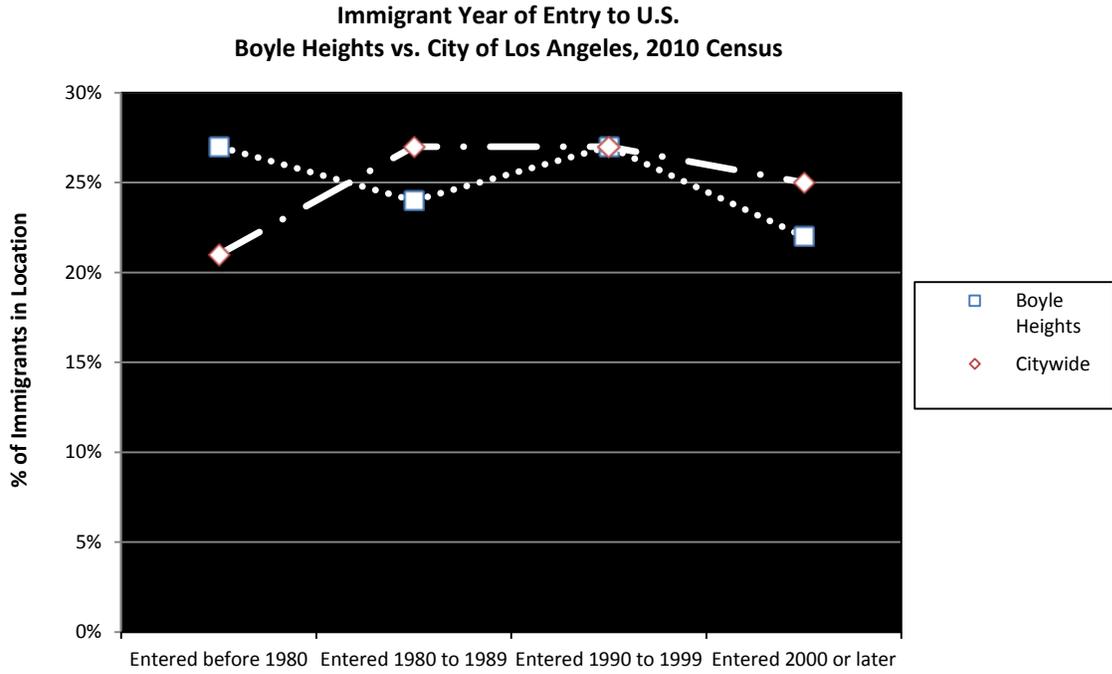
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T93; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T185; U. S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T118

Figure 5: Immigrants in Boyle Heights vs the City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010



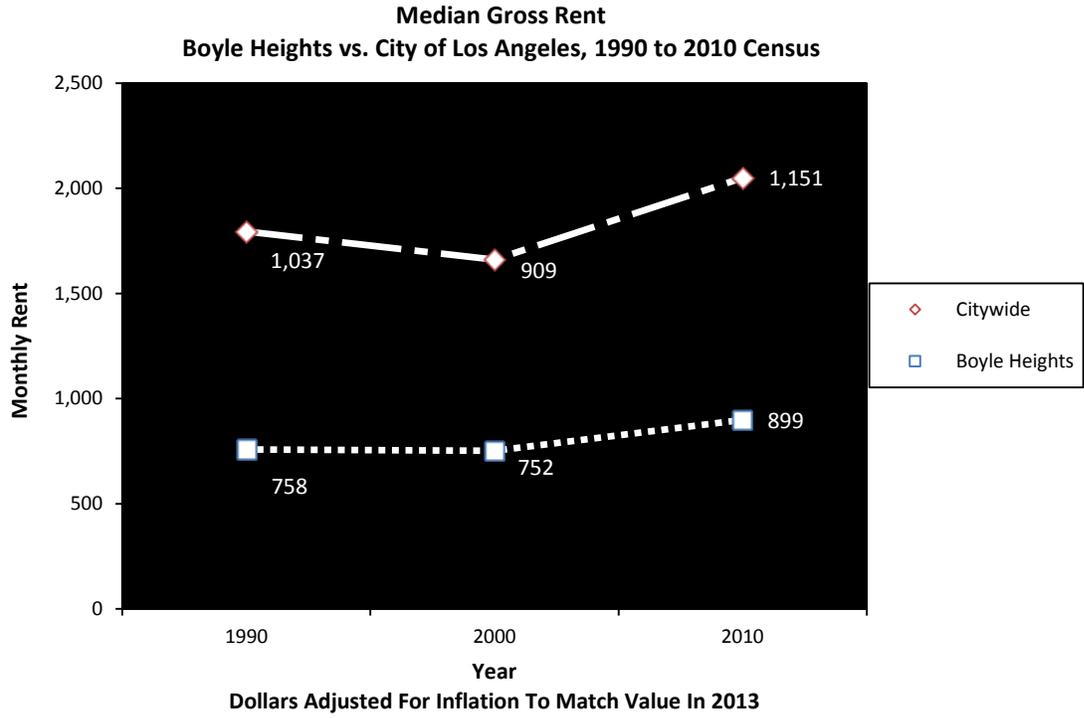
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T110; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T201; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T133

Figure 6: Year Immigrants Arrived in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles



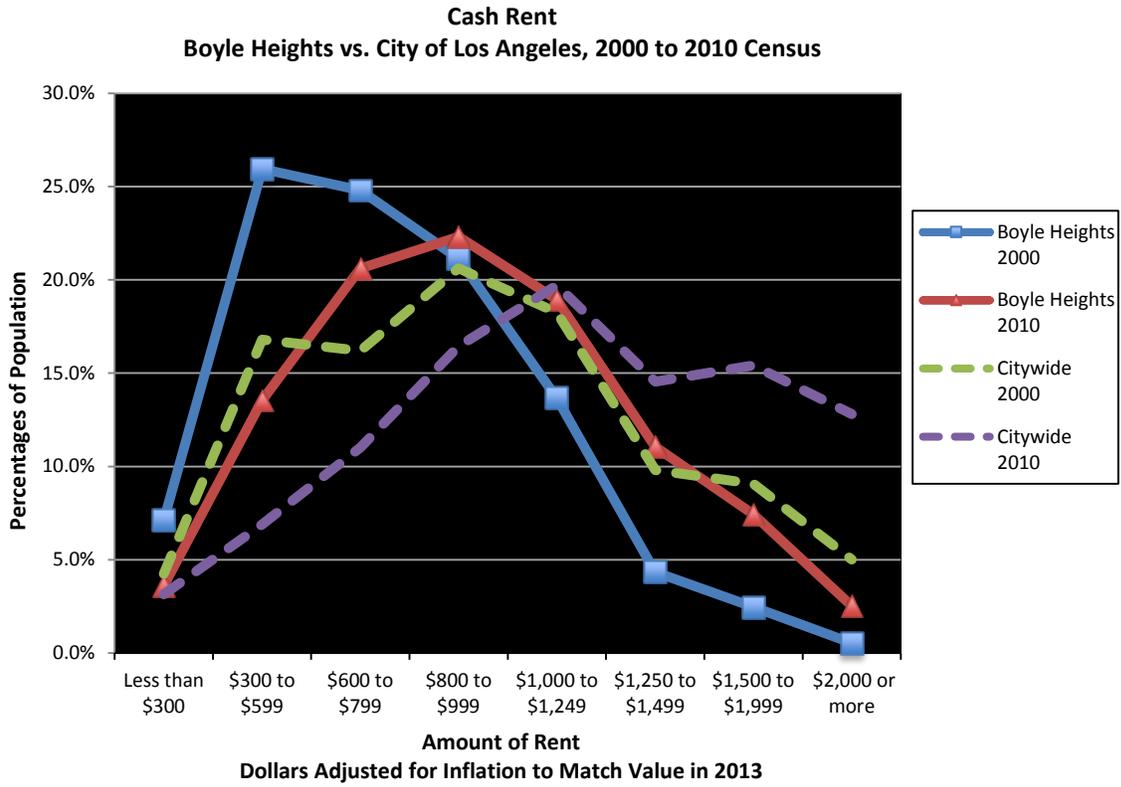
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T134

Figure 7: Rent in Boyle Heights vs the City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010



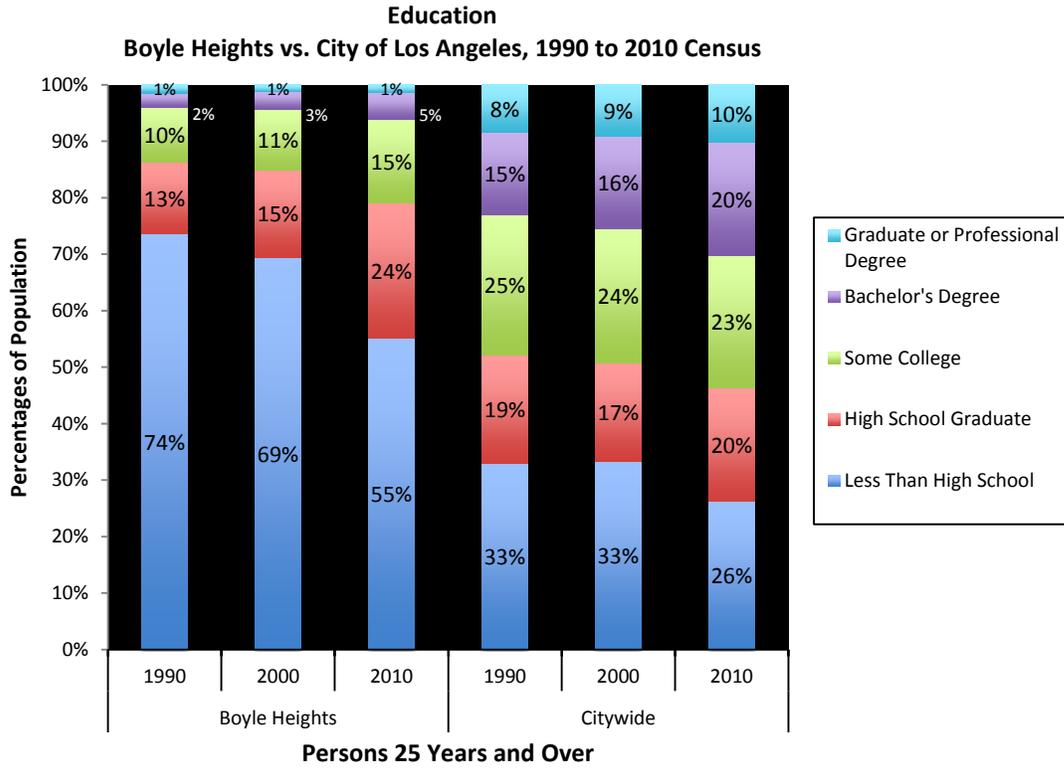
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T82; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T167; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T104

Figure 8: Cash Rent in Boyle Heights vs the City of Los Angeles, 1990-2010



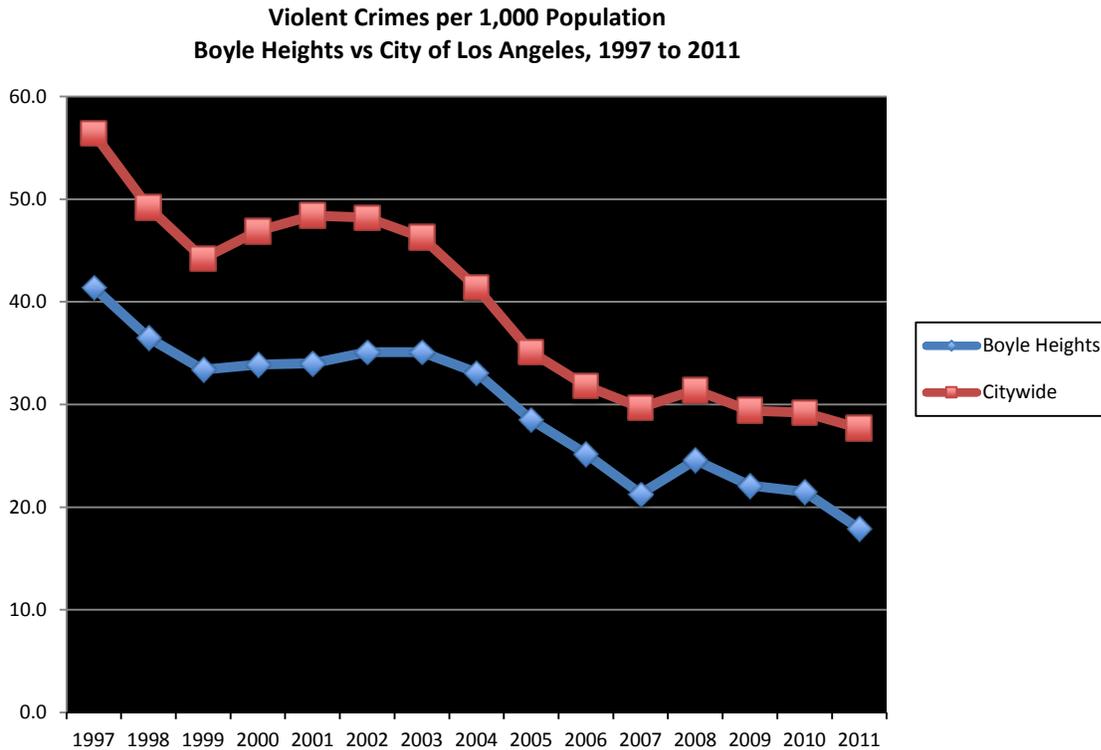
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T81; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T165; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T102

Figure 9: Education Attainment in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T22; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T40; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T25

Figure 10: Crimes in Boyle Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1997 to 2011



Source: Summary of City of Los Angeles Crimes and Arrests per 1000 Population for 1997-2011

## 5.2 Story of Aliso Pico and Mariachi Plaza

“El Tren De Las Criadas: The rail for Nany's. People will be able to live here and travel to the west side. It gives people opportunities.” - Architect in Boyle Heights

One of the goals of the Gold Line Extension was to encourage transit-oriented development (TOD) around Metro stations. There are two new housing developments near the Aliso/Pico TOD; the most prominent development is the Pueblo del Sol public housing project (formerly Aliso Village Housing Project) that is located a few minutes walking distance to the northeast of the station. And Pueblo del Sol, a New Urbanist development, consists of largely detached and semi-detached single-family homes (337 units). The units are spacious, energy-efficient, and have modern kitchen and bathroom fixtures. Housing project amenities include two community centers, an exercise room, swimming pools, classrooms that offer computer and job training, and playgrounds. This housing project replaced a large public housing project and was built under HUD’s HOPE VI program. The new project provides a mix of for-sale and rental housing for a range of incomes from very low to moderate. Mixed-income housing developments, which usually offer ownership opportunities, are generally used as a tool to both eliminate high levels of concentrated poverty in a neighborhood and combat residential segregation (Vale, 2013). But there are critics of these projects because they do encompass displacement of residents (as happened in this case) and they drastically change the social makeup of neighborhoods. Hence,

the story of Aliso Pico and Mariachi Plaza's TODs is a conflict over access to housing and its links to public transportation.

