LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

Eleventh Annual COMMUNITY FORUM

Rebuilding Neighborhoods One Block At A Time

USC DAVIDSON CONFERENCE CENTER • THURSDAY • JUNE 20, 2013
Congratulations!

LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE

11TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM

Berg & Associates Inc.
Your Bridge to a Better Project

www.bergcm.com
June 20, 2013

Dear Attendees,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to LANI’s Eleventh Annual Community Forum! Your attendance today demonstrates your deep commitment to improving your own neighborhood as well as the communities you touch. We thank you for joining us.

Each and every person gathered here is motivated by the desire to create neighborhoods that are better places to live, work and play. Whether that means increasing safety, cleaning up streets or energizing the local economy, our common goal is simple: to work together to implement the changes necessary to improve our neighborhoods one block at a time. We hope to inspire you, to encourage you and to give you the tools you need for long-term success.

We look forward to the opening remarks of Father John Bakas, Dean of Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Fr. Bakas’ leadership has successfully changed not only the cathedral grounds but the extended community it serves. We also know you will be deeply moved by our keynote speaker, Sandy Banks. Ms. Banks is often regarded as the voice of our City as a long-time columnist at the Los Angeles Times. She is a passionate advocate for Los Angeles and its diverse neighborhoods. Our program continues with ten workshop sessions devoted to a variety of timely topics, each led by experts in their fields and designed to supply you with useful information that is relevant to your own experience.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has supported LANI this year including Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, whose office provides unwavering support, in addition to Los Angeles City Council Members, State, Federal and County elected officials, City Department leaders and staff as well as our private and nonprofit partners. I would also like to thank our sponsors, many of whom join us year after year, and who make it possible for us to continue to offer this informative day free of charge.

Most of all, I would like to recognize you, the caring individuals, neighborhood organizers and dedicated residents who make our mission clear. It is only with your enthusiasm and dedication that we continue to stimulate community-driven neighborhood revitalization.

Thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,

Veronica Hahni
Executive Director
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COMMUNITY FORUM OVERVIEW

Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative’s (LANI’s) ELEVENTH ANNUAL COMMUNITY FORUM promises to be a practical and exciting event.

The Forum gathers and trains neighborhood leaders and local stakeholders working to build better communities, providing a critical opportunity for dialogue and information sharing. We believe that our collective efforts and resources can "rebuild neighborhoods one block at a time."

LANI OVERVIEW

The mission of LANI is to stimulate community-driven neighborhood revitalization. LANI facilitates stakeholder participation and decision-making, and promotes public/private partnerships that result in catalytic community improvement projects. LANI achieves this through:

- COMMUNITY CONSENSUS BUILDING
- TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS
- BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION
- URBAN GREENING
- ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND SUPPORT
LANI BOARD
LANI is proud to introduce our dedicated board members, individuals committed to improving communities.

Karen Mack
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LA Commons

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University of Southern California
Center for Economic Development

Michael S. Metcalfe
Metcalfe Associates

Vinit Mukhija
University of California, Los Angeles
Department of Urban Planning
School of Public Affairs

Joyce Perkins
Joyce Perkins Consulting
LANI Co-Founder

Dennis Rodriguez
Siemens Industry, Inc.

LANI STAFF

Veronica Hahni
Executive Director
Extension 11

Rebecca Draper
Director of Neighborhood Improvement Projects
Extension 16

Sian Leong
Director of Development & Marketing
Extension 12

Anna Apostolos
Senior Program Manager
Neighborhood Improvement Projects
Extension 14

Monica Carlos Tellalian
Program Manager
Extension 15

Kate Mayerson
Program Manager
Extension 18

Janell Mullen
Program Manager
Extension 17

Maggie Liu
Office Assistant
Extension 13

Daisy Miguel
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2013 COMMUNITY FORUM GUEST SPEAKER

WELCOME ADDRESS
Father John Bakas
Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Fr. Bakas has been the Dean of Saint Sophia Cathedral and Greek Orthodox Community of Los Angeles since 1995. He spearheaded the drive for the major renovation of the Cathedral grounds and adjacent buildings. This renovation and renewal spawned the redevelopment of the surrounding area into what is now the Byzantine-Latino Quarter (BLQ) of Los Angeles. He is an original advisory board member of the BLQ Business Improvement District.