Aliso Pico was the site of the largest public housing project west of the Mississippi River. It contained 1,200 units of public housing. That housing was displaced to make way for the Hope VI mixed-income housing. Hence, you had a non-profit affordable housing developer build apartments, and there were also 93 units of single-family homes that were built and sold at market rates. But most of the residents who lived in the public housing could not take advantage of the market rate housing, as a former resident explained in an interview:

“The 93 homes...the irony...of the 93 homes, only three were former residents of the housing project. And not just Pico Aliso, but all the projects around here. One of them, they worked for the Unions, the other, they covered their payments with the kids living with them and chipping in, and the last one was me.”

Hence, critics of the project claim that the new affordable, mixed-income apartments and the market rate houses were not targeted to current Boyle Heights residents.

The gangs also had to be displaced in the neighborhood to make way for the HOPE VI project and other housing development. This area was notorious for gang activity both in the projects and around the neighborhood, where estimates counted 42 gangs in the neighborhood. There were gang injunctions in place and once people were displaced, those families that had gang affiliations were not allowed to move into the new housing development. A housing developer in the area explained that process:

“All the new investments in housing, etc. didn't help the gang members. All these gang members have families and they also got pushed out. You created a new process that makes it difficult for those families to remain on site. Because now you are screening, and you can't have those gang members in the properties. It creates more boundaries for families to live in the neighborhoods. At the end of the day, no matter what people think of gang members, there is no support for them.”

The gangs had to be cleared in order to make room for the new transportation, housing and commercial investments to take hold.

The Mariachi Plaza TOD is now becoming the face of Boyle Heights, and that has both its positive aspects and its challenges. It is now a key public space where cultural celebrations and public festivals occur. As one activist sees it, “...the plaza. It is very vibrant. I won't deny that. It's amazing. I think that has changed drastically. You have a lot of people who live here in the projects go over there every Friday night...there's a dance there...they go there...” Mariachi Plaza also serves as a point of entrance into the middle of Boyle Heights and the new commercial developments on First Street. But it's also the new face of potential gentrification in Boyle Heights as the new businesses also cater to outside residents with higher incomes. With new Chicano hipster bars opening and emerging arts centers, you have started to see more community activists start to push back on the new developments as they see them as contributing to the raise in rents within the neighborhood.

Figure 11: Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights



The East LA Development Corporation has been at the forefront of providing affordable housing in the neighborhood. In fact, they have a large affordable housing project across the street from Mariachi Plaza, the Boyle Hotel. But the Mariachi Plaza TOD is still not completed; it is a work in progress as Metro plans two more lots next to the station and is currently developing plans for those two sites. In fact, their initial plans for the development were not seen as community oriented and residents and activists opposed them. One activist involved in the process explained why there was opposition:

Then there was another development where they were going to do all of this parking...they were going to build a parking lot, a gym, and all this other stuff...and the developers made the huge mistake that their design...the pictures they were showing for the design didn't show anything that looked like the Mariachi Plaza that we know or that we aspire to have. No street vendors, no mariachis...nothing. So the community went up in arms and started protesting. And then Metro pretty much stopped and pulled back from that project...and technically said that they would do something that the community wants.

Sandoval: So this is recent, right?

Very, very recent. And we're going through this process where supposedly they're doing all of this consultation. In the meantime, through our own work, we start pulling out the whole issue about incomes...basically showing that the affordable housing was not

affordable. So we started pushing and saying, "well, we want affordable housing that is affordable for the community."

Mariachi Plaza has the potential of transforming that area into a vibrant space where Latino culture and businesses could really thrive. But the housing affordability issue and incorporating the community's needs into the planning of the TOD will dictate whether the community there sees the project as a tool that helped revitalize the neighborhood or helped to gentrify it.

## 6.0 Getting to know Logan Heights, San Diego



Figure 12: Chicano Park Mural

Some of the new affordable housing units in the Mercado Del Barrio development have views of the San Diego Bay. They sit on top of diverse businesses such as a microbrewery, a barbershop, a CrossFit gym, a laundromat, and directly in front of a Latino-themed grocery store, Northgate Mercado. The development also has a public space, a Latino-themed plaza with water spouts and an area for public music. Other businesses in the new development are a Latino ice cream shop and a seafood restaurant. The new development also incorporated public art from Chicano Park muralists in the neighborhood throughout the apartments and storefronts. One of the most

important public spaces for Latinos in Southern California is directly adjacent to the new Mercado Del Barrio development, Chicano Park.

Chicano Park has the largest concentration of outdoor public murals in the United States. It is a public space which was taken over by the Chicano community in the 1970s as a response to the continued construction of freeways that kept separating and segregating the neighborhood. In 2013 the park was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The public space is a gathering place for local activists who view the space as a place of resistance and self-determination.



Figure 13: El Mercado Del Barrio Development Project in Boyle Heights

The neighborhood is actually cut into two parts (thanks to Interstate 5). Hence, the western side is officially called Barrio Logan (by the city which defined it as such) and the eastern part, Logan Heights. But previous to I-5, they were just one neighborhood, Logan Heights. Just south of the El Mercado Del Barrio development sits a new community college, the Cesar Chavez Continuing Education Campus, which promises to bring in hundreds of new students into the neighborhood every day. Next to the community college is the San Diego Trolley stop which makes this area a transit-adjacent development. Logan Avenue that crosses Chicano Park is the site of a new vibrant arts milieu that has local neighborhood artists but has also drawn in artist from through San Diego who are contributing to the new artsy scene developing in the neighborhood. Logan Avenue also has older businesses that are owned by Latinos and newer Latino businesses that cater to people outside the neighborhood, such as a new Latino-themed microbrewery, a Latino coffee shop, and new Latino restaurants that draw in a younger hip crowd.

The Barrio Logan Trolley Station is located on the Metropolitan Transit System’s (MTS) Blue Line, an 18.8-mile line that connects downtown San Diego to the U.S/International Border with Mexico, which was opened in 1981. The Barrio Logan Trolley Station is being renovated as part of a Trolley Renewal Project. The improvements are a \$660 million project designed to renew the entire trolley network of 53 stations, which comprises 53.5 miles (the San Diego Trolley system is comprised of the Green Line, Orange Line, and Blue Line). Their goal is to have their stations equipped with new passenger shelters, next-arrival electronic signs, enhanced lighting, and station boarding platforms.

Logan Heights also has another TOD project, the COMM 22 TOD. This TOD has 250 units mainly for the aging population which are all affordable housing units. It contains public art which was painted by Chicano Park muralists. Hence, Logan Heights has two TOD projects that have in a short time served as catalysts for new investment happening in the neighborhood. Logan Heights, like Boyle Heights, is at a crossroads between maintaining its Latino historical neighborhood characteristics and pressures of gentrification.

### 6.1 Demographic changes in Logan Heights, San Diego

The following section describes the demographic characteristics of the barrio. It paints a picture of a Latino, mainly Mexican American, community that is undergoing some quick demographic changes, especially in terms of income and education indicators. Logan Heights is predominantly Latino, with about 90% of residents being Latino, which has not changed in the last 25 years. Income levels have also remained relatively steady, but poverty levels have decreased as have immigrant levels. Rents, similarly to Boyle Heights, have increased and so has the level of education of residents in the neighborhood. Even though these demographic changes do not point to alarming rates of gentrification, neighborhood residents and activists are worried about gentrification pressures. They have organized to make sure most of the new housing development in the neighborhood has been affordable.

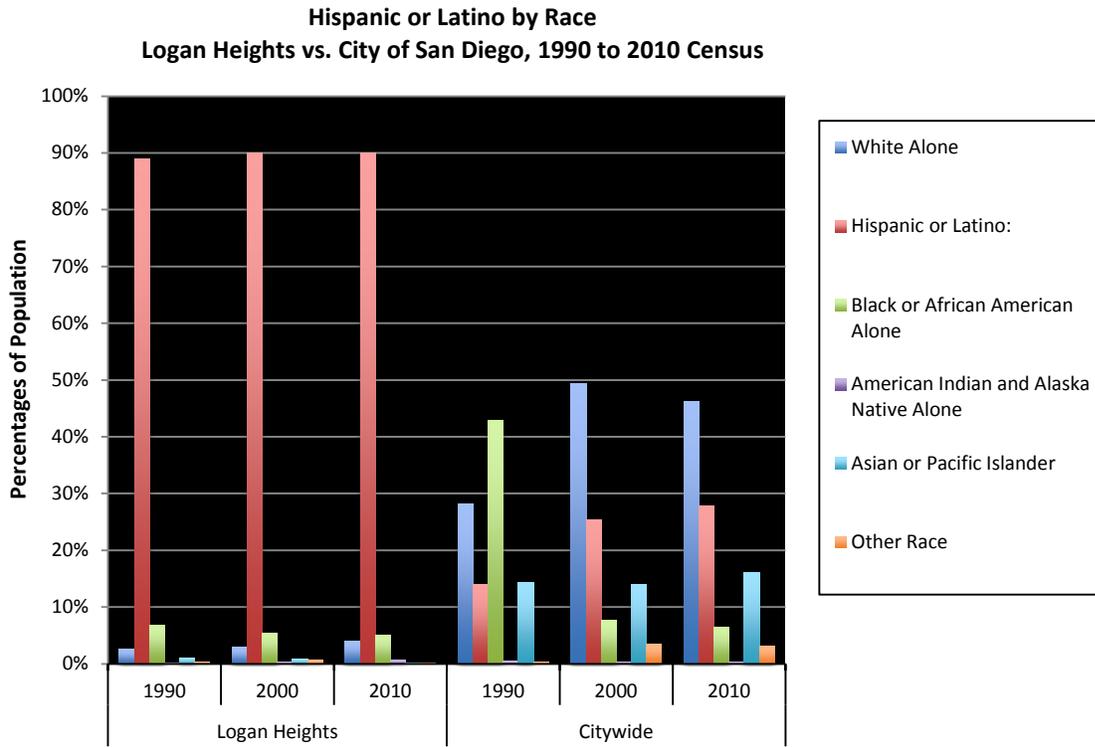
Table 2: Total Population for Historic Core Area in Barrio Logan and the City of San Diego.

	Barrio Logan			Citywide		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
White Alone	189	217	278	104,733	603,892	593,166
Hispanic or Latino:	6,432	6,695	6,277	51,617	310,752	357,799
Black or African American Alone	497	402	349	159,277	92,830	83,177
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	6	17	46	1,800	4,267	3,408
Asian or Pacific Islander	76	68	11	52,983	170,206	205,344
Other Race	25	45	10	1,031	41,453	39,906
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>7,225</b>	<b>7,444</b>	<b>6,971</b>	<b>371,441</b>	<b>1,223,400</b>	<b>1,282,800</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T13; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T15; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T14<sup>2</sup>

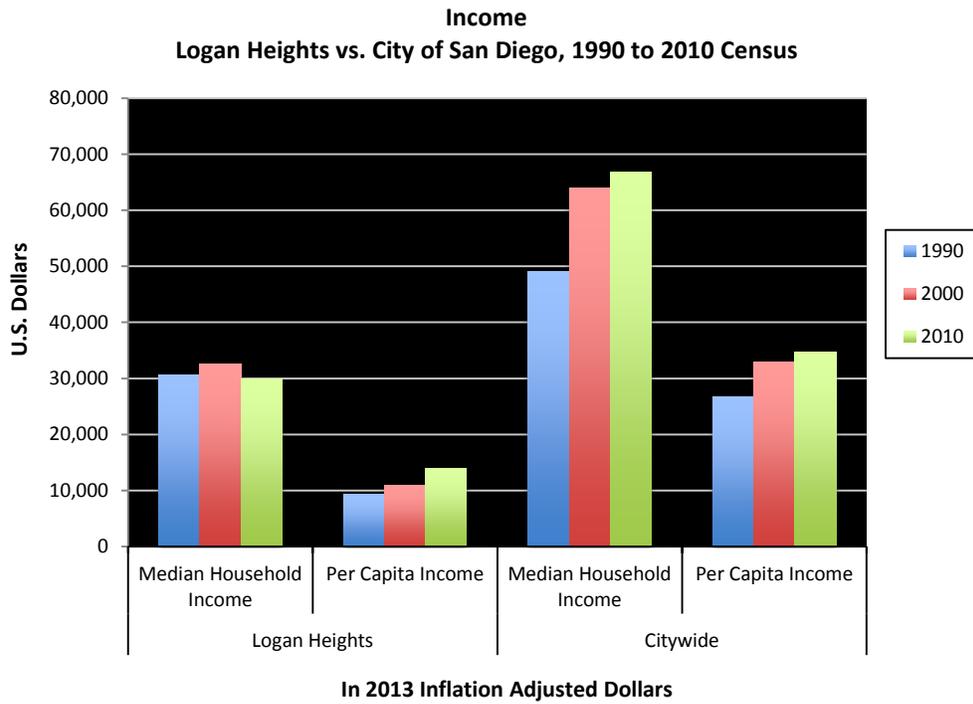
<sup>2</sup> See References Section for Census Tract and Block Group Information.

Figure 14: Latinos in Logan Heights vs City of Los Angeles, 1990 to 2010



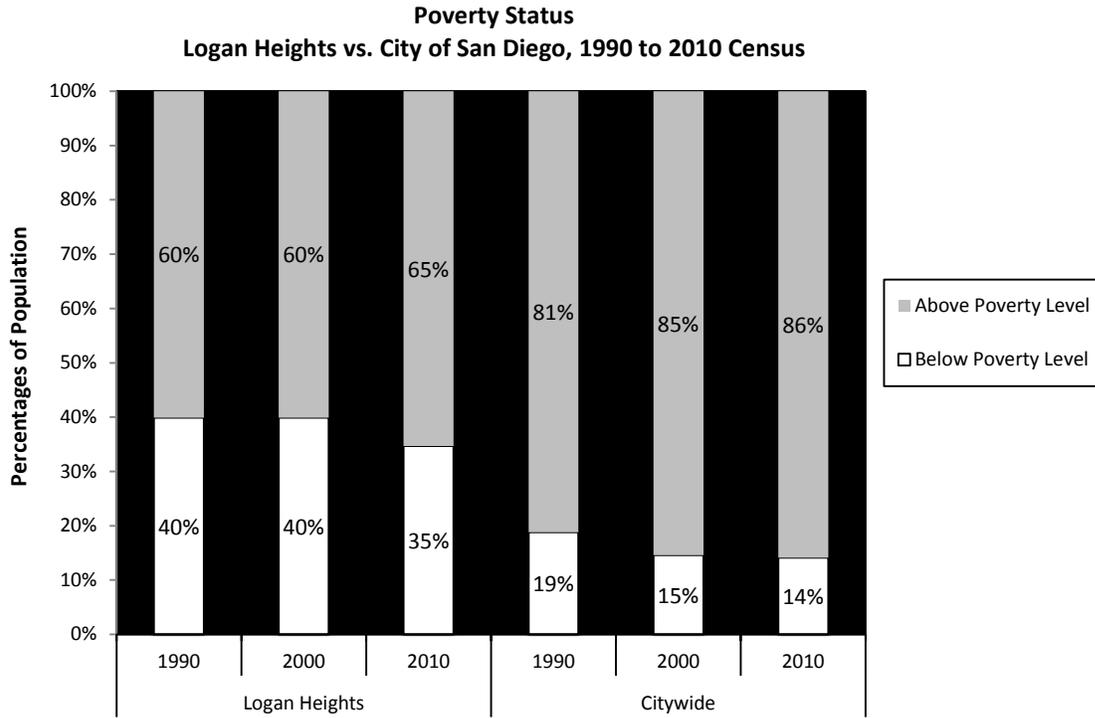
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T13; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T15; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T14

Figure 15: Income in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 1990 to 2010



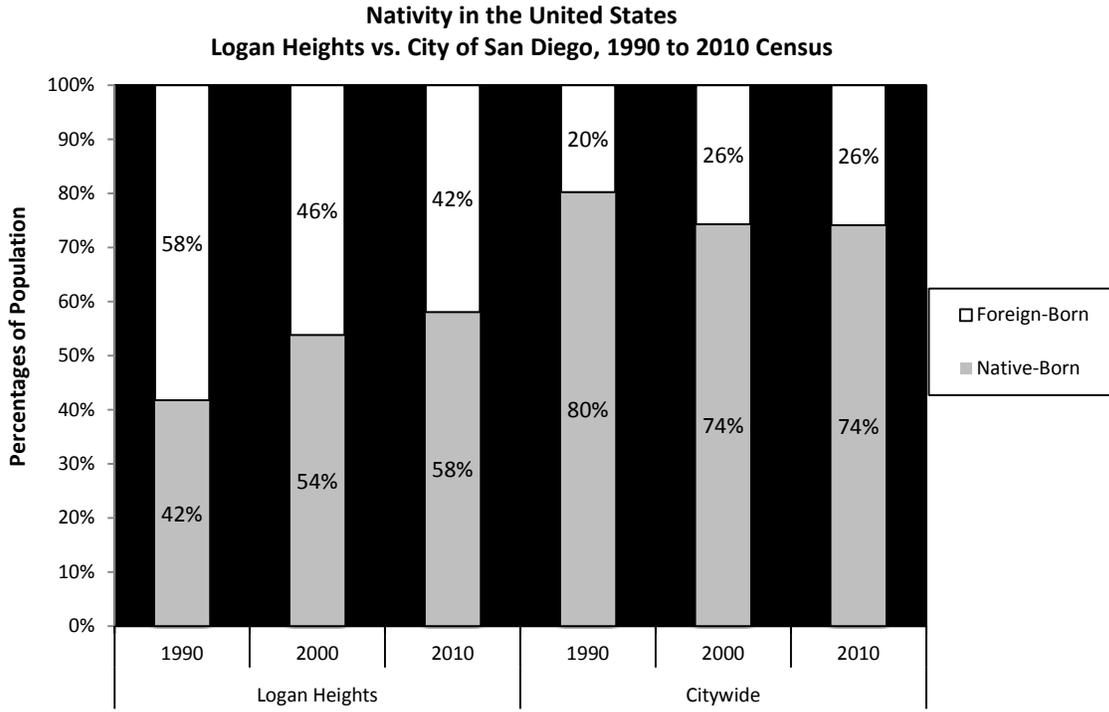
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T43, Table SE: T65; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T93, Table SE: T145; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T57, Table SE: T83

Figure 16: Poverty in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 1990-2010



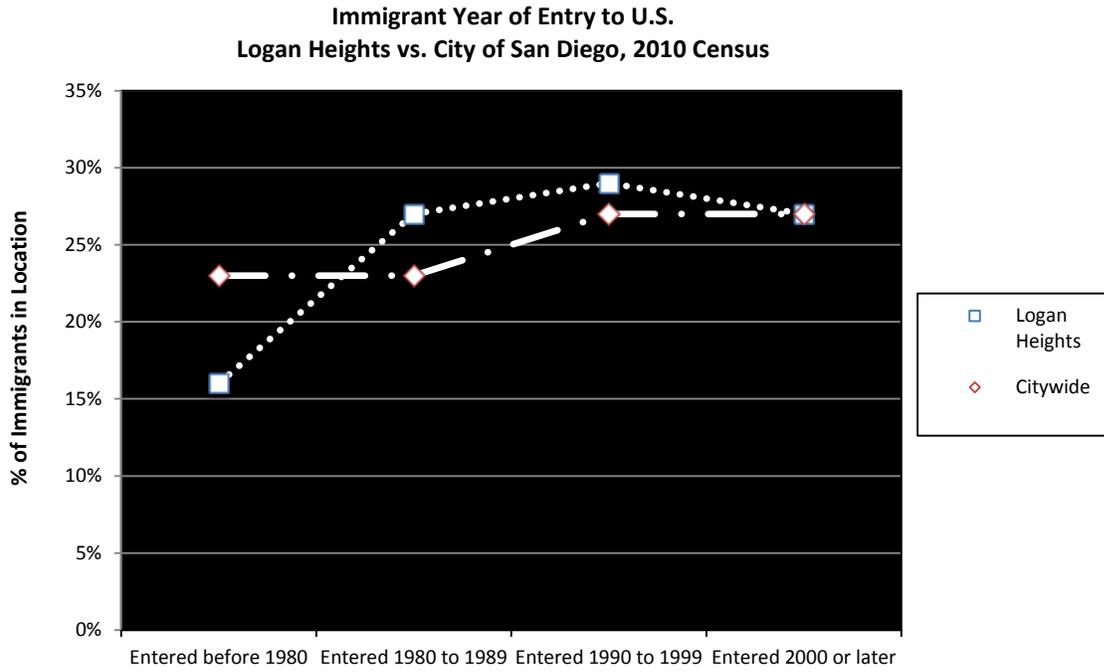
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T93; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T185; U. S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T118

Figure 17: Immigrants in Logan Heights vs San Diego, 1990 to 2010



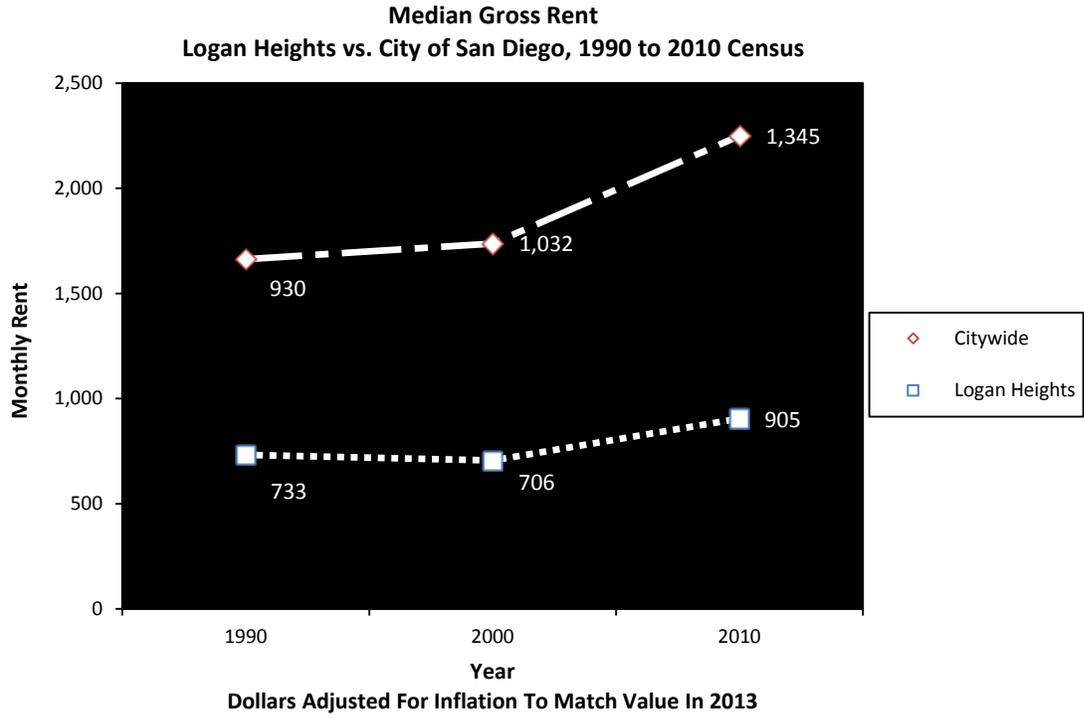
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T110; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T201; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T133

Figure 18: Immigrants' Arrival in Logan Heights vs City of Los Angeles



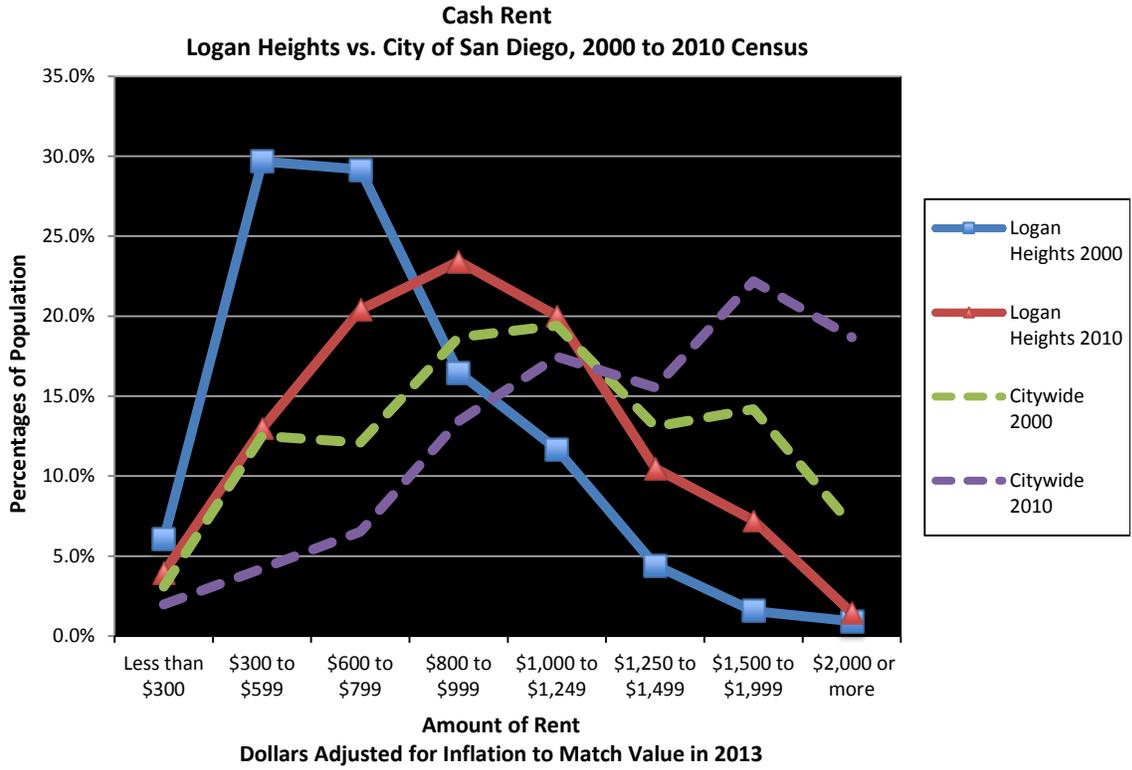
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T134

Figure 19: Rent in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 1990-2010



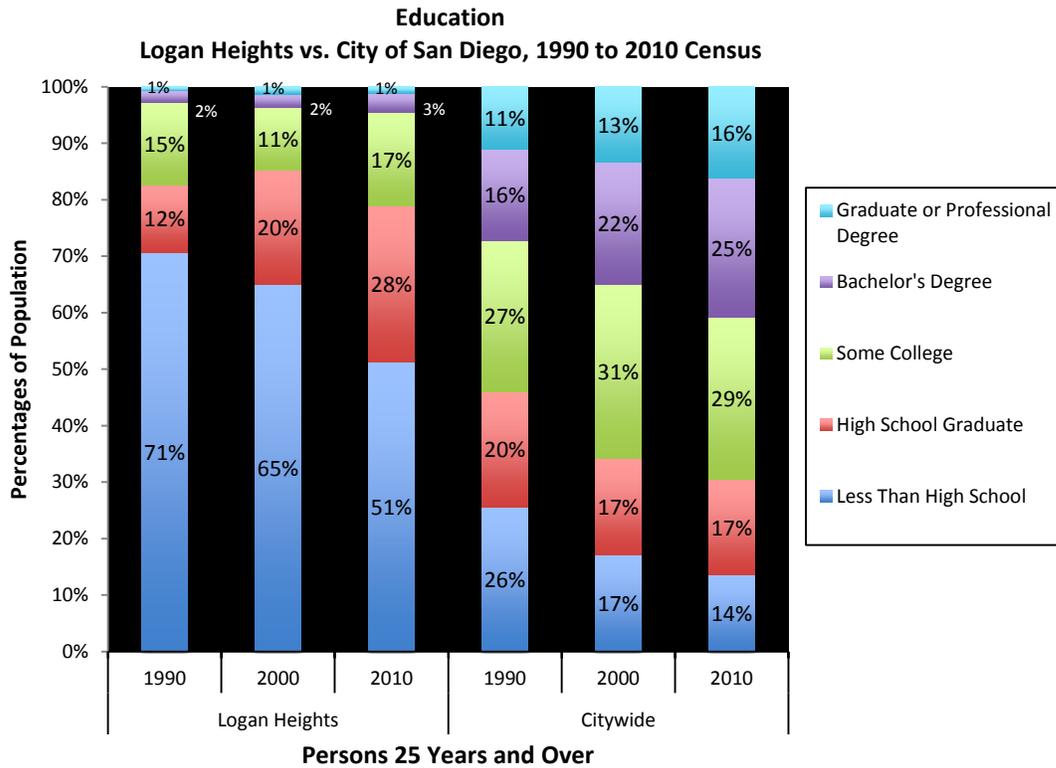
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T82; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T167; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T104

Figure 20: Cash Rent in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 2000-2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T81; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T165; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T102

Figure 21: Educational Attainment in Logan Heights vs City of San Diego, 1990 to 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1990) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T22; U.S. Census Bureau (2000) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T40; U.S. Census Bureau (2010) *Social Explorer fact sheet* – Table SE: T25

## 6.2 Story of El Mercado Del Barrio project

“Some of the Mercado Del Barrio units have \$1,000,000 views,” City Staff Member.

El Mercado Del Barrio project in Logan Heights is a potentially neighborhood-transforming, mixed-use, retail commercial project that is linked to affordable housing and within walking distance to the trolley. The project took 25 years to complete. The vision for the project came out of the 1978 Community Plan, which has not actually been updated. (The most recent update in 2015 ran into political opposition due to environmental justice issues in the neighborhood). The initial vision for the revitalization plan came out of the 1978 Community Plan and called for an anchor supermarket tenant that would provide access to food in the neighborhood.



Figure 22: Mercado Del Barrio Apartments Across the Street from Chicano Park.

A community activist and artist explains why it was important to revitalize that area: “All that land was auto body shops, auto wrecking yards, and parking lots and a few small businesses. But then it stayed empty forever [after they were demolished]. Then [the city] promised us a Mercado Del Barrio.” A key struggle in Barrio Logan was the environmental justice struggles that the neighborhood had been organizing on and are still organizing around. Hence, the demolition of these auto wrecking yards was a key part of that environmental justice struggle.

The city used eminent domain to clear the 6.8 acres of land for the new housing and supermarket development. There were many reasons why the development took so long. It was difficult to convince developers to invest in a low-income neighborhood, for instance. And the community was also very particular about what could be developed in the lot. They wanted affordable housing and a market that would actually cater to the current community’s needs. Another activist explained how they pressured the city to transform the project to serve the community. “The for-profit developer took control and started proposing things that were not reflective of what the original vision was. His last proposal was to do for-market housing, and still bring in a grocery store. The big problem for us was the for-profit housing and minimum 10% affordable housing. They were going to use public land and use public money and they needed to truly benefit the community. So, we killed it over concerns about gentrification. We wanted the housing. But the previous developer wanted market rate and we wanted affordable housing.”