Fr. Bakas has served as Chaplain and President of the Valley Children's Hospital Foundation in Fresno. His efforts led to the building of a new $170 million facility, now in operation as the nation's state of the art, premier children's hospital. He has worked as an administrator at the University of New Mexico and at California State University Stanislaus. At the University of New Mexico he taught in the Latin American Affairs Department and served as Assistant Dean of Admissions. He is tri-lingual. In addition to English he speaks, Greek and Spanish.

He is Founder of the Diocesan Camp AGAPE "Kids 'n Cancer" program for needy children suffering with cancer, Camp Axios for Los Angeles inner city at risk youth, Rotary House Children's Hospice in Fresno, Project Nino-Mexico offering free medical care for poor children in Mexico through Rotary International and the Rotary Greek Amphitheater in Fresno which is a 2,500 seat outdoor theater built as a mini Epidaurus of ancient Greece. Fr. Bakas is Co-Chairman of the Police-Clergy Forum of the Los Angeles Police Department and serves as Commissioner of the Los Angeles Commission on Children, Youth and Families.

Fr. Bakas was ordained to the priesthood in 1979 and has a M.A. in Philosophy from the University of New Mexico and a Master of Theology from Loyola Marymount University. He is married and has four adult children; three daughters, one son and five grandchildren.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Sandy Banks
Los Angeles Times

On cold Cleveland days, young Sandy Banks had an after-school routine: She'd lie on the floor, put her feet on a heating vent and read advice columnists Ann Landers and Dear Abby. Then she'd clip her favorite columns and stick them in her journal. They still remind her of the power of the written word to comfort, challenge, teach and inspire.

Journalism became her passion in college at Ohio State, but her time there was cut short when her mother was diagnosed with cancer and Sandy returned to Cleveland to help care for her. Her mother died a month later. Sandy graduated the next year from Cleveland State University and took a job as a sports writer at a black weekly newspaper. She then spent two years at the Cleveland Press, before moving to California in 1979 to join the staff of the Los Angeles Times.

During 34 years at the Los Angeles Times she's served as a reporter, editor, columnist, editorial writer and director of the newspaper's internship program. She was on the team awarded a Pulitzer Prize for coverage of the Los Angeles riots in 1992.

But she is best known for her twice-weekly personal commentaries, which have won national recognition from organizations as varied as the National Council of Jewish Women and the Muslim Women's League; the Watts Community Health Foundation and the Beverly Hills Rotary Club; the California Teachers’ Association and the Union of Medical Marijuana Patients.

Sandy has also taught journalism courses at USC and Cal State Northridge and provided commentary on CNN, PBS and NPR. She is a frequent keynote speaker at civic functions, leadership forums and educational events. Widowed in 1993, she raised three daughters – all college graduates now – in Northridge, where she has lived since 1986.
Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
REGISTRATION & REGGY WOODS TRIO .................................................. Patio

9:00 AM – 10:15 AM
WELCOME AND KEYNOTE BREAKFAST ................................... Embassy Room

WELCOME ADDRESS ................................................................. Embassy Room
Father John Bakas
Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral

KEYNOTE SPEAKER ................................................................. Embassy Room
Sandy Banks
Los Angeles Times

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM SESSION 1 WORKSHOPS
BUILDING BLOCKS ................................................................. Board Room
WHAT’S OLD IS NEW AGAIN ................................................. Club Room
THE POWER OF ART ............................................................. Vineyard Room
GREENING THE CITY 50 PARKS AT A TIME! ......................... Figueroa Room
COMPLETE THE STREET ......................................................... Alumni Room

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
LUNCH ................................................................. Lobby/Patio

1:00 PM – 2:30 PM SESSION 2 WORKSHOPS
GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS .............................................. Board Room
MAKING THE MOST OF OUR STREETS ................................ Vineyard Room
CONNECTING THE DOT’S .................................................... Figueroa Room
PROMOTING HOPE AND ENHANCING LIFE ......................... Club Room
CHOOSE HEALTH LA ......................................................... Alumni Room

Traducciones en español estarán disponible durante el día.