Neighborhood activists were very involved in making sure the city redevelopment agency picked a developer who would pay attention to the affordable housing needs of the neighborhood. They even got involved in making sure the 2006 RFP was specifically calling for community needs. “The RFP was very descriptive of goals and also about community outreach. It was a two-year outreach process for the design. Then they got Northgate Mercado Gonzalez [a supermarket] to come in. The developers were Shea Homes. What they proposed was the closest [to what the community wanted].” Shea Properties started construction in 2010 and created 92 units of affordable housing, and incorporated Latino cultural elements into the project. Their design team integrated murals into the project, built a plaza, and encouraged a supermarket, Northgate, that caters to a Latino niche retail market. So, after 35 years, the neighborhood finally got their grocery supermarket.

s-



Figure 23: New Latino-themed Grocery Store in the Mercado Del Barrio Development

Interestingly enough, this project was envisioned as a TOD even before planners in the field started framing the concept of TODs. A SD planner explains:

Sandoval: When this was being envisioned, was it as a TOD, or a mixed-used project that is conveniently located next to light rail?

Planner: It has always been envisioned as a TOD project. In the old days, they didn't really know what that meant, but they knew that the trolley was a resource. Then we

coined it as TOD to get more funding. But originally, over 25 years ago, TOD wasn't even on the map and this project was already envisioned.

## **7.0 Boyle Heights Findings**

The story of Boyle Heights is one of transforming an important historical Latino barrio. It transformed from a low-income Latino neighborhood to one that is now seeing drastic socioeconomic changes of people with more economic means moving into the neighborhood. This was accomplished via government policies that began to be implemented 15-20 years ago. Transportation policies played a key role in this neighborhood transformation.

In the early 1990s Boyle Heights had the largest concentration of public housing west of the Mississippi. It was also a community inundated with violent street gangs and drugs. The neighborhood's public schools were overcrowded and many people lived in poverty. However, it was also an important Latino barrio with various forms of capital that sustained the community. Historically, a lot of Latino artists, musicians, and intellectuals have come out of this neighborhood and much has been written about it in the humanities, history and political science fields (Avila, 2014). Although the neighborhood saw many socioeconomic struggles, it was and still is a very important cultural milieu for Chicanos/Latinos in California.

But now Boyle Heights is currently changing and very rapidly. It is now a neighborhood that has seen a large investment of dense affordable housing units, government-initiated, mixed-income housing projects, investment to increase access to a regional transportation rail system linked to transit-oriented development, the building of new schools, and an improvement in public safety (with less gangs in the neighborhood). Hence, one could argue that these have been important and positive neighborhood improvements and that TOD played a role within this change, which would be an accurate statement. However, some community residents and activists are now organizing against increased pressures of gentrification as they argue that their neighborhood is rapidly changing and becoming more affluent and less Latino. There is a backlash against a combination of new developments such as: new affordable housing and the density that this new housing represents, efforts to design bike lanes, local hipsters moving into the neighborhood, local artists, and new restaurants moving into the neighborhood. Many activists do not view these new developments in a positive light. I argue that yes, the neighborhood is experiencing growth and these government investments have greatly contributed to quality of life improvement, but what is the point of improving a neighborhood if not to benefit the current residents of that neighborhood?

That is the Boyle Heights story as it relates to TOD and whether those impacts are equitable. The key issue is that the Latino community is still maintaining their neighborhood in the face of all these pressures. Yes, the community improved in terms of government resources with better transportation, better schools, and safety improvements, but if these changes are just contributing to a context of gentrification pressures then one could argue that these changes are contributing to gentrification and not in fact helping current residents.

As one educator activist beautifully described the conflict, "Gentrification is one of the things that keeps me up at night. This is one of the oldest barrios in the country. With a long-standing

history of social movement, culture, art, families, networks of families, both formal and informal, tradition, in terms of Chicano identity, Latino identity, so it would be devastating, I think, to lose such a resource for the world."

This section of the report will describe how the government policies in the last 15-20 years in Boyle Heights have set the stage for the current conflicts over gentrification in the neighborhood. I will argue that investments in public transportation via TOD have played a key role in those policies and, consequentially, the changes in the neighborhood. The discussion will be focused around three themes that emerged via the fieldwork: public and affordable housing, the resistance and activism in the neighborhood, and the conflicts over "Chipsters" or hipsters that are now starting businesses and moving into the neighborhood.

## **7.1 Public housing vs affordable housing**

Boyle Heights is directly east of downtown Los Angeles over the LA River. If one wanted to take a really cynical view of the gentrification happening in Boyle Heights, one could argue that in order to encourage more real estate development east of LA, developers had to transform Boyle Heights. And one had to begin with transforming the public housing in the neighborhood, which was directly adjacent to the LA River and had 1,200 units. One had to also create a safer environment with more policing and kick out the gangs in the neighborhood. And finally, development in Boyle Heights could be encouraged by proving better public transit via investments in light rail and biking infrastructure that would take workers from downtown into Boyle Heights, which would contribute to the gentrification of the area.

The transformation of Boyle Heights today began with the large Hope IV project that lead the way to transforming the neighborhood. Hope VI projects are federal housing initiatives that aim to transform public housing projects to mixed-income ones in the hopes of desegregating concentrations of poverty (Vale, 2013). A key critique of large, government-sponsored, public housing projects is that they further concentrate poverty in areas that lack access to jobs, good transportation systems, and productive schools. They are also areas of concentrated crime with gangs and drugs and conflicts over police abuse. Hence, creating mixed-income housing projects that are also tied to social amenities promises to improve access to residents in the area.

The Hope VI project in Boyle Heights is called Pueblo Del Sol. It is managed by McCormick and Salazar, who were also the developers of the MacArthur Park TOD. The Pueblo Del Sol project paid close attention to the design elements. As a key architect in the project explains, "We wanted to open up the neighborhood. We opened up the street, we made connections to the rest of the neighborhoods. We started linking to parks and markets." People I interviewed describe the old public housing projects as a fortress that was controlled by gangs. So, the designers of the Hope VI project wanted to purposefully open up their new development and link it to parks and the new high school adjacent to the development and the TOD.



Figure 24: Aliso/Pico Apartment Complex with New Urbanist Design Principles

There were controversies in the project. Residents had to be displaced and most did not move back into the new housing. Plus, the number of units were lessened as developers needed to make room for the mixed-income units and the market rate housing. An activist who was closely involved in the project explains some of the worries from residents in the old projects:

The Housing Authority was presenting this as a huge problem. And so we went to the community and starting talking to them...the organizers went to the community and starting asking them...okay, there is a plan coming to demolish the projects, and the idea is to rebuild housing and part of it is going to privatize housing and the other part of it is going to be for affordable housing. What do you guys want? And first of all, very few people knew about it and very few people understood what it was. Second of all, people started becoming concerned that they would lose their housing. And third, people were just like...they didn't want this...they like their community. Umm...from our own analysis as organizers we started realizing that the development was going to be reduced by two-thirds. When we looked at the numbers we said, "Oh my God, ... .." When we looked at what they were planning to develop, it wasn't housing that was going to serve the needs of the community.

The housing authority provided Section 8 vouchers for displaced residents. But most of these residents actually left the neighborhood as they could not find affordable housing units in Boyle Heights. The key critiques of the project from the people I interviewed had to do with the

consultation process and the options that were given to current residents. A neighborhood housing advocate explained that,

the people who got lucky to stay here...they have their nice town homes with their parking lot and their electronic garage...I mean, it's beautiful. But 280 families lost...got pushed out. I mean, 238 families lost their housing so that 42 families can get to have their little town homes. I don't think it's necessarily fair. It's not a good balance, right? It would be good to investigate what is a fair number. But it really looks unbalanced from our end. And only through the promise of new affordable housing and brand new projects, 238 of you have to move out.

Some residents also felt that knocking down the projects was a very good thing. "We can now walk down the street at night," as one former resident put it. It is just a safer area with more amenities. The residents who were actually able to stay and move into the new units really see it as a good outcome for the neighborhood. One of the architects explains that, "The people that stayed, they really benefitted from it. Now there is no graffiti. Now people have their satellite cable and bikes in their units without fear of them getting stolen. People are able to walk and take light rail to get to other places." The links to the rail are also seen as positive for those who were able to stay. "People always focus on the change. But to move forward it's realizing how people accepted the project. They accepted their future and the new opportunities that come from it as well. Having a light rail on First Street gives them an opportunity because they can't afford a car. By accepting the change, they accept the opportunities and shapes their cultural life and the choices that they have. It will change generations it won't be a fortress anymore."

The Hope VI project played a key role in transforming the neighborhood. Whether one sees it as a good thing for those who actually lived in the public housing projects depends on whether they were able to move back into the development after the displacement took place. Those who moved back in seem to really appreciate the new housing with the careful design and access to public space, a community center, public schools, and public transportation. But the process and outcomes are not without controversy. What the project did accomplish was a more mixed-income population in the neighborhood. A neighborhood activist nicely summed up the dilemma, "The new housing displaced low-income people. It did benefit some people but not the majority. People deserve to have a higher quality of life. Do you keep things the way they are to keep everyone there or do you invest in necessary improvements at the expense of certain people not able to benefit from that?"

The project also contributed to increased safety in the neighborhood by displacing many of the gang members in the area. That was accomplished both by the very rigid anti-gang housing policies of the housing authority and by the policing of the neighborhood via gang injunctions. One can write a book about gangs in Boyle Heights and how the neighborhood was transformed related to gang issues, but with the limited scope of this report I will not cover that issue except to say that there seems to be a link between areas in cities that are targeted for gentrification and the displacement of gangs in those neighborhoods.

## 7.2 How affordable is affordable housing?

“It's affordable to whom? That's what we say...affordable to whom? Because our residents don't qualify...we have lots of members who don't qualify.” – Neighborhood Housing Activist

Housing affordability is the key issue emerging in the Boyle Heights case that relates to TOD and gentrification concerns. Much of the new affordable housing constructed in the neighborhood has been tied to transit-oriented development. The East Los Angeles Community Corporation (ELACC) is a non-profit housing development organization that is strongly pushing for affordable housing to lessen the impacts of gentrification in the neighborhood. They started about 20 years ago with Chicano activists in the neighborhood who were advocating for more low-income housing. One longtime neighborhood activist explains that “ELACC started off small, a couple of people, and now they have a huge staff. They get millions of dollars. They have a VIP fundraiser and they get money from Wells Fargo Bank, etc. They started developing small apartments and fixing them up. And now they are big time. They are dealing with county money and Metro money. They have onsite social services for the ones that have people with special needs.” ELACC were also the developers behind the rehabilitation of the Boyle Hotel that sits directly across the street from Mariachi Plaza TOD and has 50 units. A staff member explains, “The Mariachi Building was in bad shape and we fixed it up. The controversy is that not all could move back, so people like to say we displaced the mariachis. But we had to fix up the property and resulted in some people leaving. But they all had relocation plan, like \$60K to move.” ELACC also has plans to continue to collaborate with Metro and potentially develop more affordable housing around the other TOD stops in Boyle Heights.

In the first report where we compared MacArthur Park to Fruitvale, we focused on the role CBOs played in increasing the amount of affordable housing in these neighborhoods. We saw the amount of affordable housing and the link between these dense affordable housing projects and the TOD as a form of advancing equity. But studying the Boyle Heights case has given me pause and made me more critical of affordable housing policy as a tool for mitigating gentrification. The key reason for that critique relates to how the transit agencies that provide land and funding for these dense housing projects calculate affordability. They use a similar approach than that of ELACC. According to one of their staff members they calculate affordability at between “30% Area Median Income and 60%. They use LA County Numbers. \$81, 000 for a family of four”. The AMI of the county is much higher than the median income of families in the low-income neighborhoods where these TODs are being built. That creates an equity problem because these affordable housing projects are supposed to ameliorate the increase of land values around the neighborhoods where the TODs are being built. The other issue relates to how tenants are picked to actually live in these projects. According to federal housing requirements, developers cannot provide preference to local residents, they have to open up the application process. Hence, these two requirements, the calculation of affordability and not being able to provide preferential treatment to current residents, creates a structural problem of affordability and choice for current low-income residents within these neighborhoods.

One housing advocate nicely explains another key program with these “affordable” housing projects. He states that the problem is about perspective:

This is sort of a linguistic-psychology-philosophy problem because really what happens is those of us who are immigrants or come from a poor working class, when we hear “affordable housing” we think affordable to us. But the people who are selling the projects have a middle-class perspective of the United States. And for them affordable is affordable for the middle class. So the perspective of the poor does not enter that conversation. But the people who fight for affordable housing are the working poor...are the working-class people.

But to be clear, my critique is not against ELACC and similar non-profit housing development organizations. They are providing an important service in these low-income neighborhoods. The issue seems to be that these national and state housing policies are set up to create mixed-income neighborhoods that are displacing the lower-income residents. Those are the residents that are at risk of displacement when the rest of the housing in the neighborhood starts to increase in rent. This increase in rent is the key issue tied to the new investments that TODs bring into these low-income neighborhoods. That is why in neighborhoods throughout the country, residents are pushing back and demanding more community-oriented development projects. They see the gentrification as a direct attack on their communities. A Boyle Heights neighborhood activist explains why anti-gentrification efforts are so important:

That's why this whole issue of owning the neighborhood and belonging to the neighborhood is very strong with us. And that's why we're very strong about this issue of gentrification and displacement because you're actually dismantling networks of support, networks of transformation, networks of peace-building within the neighborhood when that is the goal of these processes [during the times of gang violence]. The goal of these processes is to reduce the violence, to increase the stability of the community, to get more people invested. Well, we're doing that but we're doing it from the ground up. And we're doing it by using the resources of the community. Ideally, the city should come in and support us.

### **7.3 Resistance and activism in Boyle Heights**

All four barrios analyzed point to resistance and activism as being important features in these barrios. All these TOD projects have run into some form of neighborhood resistance. This is because urban and transportation planners have not paid close enough attention to public participation issues and to tailoring these projects to benefit current residents. In the MacArthur Park case, resistance came from Supervisor Gloria Molina and neighborhood activists who pushed the MTA to go back to the drawing board and develop a TOD that was more in tone with the neighborhood context. In the Fruitvale Transit Village, the Spanish Unity Council stopped BART from building a large parking structure that could cut off International Boulevard (and hence the neighborhood) from the BART station. Instead, the Unity Council took over the development of the TOD and now it has become a model of doing TOD in low-income neighborhoods. In Barrio Logan, neighborhood activists demanded that the Mercado Del Barrio Apartments be designed as affordable housing instead of market rate housing before the project could be approved. And in Boyle Heights, neighborhood activists pressured the housing

authority to provide adequate displacement resources as the result of the Hope VI project and they also pushed back against the MTA for its design plans around Mariachi Plaza. Hence, neighborhood resistance and activism in these areas have in fact dictated the types of community benefits that emerged in the projects.

During the Hope VI project, the community organized to gain some guarantees and more input into the displacement process. A tenant-turned-activist explains that, "A whole bunch of us started organizing and having community meetings and got the neighborhoods together. Telling people what was going on. I was born in White Memorial [a large hospital near Mariachi Plaza], I was a familiar face, so people knew me around here. I was an activist; this was my neighborhood. It allowed me to be an activist naturally." The organizing around displacement in the project was not easy. It demanded that activists in the community really commit to their cause and place pressure on the planning institutions.

Sandoval: So, it was always a struggle then?

Interviewee: It was always a struggle.

Sandoval: They didn't give you anything..?

Interviewee: No, no, no...

Sandoval: And the only reason you got stuff was because you were fighting.

Interviewee: Yeah. Exactly, exactly.

One key neighborhood activist organization sprung up from these struggles, Union de Vecinos. This organization became one of the key organizations working on tenant housing rights in the area and now still organizes around anti-gentrification struggles. The organization is a grassroots organization and its founders emerged from faith-based communities in the neighborhood. They were key players in making sure tenants either received relocation assistance or could come back to the new development. A staff member described one of the fights they had with the housing authority.

When we got close to demolition, especially across the street, we had three families who stayed in their homes and they had all these bulldozers. They were beginning to demolish the buildings all around them and they stayed in their homes. And everyone was telling them to "get out, get out." They sent the social worker, they sent the priest, and they sent everybody. And finally at the end of this process...we had a lawyer who was working with us...our lawyer got a call and they said, "okay fine, what do you guys want?" We want a contract guaranteeing that people are going to stay here. Because the Housing Authority had a contract that was iffy. Basically, their contract said you get to move into the development if you accept the house that we give you. If you qualify for that housing and if there is no other considerations that we may have about them sending you to another place. And we said, "we don't want any of those clauses in our contract." So the Union de Vecinos got a contract just for its members, with no clauses, basically saying

you get to move into the development AND you get to inspect the house when you move in, you have a week to change your mind if the house doesn't work and something else. And we got it. But we had to fight for it.

Hence, these fights with the housing authority were tense. But ultimately organizations like Union de Vecinos and other activists and residents in the neighborhood were able to gain some concessions for those residents being displaced. And that tenant movement that emerged from the Hope VI struggles still lives on today in the anti-gentrification struggles. These activists have a lot of experience, as some of them were also involved in the Chicano movement of the 1960s and so they understand how to deal with city agencies. One activist explains their strategy for getting planning agencies to incorporate their demands:

Latinos have to be organized and be prepared to sit at the table to force the negotiation. And the negotiation doesn't happen just because you say yes, which is part of my other phrases. When you say "yes" to these projects...actually people tend to say "yes, but" ...they don't listen to the but...they listen to the yes and roll with it. But when you say "no" everyone stops and they start negotiating with you. That's been our lesson. With the demolition. And right now in this issue related to housing for the lowest income. We say no [to gentrification]. Not because we're jerks or stubborn and ignorant. Because that's the only thing that stops [the city] to negotiate.

These community-based organizations are working together to push back on the present concerns around gentrification. A staff member of an educational youth organization spoke about their coalition efforts, and how even though they focus on youth education they are now becoming more involved in housing issues. "We have been part of pushing back the development in Boyle Heights. We were part of the Committee Alliance for Boyle Heights made up of: Inner City Struggle, Union de Vecinos, Homies Unidos and East LA Community Development Corporation. We all worked together to push back .... on changes to Boyle Heights. We are becoming more involved in housing issues because we know we will need a united force to push back on gentrification."

The new anti-gentrification efforts in the neighborhood are being manifested mostly around Mariachi Plaza. Mariachi Plaza was designed as a public space that has Latino cultural elements such as a kiosk that came directly from Mexico. Before the plaza, it was a space where mariachis would gather informally to wait for work as performers. It was a well-known area in Los Angeles where people could pick up mariachis and have them perform at their weddings, parties and other social events. Hence, when the MTA decided to construct a subway station in the neighborhood, the community wanted mariachis to still be represented and, hence, Metro created Mariachi Plaza as a public space for the community.



Figure 25: Lowrider Show at Plaza Mariachi in Boyle Heights

The TOD is not fully completed. There is the Boyle Hotel that was refurbished by ELACC across the street and some small, mainly Latino-owned businesses next to the subway stop. But Metro owns two lots in the area that they are interested in developing with denser housing and dense commercial development to make it into a true TOD hub for the neighborhood. But as gentrification concerns have risen in the neighborhood, Metro has experienced a backlash to its proposed TOD plans, as some activists in the community are now seeing these developments as contributing to the gentrification. An old-time Chicano activist, who actually played an important role in the Chicano movement of the 1960s, explains how the community pushed back against the latest large-scale TOD plans from Metro at Mariachi Plaza:

What are people doing to resist gentrification? One successful story is the big parking lot behind Mariachi Plaza, the parking area [which is owned by Metro and they have large plans for commercial development at that site]. They currently use that as parking for a farmers market and it is owned by Metro. They gave the contract to someone to develop it and they came up with a nine-story building. Four stories of parking and medical offices. So everyone said, "hell no." They reacted and moved against it. We went to the meeting and it was spontaneous. The non-profits were kind of like quiet, like, the natives are getting restless, right. So then the developers said, ok, we won't do it. It was because it was a big public outcry. We said, look, you already have White Memorial [Hospital]. We also said, save the murals. Although they are little Mickey Mouse murals, very small. "Murals are our culture," you know. Mariachi Plaza and murals, Save our culture! You know. So they backed off and went back to the drawing board. We said, we wanted parks, a market.

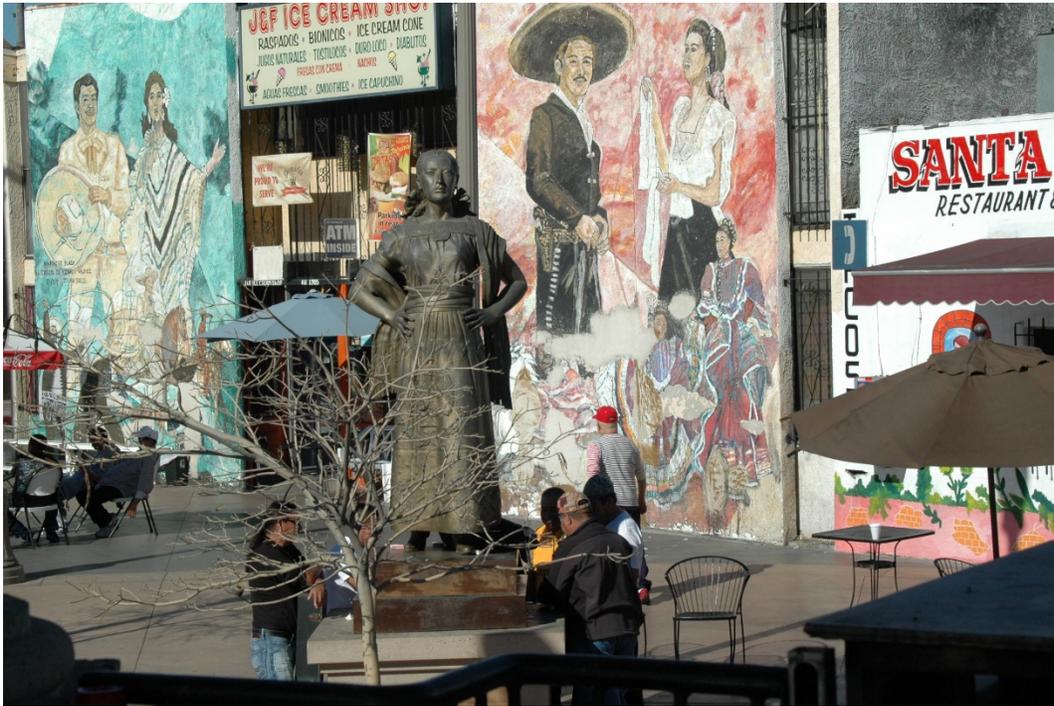


Figure 26: Murals at Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights Next to TOD Development.

Another neighborhood activist describes Metro's mistake and the opposition by the community to their TOD plans for Mariachi Plaza:

Then there was another development where they were going to do all of this parking...they were going to build a parking lot, a gym, and all this other stuff...and the developers made the huge mistake that their design...the pictures they were showing for the design didn't show anything that looked like the Mariachi Plaza that we know or that we aspire to have. No street vendors, no mariachis...nothing. So the community went up in arms and started protesting. And Metro pretty much stopped and pulled back from that project...and technically said that they would do something that the community wants.

Hence, the community really opposed the large plans of Metro and its developer to create a type of commercial medical facility. Instead the activists started to push for more open space and local food and to support local Latino businesses. They, interestingly enough, also used the power of murals to push back against these plans. This is a theme we will see in the Logan Heights case. Using public art as a neighborhood organizing tool to create a sense of cultural placemaking and as a way to protect the cultural identity of a neighborhood. Even though the murals on Mariachi Plaza were small and are not as well-known as the historical murals in Chicano Park in Logan Heights, they are still important to the community and, in fact, seem to be protecting the Latino small businesses in Mariachi Plaza. Hence, this theme of resistance and the activists who support it is critical to understand. Resistance to the initial plans of whether it's

Metro or the housing authority is the force that creates the opportunity for more community benefits to emerge from these TOD projects.

The gentrification context in Boyle Heights is not as straightforward as white people moving in and displacing low-income Latinos. Although real estate agents I spoke to and activists also say that is happening. A long-term activist stated that, “you have hipsters and artists now moving into the neighborhood. Private developers are coming in and buying the homes and jacking up the prices and renting them out to white people. This has been going on for a few years.” But the gentrification in the neighborhood is more complex as higher-income Latinos are also moving into the neighborhood and starting new businesses and buying homes. This is a process residents and activists have termed “gentrification,” as “gente” means people in Spanish. So “gentrification” is a process where Latinos are gentrifying other Latinos in the neighborhood. Residents, business owners, and activists had different thoughts on gentrification, whether it helped the neighborhood upgrade and kicked lower-income residents out or whether it was a form of neighborhood revitalization that improved the area for everyone.



Figure 27: Music Festival at Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights

Sandoval: What's your take on the Chicano chipsters?

Interviewee: I'm not into that. I don't identify as a Chicano, I was born in Mexico. A lot of the Chicanismo values don't apply to me. So, when you modify culture to adapt it to times now like the chipsters [combination of Chicanos and hipsters], it's like combining

hipsters with gentrification. So the same chipsters argue that what you see is taking gentrification and turning it into “gentefication.” So they are saying they are doing it for the Latino people of Boyle Heights. To an extent that might be true but it doesn't mean it's equitable. Working-class people are not identifying themselves as chipsters, they just see the changes in the neighborhood and they don't know who that is for. “Gentefication” started about 2-3 years ago and it was a lot of local artists putting a spin on things.

Therefore, “gentrification” is a debate within the community.

Another long-term activist in the neighborhood explains the “gentefication” issue in this way:

One of the contradictions that we're dealing with is...a certain level of people who have grown up in this community, who have been raised in this community have been very successful. And that goes from the projects all the way back to the rent control housing...so we have a lot of people here who's children made it, went to college, thanks to the subsidies and rent controls...the kids are going to college, they started planning, and now they come back and say, "these changes are good." Because it benefits them at the professional level, the class level they have worked to position themselves in...

Hence, there seems to be an inter-generation and class structure change happening within the changing demographics in the neighborhood. The plaza does seem to be well regarded and a center of community activity.

Interviewee: The plaza. It is very vibrant. I won't deny that. It's amazing. I think that has changed drastically. You have a lot of people who live here in the projects go over there every Friday night...there's a dance there...they go there...

Sandoval: Oh, really..?

Interviewee: Yeah, there's a lot of viejitas there, man.

Sandoval: Oh...well, that's good. Shoot...

Interviewee: No, that's really good. So that's a good benefit. So that plaza is amazing. They have that...they have a lot of different festivities.

I visited a festival in Mariachi Plaza where music was being played from the 1950s era. Latinos were dressed in Pachuco clothing that represented Latinos in this era and were dancing songs from this era. There were hundreds of mostly Latino youth dancing and older Latinos looking on at the plaza. It was actually a very nice scene as people just relaxed and had a good time. That was linked to a lowrider show on First Street, a farmers market near Plaza Mariachi, and street vendors selling food and merchandise also on First Street that was closed to traffic. The ambiance was very festive. The MC and organizer was the Latino owner of Eastside Luv, a chipster bar across the street from Mariachi Plaza that has been at the center of these gentrification debates.

Eastside Luv caters to Chicanos but mostly middle class-young professionals, which is a different crowd than the other older bars in the neighborhood that are actually now closing shop because they cannot afford the new rents. A neighborhood resident who has visited the chipster bar is critical of its presence in the neighborhood, and asks important questions related to its link to gentrification and the class dynamics it represents.

I have gone to the Eastside Luv bar and I could not get in because I was dressed a certain way. So to me, that's creating barriers in the neighborhood that we don't really need. Not everyone can afford to dress a certain way. Not everyone has their priority to buy clothes that they accept there. And drinks are expensive. So, who is this bar for? Is it for us or for people with middle-class income? So how can you justify your bar as being positive for the neighborhood?

He goes on to comment on some of the unintended consequences of gentrification.

With “gentefication” you start to get people that you didn't intentionally want to reach. So the pachuco festivals might have been intended for Boyle Heights people, but they draw other people from different neighborhoods and they start to see the culture as a commodity. They see the culture that is taking place as an experience. It becomes a show.

These are serious concerns as the neighborhood could be seeing a change in class structure due to all the public investments in the area and now a draw of higher-income Latinos into the community. But it's a debate that needs further research. For our purposes, having both of these TODs in Boyle Heights has brought in new public resources that have now followed with private investments. These new investments are attracting new people into the neighborhood, both Latino professionals with higher incomes and other ethnic groups with higher incomes. In fact, attracting new investments was always the goal of these TOD projects. As a Metro real estate planner explains, "We hope we are a catalyst in TOD for LA. A catalyst for future development. If you are looking at the TOD being a quarter of a mile from the station, we are the pin at the center, so our project can help catalyze other projects." Hence, does that mean gentrification of low-income Latinos is inevitable? That is the key question now facing community members of Boyle Heights. And because of the heightened concerns about gentrification in the area, Metro's TOD projects are now forced to deal directly with that issue as they have run into community opposition. Whether they deal with it by allocating more affordable housing and working with ELACC and other affordable housing developers remains to be seen. But even if affordable housing is seen as the solution to gentrification, we have seen that there is a built-in structural bias within housing policies that are aimed to create mixed-income neighborhoods. So, the question is really what happens to the lower-income groups within this context of public and private investment that is creating more pressures of gentrification within this neighborhood?

## **8.0 Logan Heights Findings**

The Logan Heights story deals with a community that has been historically disenfranchised, but activists in the community protect it as a form of self-determination and liberation for Chicanos. Chicano Park is a symbol of resistance and Latino/Chicano placemaking for Chicanos in the Southwest and hence it is an extremely important public space. The community took an active role in making sure the TOD at the heart of their neighborhood would cater to local needs. Ultimately, the TOD was transformed by activists and artists to one that encompasses Latino culture and housing affordability.

As previously stated, the process took 25 years. But now the TOD is built and is serving as a catalyst for new development in the neighborhood. The project has sparked other public and private developments such as a new community college, a second TOD in Logan Heights with housing and commercial development, and a sea of new businesses around the neighborhood. But just like Boyle Heights, the new development is increasing concerns over gentrification.

A staff member from the developers of the project recognizes this important contradiction within their catalysts project.

Gentrification is inevitable in any project to a point. You are going to have some when you build something new. You will attract new businesses and new investments serving as catalysts. So how do you control it? You really can't. You try to stay true to your original project and then things happen from there. This was a big concern for the community and we were honest in telling them that it was going to happen to an extent. There is no real way to control it, right? Gentrification is good to an extent if you can keep the cultural roots strong, but it's bound to happen. Even with affordable housing, you have people from outside the community moving in, you can't dictate who leases, it's [federal] law.

This was a large catalysts project with dense housing, commercial development, and ties to public transit. But the project did not spring up in a vacuum and other city development pressures are making it more difficult to control for gentrification. A city planner explains the context of development in Logan Heights. "I think it's a lot of different actors [contributing to the context of gentrification]. [Logan Heights is] close to downtown, the number of trolley stops, the cultural and historic value of the neighborhood, close to the bay, close to job sectors. It's not one character acting. It's evolving, an evolution. Like any city. You hope it can maintain the character and not displace a lot of people." Hence, these pressures are real and come from various factors, but the neighborhood maintains a lot of "cultural and historic value" that leads to the strong activism within the community.

Some activists in the neighborhood do not see it as a zero sum game. They view the new investments in a positive light, as long as those are helping to revitalize the neighborhood. A young Chicano artist who is also an activist views the changes this way: "You can call it 'gentrification' maybe, but the way I see it is, why not get nice things in the community that has been neglected for so long? Why not get nice things into the community? I would have been angry if [the new development] wasn't affordable housing so that would have been a problem." So the issue is not necessarily the new investments but how those investments help the current

residents. One of the original Chicano Park muralists explains the approach he would like to see: “We need to use a balanced approach. Doing development that is economic growth but respectful of the neighborhood. That is the only way that community will survive.”

## **8.1 Activist organizations that transformed TODs**

The key theme that emerged from the Logan Heights case is the wealth of community activists who care and are organizing in this barrio. Many of those activists were involved in the Chicano movement of the 1960s and '70s. They also organized during the takeover of Chicano Park in the late 1970s. One key activist, Rachel Ortiz, the head of Barrio Station in the neighborhood, had worked with Caesar Chavez organizing farmworker struggles. She grew up in the neighborhood and started Barrio Station, a youth community organization that has been in the neighborhood for 20 years. She is probably the most influential activist who was behind the transformation of the TOD, as she fought to maintain its affordability and also fought to gain community benefits from the project.

There are three key activists' organizations in the neighborhood, the Chicano Park Steering Committee, Barrio Station, and the Environmental Health Coalition. In the development of the TOD, these organizations had to be consulted and their approval gained in order to push the project. The Chicano Park Steering Committee emerged as the steward of Chicano Park and is mainly focused on protecting the park itself. But nevertheless, it is made up of key Chicano activists who have a lot of organizing experience and many of whom still live in the neighborhood. They also have a lot of influence with their ability to bring people out to protest and engage in local community issues. As a redevelopment staff member explains, “The Chicano Park Steering Committee is pretty hardcore in terms of protecting the park and keeping it their own. Keeping outsiders out. In our planning processes, we have to build trust in that community.”

The Chicano Park Steering Committee did not play a very active role in the TOD development, but they were consulted and developers knew they had to get their blessing for the project for it to move forward. As a member of the committee explains:

“The Steering Committee only knew there was going to be Mercado Del Barrio but didn't know the actual plans. And they didn't oppose it because we wanted the Mercado [a grocery store]. And forever, there hadn't been a supermarket for a long time. So we did want a Mercado. So we didn't oppose it”.

The community's need for a large supermarket kept many stakeholders open to the large-scale development. However, the developers also know that they needed to have an open process and make sure they had community support for the project. The developer explains that, “We interacted with the Chicano Park Steering Committee. One of the artists did one of the murals. There wasn't any conflict, zero opposition.” This was because the lines of communication were open and the developers realized that the Mercado Del Barrio development also needed to incorporate the artist milieu of the neighborhood.

The second organization is Barrio Station and its leader, Rachel Ortiz, played a key role in ensuring the project moved forward but had the community's interest in mind. As one planner explained, "Rachel has a lot of power in the barrio and if you don't get her approval, your project will not go forward." Rachel Ortiz grew up in Logan Heights and has been organizing in the neighborhood for the past 30 years. She has played a key role in environmental justice efforts as they kicked out a lot of the junk yards in the neighborhood. Her youth organization, Barrio Station, had also been doing a lot of anti-gang work with youth and played a key role in creating a safer neighborhood and opportunities for youth. But Rachel has also been a key community voice in the transformation of Barrio Logan in particular. She was on the neighborhood planning group that gave input to the city council and tirelessly worked to help push through and gain community support for the Mercado Del Barrio project. Planners see her contribution, as one explained, "Rachel Ortiz and her pack head the effort for all those affordable housing projects. In any redevelopment project you had to have an arts component and it was important to use local artist to display the art." In many ways, Rachel Ortiz was the person spearheading the equity components of these projects and making sure local residents benefited from the affordable housing developments in the neighborhood.

An urban planner who understands the importance of knowing a neighborhood's politics states that, "The other group that is in the community is the Environmental Health Coalition and they have amazing organizing skills. And they have been able to organize the residents in so many ways and be proactive in encouraging dollars to come in to do affordable housing." The Environmental Health Coalition has also been organizing around environmental justice work in the neighborhood and has done this via using the tools of city planning. They were a key group in pushing the update of the community plan in the area that had not been updated since 1978. The update of the community plan became a very heated political debate between neighborhood interests and industry that catered to the Navy industry. The conflict came down to a small buffer zone that changed the zoning from allowing industry to discouraging it. The community update passed the city council, but then a referendum was put to vote citywide and the plan was shot down. One former social service worker in the neighborhood observed that, "The city council approved the updated community plan, twice, and then came measure B and C and it was defeated. That was put out into a vote for the entire city of San Diego. And people could care less about communities of color. Nowhere in SD is there is a community that has been waiting 37 years for a community plan update. That is criminal. By not having an update with all these incompatible land uses, they are responsible for the health and cancer rates in the community." The Environmental Health Coalition helped lead the way in this community plan update, which is tied to the TOD because the original vision of the Mercado development came out of the original community plan in 1978.

The important role activists played in the transformation of the TOD from a market rate housing development project to an affordable housing development project is key to understanding how these TOD projects can have equitable outcomes in low-income areas. The abundant sources of political capital in this neighborhood that actually stem from the Chicano movement of the 1960s in many ways dictated that the project would incorporate the community's interest.

## 8.2 Chicano Park’s role in shaping TODs

If it wasn't for Chicano Park, this neighborhood would have been gentrified a long time ago. This is the anchor that is holding it down. A lot of Chicanos are starting to move back in, the “gentefication.” We do want a better quality of life. – Chicano Park Artist and Activist

Chicano Park is a space for the Latino community. It is the epitome of Latino/barrio placemaking, a cultural space that has significant value to the community and that activists and residents have transformed and projected. Historically, it has played an important role in Chicano movements for self-determination and cultural pride. As a Chicano Park artist eloquently explains, “Chicano Park is the umbilical cord of our culture, of our Latin culture. It gives us a sense of pride, like, we are here. Whether ‘immigrants’ stay here or move on north. It's a welcoming sign. It's the center of a cross cultural thing.” Hence, the amount of cultural capital in the neighborhood is striking and really serves as a resource for the community.

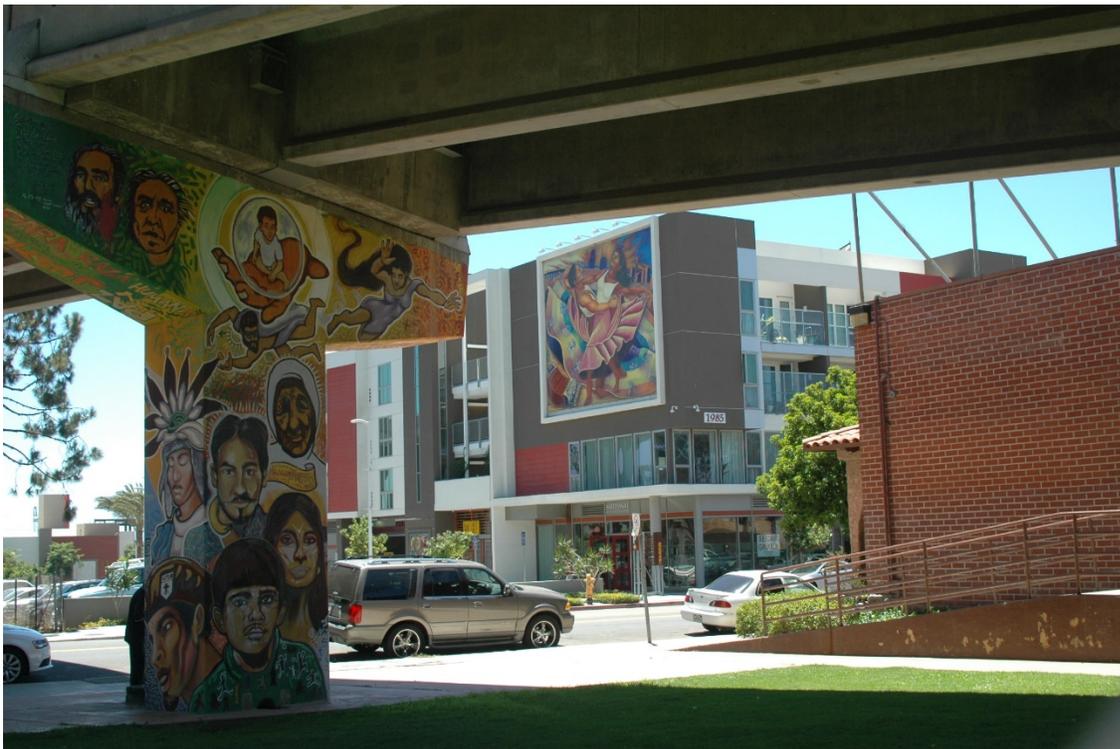


Figure 28: Murals Incorporated into the Mercado Del Barrio Apartments.

However, the community is quickly changing. Most of the new residents moving in do not have a strong connection to the cultural significance of the park and, more importantly, do not realize that the park represents a particular history of political struggle. “There are more and more people coming around to Chicano Park without an understanding of the history or context of the community and converting it into a tourist attraction. Without any historical or political context. Unless you actually look at the murals and understand the character of the park. They have political connotations,” states another artist. This artist’s astute statement is extremely important

as it speaks to the type of gentrification impacts that are placing pressure on the neighborhood and changing the meaning of the space.

A concrete example of these changes are the conflicts around the Aztec dances in the neighborhood. “Danza” is an important cultural expression that is practiced at Chicano Park that has its roots hundreds of years ago in Mexico and has been passed on via indigenous practices. A professor of Ethnic Studies who works in the area explains, “There was a recent conflict with the Aztec danza. A resident from the new apartments [Mercado Del Barrio] complained about the noise. I mean, they have been doing this for 40 years [in Chicano Park]. And the cops came. So the cops said, ‘We are going to take your instruments.’ So a big special meeting was called. And all the dancers came with regalia. So I think more of these conflicts will happen in the future.” This conflict is a land use, noise ordinance planning conflict, but it goes deeper into cultural practices that have been present in this public space for 40 years and link community members to their indigenous roots and culture. These Aztec dances also represent the neighborhood’s efforts of resistance and self-determination. The conflict also points to the cultural transformation of the use of the space in the park due to the new development. Another artist and Aztec dancer elaborates on the conflict:

Interviewee: The Aztec Danza groups here, they practice twice a week. There are 3-4 Danza groups that use the park kiosk. So people started calling the police on the drum. So the police would come and tell the Danza they need to shut it down because it's past 9pm. Sometimes they were doing the ceremonies and would go to 10pm and no one ever complained. It has been happening here for 40 years or more. And all of a sudden, these new residents start to come here and start to call the cops. And new cops don't know what is going on so they start taking the drums. So we had to meet with the police in charge and the representatives from the district and we came to a middle ground and now we have to stop it at 8pm. And if we want to go further, we have to get a permit. That's [messed] up. And that's [messed] up because that is gentrification right there.

Sandoval: The space is changing and the use of the space because of the gentrification.

Interviewee: How are you going to call the cops on something that has been happening for 40 years? We were really pissed because the cops threatened the dancers. This is where Danza started [in the US] and then went to other space.

This is a clear example of the cultural changes occurring in the neighborhood as new investments bring in new residents and businesses. And some of the new population might not appreciate or have some of the same cultural identity as the older residents. Or they might see Chicano Park as a colorful and vibrant public space but not associate the political struggle behind the space. The use of the park is changing.

### 8.3 Artists and Latino cultural identity

“In order to find justice you have to put it on the wall, where everyone can see it.” Chicano Park Artist



Figure 29: Chicano Park as Public Space in Logan Heights, San Diego

A key cultural resource in the neighborhood is the artists. Artists have been an important element of the neighborhood since activists took over the park and created it as their own public space. In fact, creating the murals solidified Chicanos’ claim to that space. Now the murals are registered under National Historical Preservation and, hence, can never be removed or destroyed. An artist explains the artist milieu that exists in the neighborhood: “The artists are a form of resistance, we have a lot of good muralists here in San Diego. They do some really nice artwork. The people who did original murals, some are still alive. Some of the new art in the rental housing [the Mercado Del Barrio], yeah, they aren’t political, but they still show the cultural [element of the neighborhood].”

What’s fascinating about Chicano Park and the current changes is that they are actually maintaining the cultural arts milieu alive. Today, art in the neighborhood is seeing a reemergence as new artists are taking up the mantel and using art to transform the neighborhood in their own terms. A redevelopment staff member sees this as a positive outcome of the revitalization in the neighborhood. “The resurgence of the arts in the area is exciting. The extension of Chicano Park and the murals into the area is great. The entire area will now be a thriving arts scene and community. That is the next phase of Barrio Logan.”

I had the chance to participate in the Barrio Logan Arts Crawl on a Friday night during the summer. The Arts Crawl occurred in Logan Heights and about five different businesses and arts

galleries showed expositions of artist work throughout San Diego. It was a very vibrant scene with music, food, and drinks. The Crawl drew a multicultural crowd and hundreds of people attended. A local Chicano artist views the Crawl as a good thing for the community, “the small businesses opening up on Logan Ave is a good thing. They bring in lots of youth and arts into the community. We have the Barrio Art Crawl. That is putting Barrio Logan on the map in terms of artistic value. I firmly believe that it's a very good thing for the community. It brings in people to see things. It has a good bottom line.”



Figure 30: Barrio Arts Crawl that Brings in Logan Avenue at Logan Heights

The cultural arts in the neighborhood have had direct consequences on the TOD project and the revitalization of the neighborhood. The affordable housing apartments all have artwork on them, and the new parking structure for the community college has large pictures of Cesar Chavez and other Chicano activists. And the new entrance to Logan Heights has a new gateway sign with cultural significance. The artist, Armando Nunez, who designed that gateway actually had the idea 30 years ago. He is one of the original Chicano Park artists who worked on the first mural in the park. He did his research on Mayan, Kumeyaay, and Aztec cultures and incorporated those symbols into the gateway sign. He focused on the corn and beans as staple foods of indigenous peoples. The community really seems to appreciate the new sign.

Some artists explained the impact: “The gateway is like saying, welcome to Barrio Logan, welcome to our community, this is our community and we are very proud. And make sure you respect our community. Don't come here tearing our community down. It's a statement saying, hey, you're welcome to my house, but don't put your feet on my table or don't start throwing crap all over the place, this is my community, it's my house. That's the statement we are trying to

make. Keeping the roots of our history, preserving our traditions. We have to emphasize that all the time.” The gateway is another means of building on cultural capital and using the new investments from the redevelopment of the area to improve it, but concurrently make efforts to maintain it as a Chicano space.

The new investments in Logan Heights are also bringing in chipsters (Chicano hipsters) like in Boyle Heights. Some of these chicano hipster businesses are connected to the growing arts scene. A few Chicano coffee shops have opened up along with Latino restaurants. There is even a new Latino microbrewery on Logan Avenue. Logan Avenue also has Chicano-themed arts galleries and these new businesses are creating a Chicano arts milieu next to Chicano Park. A longtime activist who spearheaded much of the revitalization sees the positive aspects of the new chipster businesses in the neighborhood. “Resurgence of the arts in the area is exciting. The extension of Chicano Parks and the murals into the area. The entire area will now be a thriving arts scene and community. That is the next phase of Barrio Logan.”

A young activist who is also a resident in the Mercado Del Barrio apartments sees the contradictions within this hipsters’ emergence.

Sandoval: “What do you think of all the Latino-owned businesses in Logan Avenue?”

Interviewee: Those things are good in the context of our communities and their abilities to have small businesses that are RAZA owned, community run. But who is it marketing to? Some of the tacos are kind of expensive so RAZA can't go get tacos because they are expensive. Same with the beers. It responds to a certain market. They need to make a profit. So RAZA in the neighborhood can't go, only certain people in the community can go have tacos.”

Hence, the same class issues we see in Boyle Heights are emerging within the Logan Heights case. The transformation of the neighborhood as higher-income residents move in and new businesses start to cater to a higher-income clientele.

## **8.4 Resistance and self-determination in Logan Heights**

“The movement is everything. Like I told you, the movement is everything.” – Longtime community activist in Logan Heights

Logan Heights is a neighborhood that contains a great amount of political, social, economic and cultural capital. That capital is used at various times in efforts to resist the further cutting up and destruction of the neighborhood. As an Ethnic Studies professor at a university in San Diego eloquently explains, the resistance is “about a community that has been continually cut up and dissected, chopped up in so many different ways. I can go back many years, all the way to the early 20th century. And there has been battle after battle and it continues. So there has been a stronghold of people who have said, this park is our park. As crazy as it is, it's under a bridge, cars are flying over at 70 mph but it's ours. And it's what we want. So that validation is really critical.” This activism and form of resistance in the neighborhood is directly related to the emergence of Chicano Park. As mentioned, Logan Heights is a neighborhood, like Boyle

Heights, that has been cut up into pieces by freeways and other planning interventions. Interstate 5 cut it in two and planners actually started defining the west part as Barrio Logan. Then the Coronado Bridge cut it again. The California Highway Patrol had plans to build a station underneath the bridge and that was the spark that made the community resist those top-down government plans for the area. Activists took over the underpass of the bridge and created Chicano Park. Caltrans owns the land but they lease it out to the City of San Diego for \$1 and the Chicano Park Steering Committee are the stewards of the park. Hence, Chicano Park is a symbol of Chicano resistance and self-determination as the community fought back the planners and now control the destiny of that public space. A longtime Chicano activist explains the importance of this resistance as it relates to Chicano Park:

The founding of Chicano Park was to give access to young people to have a place to play, some greenspace. To have access to recreation. After the displacement of the [Chicanos] because of I-5 and Coronado Bridge, there was a huge anger and frustration from the community. When they heard they were going to build a Highway Patrol Station at the location where Chicano Park now sits, the community rolled up and took the land over. This is our community and we need a park to call our own. And at the height of the Chicano Movement the reaffirmation of what our struggle was, a struggle for land, we took a piece of land and wrote down AZTLAN as our banner, our struggle. Reaffirmed our history through the murals as an indigenous people.

The cultural capital within the neighborhood is protected by political struggle. Logan Heights might be the best example of this type of Latino placemaking because the park represents the history of this political struggle and the manifestation of cultural practices visually and publicly via the murals. Hence, the community-based organizations and activists in the neighborhood directly place pressure on planning institutions and local government to ensure the cultural milieu in the neighborhood is maintained. These political pressures have ensured that public participation in the planning process has been taken seriously. As an activist involved in the TOD planning project explains:

There had been many community meetings to talk about the [redevelopment of the] area because of the history of struggle and resistance in this community, right. This community has always had political antagonisms. There is always a push from members of the community to say, no, it has to reflect the cultural history of the neighborhood and therefore it has to incorporate those things. If you see the Barrio Logan sign, you will see a corn in the center because for us Mexicanos, it's very significant to us for our diet and history. There is always a push to have those architectural designs that reflect the community. There is a history of struggle of political combativeness and that has an impact on how the city designs things. There are processes where these architects and builders have these community meetings.

The murals on the TOD site, the gateway signage representing indigenous Aztec and Mayan symbols, and the search for a Latino-themed grocery store, were all products of political pressure to maintain the cultural history of the barrio. This pressure came mainly from community activists who saw these new developments as potentially threatening the neighborhood and, hence, proactively worked with planners and government officials to gain some community

benefits from the new infrastructural development projects. Activists pressured the developer to make all the housing affordable in the Mercado Del Barrio development. A key activist who directly participated in that process says they had to make the developer and city accountable to the community by being advocates:

During the community improvement study, the community said “the freeway took our houses, the junkyards took our houses, and all those small boat builders, little recycle shops, they all took houses. They took the housing away. They're the transformers. And so we had to become the change makers. That's what we are: we're change makers. Always, always...And I tell everyone who works for me, "You have to become an advocate." We'll teach you how. I don't care if you're recreation, maintenance...I don't care what you are. You're all advocates.

The key lesson to learn from Logan Heights' experience in dealing with TOD is that community advocates were proactive and took over the development process. They became advocates for gaining community benefits, pressured the key stakeholders and made them accountable to the current residents in the neighborhood. At the end of the day, the TODs in Logan Heights will serve the community because advocates made sure they would.

Sandoval: The thing about this neighborhood is that so many people care about it.

Interviewee: Of course, people care.

Sandoval: Because if you didn't care about it, people could do whatever they wanted to it.

Interviewee: There's a gel that brings us all together. Culture, history, traditions. You don't have to relate it to Mayas, Aztecs, it's your traditions and customs.

## 9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

“Theoretically you listen to the concept of walkable communities, all of that sounds good. But in reality, when it all plays out, I don't know how much it will actually benefit our communities or to preserve our cultural heritage. I really don't.”

Resident of Logan Heights

The Boyle Heights TOD and the Logan Heights TOD case studies validate much of the findings from the first report, *Transit-Oriented Development and Equity in Latino Neighborhoods: A comparative case study of MacArthur Park (Los Angeles) and Fruitvale (Oakland)*. The TODs in Boyle Heights and in Logan Heights are transportation tools that can be used to revitalize barrio neighborhoods. But the key to the equity impacts from these projects is the involvement of community residents in shaping and guiding the development process. This building upon the community assets within the barrio. Hence, after studying the impacts of two additional TOD projects in Latino low-income neighborhoods, I still believe that TOD projects have the

opportunity to really make an important contribution towards revitalizing and improving low-income neighborhoods, but this depends on residents *authentically guiding the development process and the building upon barrio assets within the context of the neighborhood.*

These two, rich qualitative case studies help urban planners and transportation policymakers better understand how to mitigate concerns of gentrification as TODs serve as catalysts for revitalizing neighborhoods. Answering the research questions helps planners better understand how to mitigate gentrification as a result of new investments. The original research questions asked: What strategies and tools are available to planners and urban transportation policymakers to help mitigate potential gentrification from their TOD investments? And what could planners learn from the experiences of neighborhood change in these two Latino neighborhoods?

The key recommendations that emerged from all four case studies (MacArthur Park, Fruitvale, Boyle Heights and Logan Heights) are three fold: 1) focus on the endogenous forms of capital in the neighborhood; 2) build on the social, political, economic, and cultural forms of capital in the neighborhood; 3) emphasize public participation processes that actually have an impact on how the TOD project is being implemented.

All of these four barrios - Fruitvale, MacArthur Park, Boyle Heights and Logan Heights- are experiencing large amounts of both public and private investment. These investments are increasing the pressures of gentrification and raising rents. In Boyle Heights and Logan Heights, in particular, these pressures have also spurred neighborhood activists to push back on rapid neighborhood changes. This push back is a very good outcome because it provides new opportunities for neighborhood activists and planners to work together to find solutions in mitigating potential displacement. Outcomes from these projects include the following: increasing affordable housing units (which activists have been demanding in both neighborhoods); an emphasis on supporting local artists and helping to create an emerging arts milieu that is community based; and increasing safety in the neighborhoods and investing in public spaces. Both neighborhoods even saw investments in educational facilities like the high school in Boyle Heights (next to the TOD) and the community college in Logan Heights (also next to the TOD), which are now linked to the regional public transportation system in the neighborhoods. An interesting cultural outcome from the new capital coming into the neighborhoods is the new intra-ethnic conflicts around “gentefication” and the gentrification being done by higher-income Latinos moving into the neighborhood.

However, these changes in the neighborhood have not been without controversies. The key ethical question emerges: What is the point of having new public facilities and private investments in the area if those investments just contributed to the displacement of lower-income residents who were previously in the neighborhood? You might be able to upgrade a neighborhood and maintain the same ethnic composition, but actually change the economic class of the community. Hence, that’s a key question that needs to be asked but goes beyond the scope of this report.

There are important lessons learned from both case studies related to the strategies and tools of mitigating for gentrification. For the Boyle Heights case, the key tool used was affordable

housing. The neighborhood is undergoing a transformation and much of it has been centered on issues of affordable housing. The neighborhood used to have the largest amount of public housing west of the Mississippi River. This is no longer the case. The public housing projects were demolished by the Hope VI project. Now there continues to be a push to bring in affordable housing into the neighborhood, especially around Metro stops, but that is bumping up against backlash from housing rights activists. Those activists are saying the new apartments are not really affordable to the lowest-income members of Boyle Heights. Hence, this question of housing affordability for the lowest-income bracket is pressing since affordable housing is the key tool being used to lessen the impacts of increasing land use value as a result of transit infrastructure investments.

The other lesson learned from Boyle Heights is investing in creating a Latino, culturally relevant public space as a way to spur vibrancy in the barrio. In Boyle Heights, that was done by creating Mariachi Plaza and bringing a gazebo from Mexico. Mariachi Plaza is contributing to the emerging vibrancy on First Street, and which is also being supported by more government investment in street design. Hence, investing in culturally appropriate public design and on cultural festivals helps to create a local festive atmosphere that attracts more people into the neighborhood. Of course, there are risks that the new vibrant milieu might also be contributing to gentrification. This vibrancy should be built from the ground up as a way to control for gentrification. Mariachi Plaza is now a key public space where Latino cultural celebrations and festivals occur.

Logan Heights also offers key lessons in terms of strategies and tools that planners use to mitigate gentrification. All one has to do is visit the Mercado Del Barrio development to see the dramatic changes happening in the neighborhood. What is fascinating about the TODs in Logan Heights is the community support behind their implementation. This is due, in large part, to the projects incorporating the cultural elements of the barrio within their design, ensuring the affordability element via housing, and bringing more access to food via the Latino supermarket in the neighborhood.

Chicano Park is in no short supply of political capital from the important community organizations in the neighborhood: Barrio Station, the Environmental Health Coalition, the Chicano Park Steering Committee, and others. This political capital can be harnessed at any time to create protest or other community actions if the neighborhood is being threatened. One example is when a group of real estate outsiders organized a Better Blocks Strategy on Logan Avenue and neighborhood groups saw that as helping to spur gentrification. They organized community resistance by not attending the event and, hence, demonstrating the lack of community support. Redevelopment and planning staff understood the power these groups had to stop the redevelopment unless community representatives were involved in guiding the development process.

Yet another strategy that was used by planners was to invest in public art via the muralists at Chicano Park. In fact, the new large TOD, COM 22, commissioned both local and international Latino artists to design public art into their projects. One artist, Hector Villegas, is a young artist who grew up a block from Chicano Park and is now creating murals in the park. He worked on a

beautiful mural that depicts the trolley entering Logan Heights. The incorporation of Chicano Park artists into the public spatial sphere is yet another example of a concrete mitigation measure that can be used to sustain the ethnic makeup of a neighborhood that is experiencing pressures of gentrification. The new gateway signage, designed by one of the original Chicano Park muralists and a member of the Chicano Park Steering Committee - Armando Nunez, depicts indigenous symbolism as a welcoming gesture to the neighborhood. The cultural elements present in the symbolism also serve to protect and maintain the Latino identity of the neighborhood.

The key areas for future research which emerged in this project are twofold. One deals with the issue of housing affordability and neighborhood turnover. A key problem is that non-profits are pushing for affordable housing that might not actually be affordable to the lowest-income group of neighborhood residents. More research needs to be done in this area. This research should take a mixed methods approach. We have to understand how these “affordable” housing projects are helping to transform these low-income barrios. Are the financial metrics used by transportation and housing/land use planners really helping the lower categories of marginalized low-income people? Are residents being pushed out because of federal and state affordable housing policies? These are important questions that go beyond the scope of this report but need to be addressed. This question becomes especially pressing in this increasing context of gentrification pressures. And especially since affordable housing is being used as a tool to supposedly mitigate for gentrification.

The other area of future research deals with intra-ethnic gentrification, that is, Latinos gentrifying other Latinos. This issue was hotly debated within the group of interviewees I had the opportunity to speak with. Some of them even saw the “gentrification” of the neighborhood as a form of social justice because Latinos were revitalizing their own neighborhoods. But others saw it as a class issue where Latinos were trying to commodify their culture and profit from the displacement of lower-income Latinos. Although this is a fascinating issue and one I wanted to further understand, the scope of this research limited my ability to further investigate that matter.

In summary, after studying four neighborhoods and speaking in depth to about 100 stakeholders, I have come to the conclusion that TODs can help revitalize low-income neighborhoods. They can serve as a piece of public investment to bring needed economic resources and access to retail, food, medical services, educational services, vibrant public spaces, and even “affordable” housing projects. However, it has been a struggle for these neighborhood actors to maintain their neighborhoods and actually gain some community benefits from these projects. Activists have made some community gains because these barrios are special spaces. Barrio spaces that maintain very strong forms of social, economic, political and cultural capital. When needed, the residents, local business owners, some Latino politicians, and local neighborhood activists have pushed back and resisted these large-scale projects. In this resistance, they have transformed the projects to be more community oriented. These barrio players have real power to influence the planning process. And maybe that is the key lesson learned in these two reports. These four Latino barrios all pushed back against the large infrastructural projects proposed by the planners, and they forced them to rethink their plans and make them more community oriented. That took courage and power.

## 10.0 References

- Arreola, Daniel (2004) *Hispanic Spaces, Latino Places: Community and Cultural Identity in Contemporary America*. University of Texas Press, Austin, TX.
- Avila, Eric (2014): *The folklore of the freeway. Race and revolt in the modernist city*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Bernick, Michael; Cervero, Robert (1997): *Transit Villages in the 21st Century*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Boarnet, Marlon; Crane, Randall (1997): *L.A. Story: A Reality Check for Transit-Based Housing*. In *Journal of the American Planning Association* 63 (2), pp. 189–204.
- Cervero, Robert et al (2004): *Transit-Oriented Development in the United States. Experiences, Challenges, and Prospects (TCRP Report 102)*.
- Cervero, Robert; Ferrell, Christopher; and Steven Murphy (2002): *Transit-Oriented Development and Joint Development in the United States. A Literature Review*.
- Chapple, Karen (2016) *Planning sustainable cities and regions. Towards more equitable development (Routledge equity, justice and the sustainable city series)* Routledge, New York.
- Chapple, Karen (2009): *Mapping Susceptibility to Gentrification. The Early Warning Toolkit*. Berkeley, CA.
- Diaz, David and Torres, Rodolfo (2012): *Latino Urbanism: The Politics of Planning, Policy and Redevelopment*, New York, NY University Press.
- Diaz, David (2005): *Barrio Urbanism: Chicanos, Planning and American Cities*. Routledge, New York.
- Dittmar, Hank; Ohland, Gloria (2004): *The new transit town. Best practices in transit-oriented development*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Ellen, Ingrid Gould; O'Regan, Katherine M. (2011): *How low income neighborhoods change: Entry, exit, and enhancement*. In *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 41 (2), pp. 89–97. DOI: 10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2010.12.005.
- Flora, C.; Flora, J. (2013): *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Freeman, L. (2005): *Displacement or Succession? Residential Mobility in Gentrifying Neighborhoods*. In *Urban Affairs Review* 40 (4), pp. 463–491. DOI: 10.1177/1078087404273341.
- Freeman, Lance (2006): *There goes the 'hood. Views of gentrification from the ground up*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Glass, Ruth Lazarus (1964): *London. Aspects of Change*. London: MacGibbon & Kee (3).

Golub, Aaron; Hoffmann, Melody; Lugo, Adonia, and Sandoval, Gerardo (2016): *Bicycle justice and urban transformation. Biking for all?* New York, N.Y: Routledge (Routledge equity, justice and the sustainable city).

Gould, Kenneth Alan; Lewis, Tammy L.: *Green gentrification. Urban sustainability and the struggle for environmental justice.*

Hodge, David C. (1980): *Inner-City Revitalization as a Challenge to Diversity?* Seattle. In *Back to the City: Issues in Neighborhood Renovation.* With assistance of S. Laska, D. Spain, eds. Elmsford, New York: Pergamon Press.

Hoffmann, Melody L.(2016) *Bike lanes are White lanes. Bicycle advocacy and urban planning,* University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Kennedy, Maureen; Leonard, Paul (2001): *Dealing with Neighborhood Change. A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices.* The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy; PolicyLink.

Lee, Bill L. (1997): *Civil Rights and Legal Remedies. A Plan of Action.* In *Just Transportation: Dismantling Race and Class Barriers to Mobility.* With assistance of Robert D. Bullard, Glenn S. Johnson, eds. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Lefaver, Scott (1997): *Public Land with Private Partnerships for Transit Based Development.*

Litman, Todd (2002): *Evaluating Transportation Equity.* In *World Transport Policy and Practice* 8 (2), pp. 50–65.

Litman, Todd (2013): *Evaluating Transportation Equity. Guidance for Incorporating Distributional Impacts in Transportation Planning.*

Logan, John R.; Molotch, Harvey Luskin (2007): *Urban fortunes. The political economy of place.* University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.

Lubitow, A.; Zinschlag, B.; Rochester, N. (2015): *Plans for pavement or for people? The politics of bike lanes on the 'Paseo Boricua' in Chicago, Illinois.* In *Urban Studies.* DOI: 10.1177/0042098015592823.

McKinnish, Terra; Walsh, Randall; Kirk White, T. (2010): *Who gentrifies low-income neighborhoods?* In *Journal of Urban Economics* 67 (2), pp. 180–193. DOI: 10.1016/j.jue.2009.08.003.

Mohl, Raymond A. (1993): *Race and Space in the Modern City. Interstate-95 and the Black Community in Miami.* In *Urban Policy in Twentieth-Century America.* With assistance of Arnold R. Hirsch, Raymond A. Mohl, eds. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Salvesen, David (1997): *Promoting Transit-Oriented Development.* In *Urban Land* 55 (7), pp. 31–35. Available online at [http://www.worldcat.org/title/promoting-transit-oriented-development/oclc/37266789&referer=brief\\_results](http://www.worldcat.org/title/promoting-transit-oriented-development/oclc/37266789&referer=brief_results).

Still, Tom (2002): Transit-Oriented Development. Reshaping America's Metropolitan Landscape. In *On Common Ground* Winter, pp. 44–47.

Stolz, Rich (2002): Transportation Equity and Environmental Justice. *Progressive Planning Magazine*. Available online at <http://www.plannersnetwork.org/2002/10/transportation-equity-and-environmental-justice/>.

U.S. Census: Barrio Logan Study Area: 1990 Census Tracts (49; 50); 2000 Census Tracts (49; 50) 2010 Census Tracts (49; 50)

U.S. Census: West Boyle Heights Study Area: 1990 Census Tracts (2031; 2032; 2033; 2034; 2035; 2036; 2037; 2038; 2039; 2041; 2042; 2043; 2044; 2045; 2046; 2047; 2048; 2049; and 2051); 2000 Census Tracts (Block Group 1, 2031; Block Group 2, 2031; Block Group 4, 2031; Block Group 5, 2031; Block Group 1, 2032; Block Group 2, 2032; Block Group 3, 2032; Block Group 4, 2032; Block Group 1, 2033; Block Group 2, 2033; Block Group 3, 2033, Block Group 1, 2035; Block Group 2, 2035; Block Group 3, 2035; Block Group 4, 2035; Block Group 1, 2036; Block Group 2, 2036; Block Group 3, 2036; Block Group 4, 2036; Block Group 1, 2037.10; Block Group 2, 2037.10; Block Group 1, 2037.20; Block Group 2, 2037.20; Block Group 3, 2037.20; Block Group 1, 2038; Block Group 2, 2038; Block Group 3, 2038; Block Group 4, 2038; Block Group 1, 2039; Block Group 2, 2039; Block Group 3, 2039; Block Group 1, 2041.10; Block Group 2, 2041.10; Block Group 3, 2041.10; Block Group 1, 2041.20; Block Group 2, 2041.20; Block Group 1, 2042; Block Group 2, 2042; Block Group 1, 2043; Block Group 2, 2043; Block Group 3, 2043; Block Group 4, 2043; Block Group 1, 2044.10; Block Group 2, 2044.10; Block Group 1, 2044.20; Block Group 2, 2044.20; Block Group 1, 2046; Block Group 2, 2046; Block Group 1, 2047; Block Group 2, 2047; Block Group 3, 2047; Block Group 1, 2048.10; Block Group 2, 2048.10; Block Group 3, 2048.10; Block Group 4, 2048.10; Block Group 1, 2048.20; Block Group 2, 2048.20; Block Group 1, 2049.10; Block Group 1, 2049.20; Block Group 2, 2049.20; Block Group 1, 2051.10; Block Group 1, 2051.20; Block Group 2, 2051.20; Block Group 1, 2060.30; Block Group 2, 2060.40; Block Group 3, 2060.40; Block Group 2, 2060.50); 2010 Census Tracts (2031; 2032; 2033; 2035; 2036; 2037.10; 2037.20; 2038; 2039; 2041.10; 2041.20; 2042; 2043; 2044.10; 2044.20; 2046; 2047; 2048.10; 2048.20; 2049.10; 2049.20; 2051.10; 2051.20; 2060.32; 2060.50)

Vale, Lawrence J. (2013): *Purging the poorest. Public housing and the design politics of twice-cleared communities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (Historical studies of urban America).

Valle, Victor and Torres, Rodolfo (2000): *Latino Metropolis*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Villa, Raul Homero (2000): *Barrio Logos: Space and Place in Urban Chicano Literature and Culture*, University of Texas Press, Austin, TX.



## **Appendix I: Letter to Interviewees**

Dear Participant:

I am a faculty member at the University of Oregon in the Department of Planning, Public Policy and Management. I am working on a research project that is designed to compare and contrast the development and community and equity impacts of large transit-oriented development (TOD) projects in low-income Latino immigrant communities. Currently, I am studying the Pico-Aliso TOD in East Los Angeles and the Barrio Logan TOD in San Diego. This research project is part of a continuing study that focused on three stations: MacArthur Park subway station in Los Angeles, Fruitvale Transit Village BART station in Oakland. I will be interviewing metropolitan transportation staff, redevelopment staff, city planning staff, local city council members, politicians, and leaders of community based organizations in these three cities. Additionally, I will be interviewing community leaders, residents in the neighborhood, and other users of the transportation systems who have specific knowledge related to this topic.

These interviews will help me better understand how the transit oriented development transportation projects transformed these Latino immigrant communities. I will be evaluating the impacts of the TOD on these communities and how community members responded to these impacts. For example, I will evaluate whether the TOD projects lead to higher density land-use patterns in these neighborhoods, with minimum cases of displacement. The research will be shared with the academic community and will include policy recommendations related to policy and planning work, and specifically offer suggestions for how to implement large-scale transportation improvements in vulnerable low-income Latino communities. Please note that this research is funded by a grant from the National Institute for Transportation and Communities (NITC). I hope to learn about your role in these important issues, your knowledge of the topic area, and any insights regarding how Latino immigrants are shaping planning efforts related to TOD projects.

With your permission, I will be recording your interview. I will also be taking careful notes. These notes will be strictly confidential and stored in a secure location. All the interview notes shall be secured in a locked safe in my office and I will be the only person with access to that information.

This interview is voluntary and we can end them at any time you request. You are also free to refuse to answer any questions in these activities. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not taking part in the research or for stopping your participation. The estimated time for the interview is approximately 1 hour. Again, your participation is voluntary and every effort will be made to keep your responses confidential. Completion of the interview indicates your willingness to participate in this project and that you are over the age of eighteen.

I am confident that this research will benefit city planners, transportation agencies, government officials, community agencies, and others working in immigrant neighborhoods as all can learn more about incorporating immigrants to large scale transportation infrastructural planning efforts.

Please note, this project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects) at the University of Oregon. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator at (541) 346-2510.

If you have any questions about the project or interview or want more information before the interview, please feel free to contact the project advisor, Professor Gerardo Sandoval, at 541-346-8432.

Gerardo Sandoval, PhD  
Assistant Professor  
Planning, Public Policy and Management  
University of Oregon

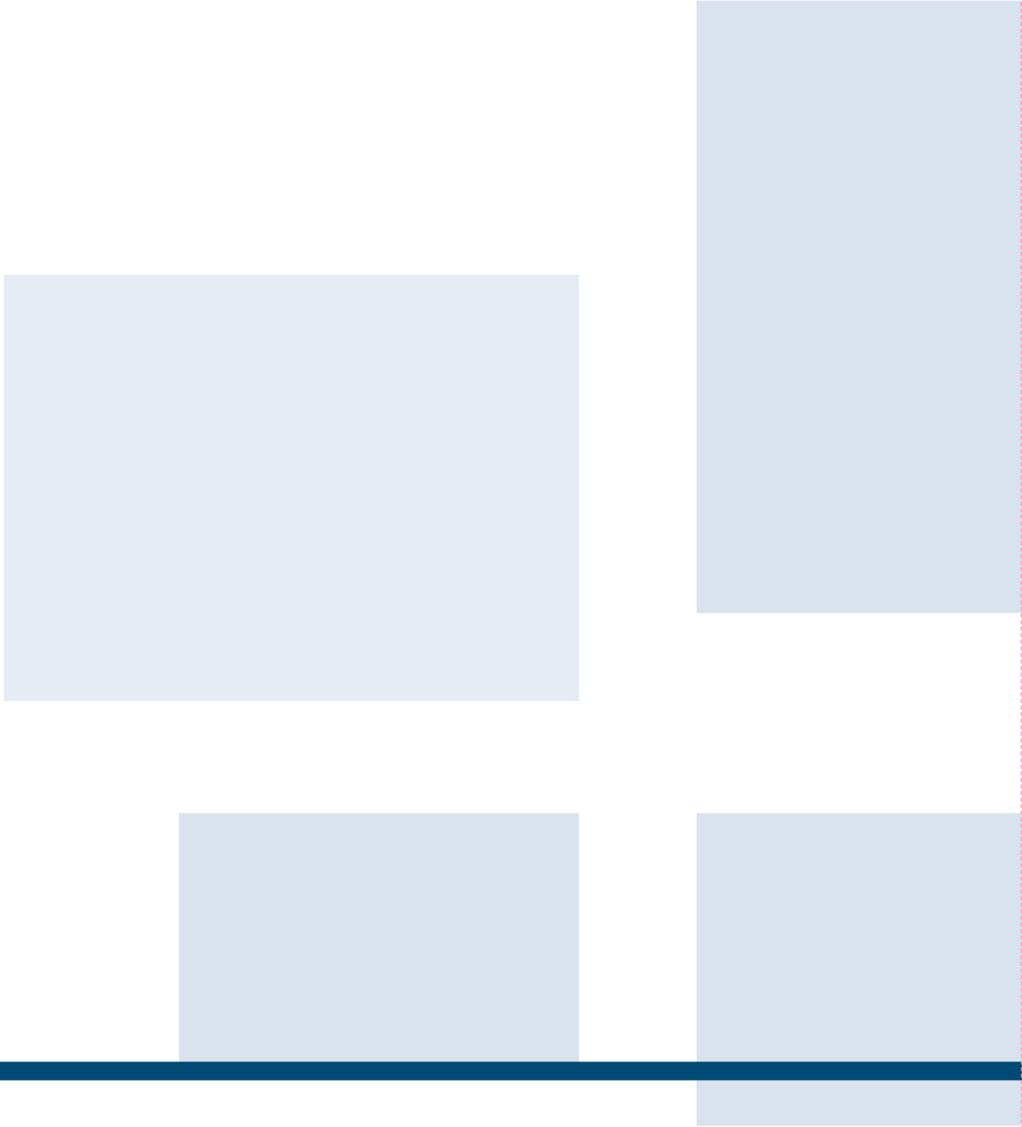
## Appendix II: Interview Guide

### Interview Guides

Updated June 16, 2014

This interview guide will be used for all the subjects interviewed. Interview subjects include: metropolitan transportation staff, redevelopment agency staff, city planning staff, local city council members, politicians, leaders of community based organizations, and community leaders.

- Could you tell us about your background and involvement in the TOD project?
- Could you describe the key equity concerns this neighborhood faces?
- What changes have you seen in the neighborhood before and after the TOD project?
- What types of resources were available in the community before and after the TOD project?
- Were there any major conflicts during the project's initial planning stages?
- What mechanisms of public participation were incorporated into the design of the project?
- Could you describe any shifts in prioritizing funding for the TOD project?
- What have been the effects of the TOD project on the level of affordable housing in the neighborhood?
- Have there been any worries of gentrification in the community? How have these been addressed?
- What have been the effects of the TOD project on pedestrian safety and accessibility in the neighborhood? How about on ridership or access to new job markets?
- Has the TOD project created any appealing public spaces?
- Have there been any multiplier effects that can be traced to the TOD project? Such as an increase in local businesses?
- Overall, has the TOD project improved or worsen the neighborhood? How so? Please provide examples.
- What have been some unintended outcomes or challenges associated with the TOD project?
- What types of evaluations have been conducted to measure the impacts of these TOD project?
- Is there anything else you would like to mention that I have not covered?



Transportation Research and Education Center  
Portland State University  
1900 S.W. Fourth Ave., Suite 175  
Portland, OR 97201