EXHIBITORS: NETWORKING AREA AND EXHIBIT TABLES AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE DAY

• California Highway Patrol
• City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation
• City of Los Angeles, Department of Water and Power
• Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative
• Los Angeles Police Department
• Move LA
• Metro
• URS
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2013 WORKSHOP TOPICS
SESSION 1 • 10:30 am to 12:00 pm

BUILDING BLOCKS: The Design Manual for Living Streets
Get an update on the movement to create complete neighborhood environments and the guidelines that encourage safe and comfortable access for all users on the streets and sidewalks of Los Angeles and beyond.

Ryan Snyder, Ryan Snyder Associates
Marcel Porras, City of Los Angeles, Office of Mayor-Elect Eric Garcetti
Madeline Brozen, Complete Streets Initiative, UCLA
Moderator: Simon Pastucha, City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning

WHAT’S OLD IS NEW AGAIN: The Revitalization of L.A.’s Historic Core
Hear from the organizations at the forefront of ushering in an economic and physical renaissance of Los Angeles’ historic downtown core.

José Huizar, City of Los Angeles, Councilmember
Jessica Wethington Mclean, Bringing Back Broadway, Office of Councilmember José Huizar
Blair Besten, Historic Downtown Business Improvement District
Simon Ha, Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council
Moderator: Shiraz Tangri, Los Angeles Streetcar, Inc.

THE POWER OF ART: Innovative Community Installations
This exciting workshop reveals how art and culture are working to create community identity, beautify neighborhoods and prevent vandalism throughout the Los Angeles region.

Carlos Callejo, Central City Action Committee
Susan Gray, Metro
Moderator: Karen Mack, LA Commons

GREENING THE CITY 50 PARKS AT A TIME!: L.A.’s 50 Parks Initiative
The City of Los Angeles has embarked on an ambitious new park program that takes advantage of underutilized properties, many left blighted by the housing crisis, and creates recreation spaces in park-poor neighborhoods. Get the details in this workshop.

Tori Kjer, Trust for Public Land
Mike Shull, City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation & Parks
Bruce Saito, LACC
Moderator: Jennie Carreon DeLacy, City of Los Angeles, Office of Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa

COMPLETE THE STREET: The Los Angeles Mobility Element
With our lives in Los Angeles increasingly defined by our challenges in getting from point A to point B, how can our diverse city create more mobility choices for all? Help answer this question with the team leading the effort to update the Mobility Element of the City’s General Plan.

Claire Bowen, City of Los Angeles, Department of Planning
My La, City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning
2013 WORKSHOP TOPICS
SESSION 2 • 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS: Organizational Options to Create Thriving Commercial Corridors
Small businesses across the nation face great challenges. This workshop is designed to provide an overview of a variety of business associations, how they form and the programs they use to revitalize commercial corridors.
Misty Iwatsu, North Figueroa Association and Lincoln Heights Business Improvement District
John Ruhlen, Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association
Chang Lee, Korean American Chamber of Commerce of L.A.
Moderator: Donald Duckworth, Duckworth Consulting

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR STREETS: An Interactive Design Workshop
What are the opportunities and limits of our streets? In the multimodal era explore this question by observing conditions on the streets just outside USC with designers who are grappling with these issues on the ground today.
Melani Smith, Meléndrez
Shannon Davis, Meléndrez
Amber Hawkes, Meléndrez

CONNECTING THE DOT’S: A Look at L.A.’s Transportation Programs
The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation’s many programs and services reach far and wide. Find out about the core initiatives that can help make daily maneuvering safer and more manageable.
Pauline Chan, City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation
Luz Echavarria, LADOT – Watch the Road
Dan Mitchell, LADOT – Express Park
Moderator: Ken Husting, City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation

PROMOTING HOPE AND ENHANCING LIFE: Gang Prevention Strategies That Work
To address violence in the most gang-plagued communities, prevention strategies target youth at the highest risk of joining gangs. Learn how specialists are effectively approaching the issue and providing children with the tools they need to make good decisions.
Guillermo Cespedes, City of Los Angeles, Gang Reduction Youth Development
Ulises Gutierrez, Santa Anita Family YMCA
David Plaza, Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District
Moderator: Doug Semark, Gang Alternatives Program

CHOOSE HEALTH LA: Overcome Your Zip Code and Change Your Destiny
Los Angeles today is a city with wide health disparities — where you live defines your destiny. Come share your vision of a Healthy LA with the team developing the Health & Wellness Chapter of the City’s General Plan.
Elizabeth Carvajal, Raimi + Associates
Lys Mendez, Raimi + Associates
Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative

WORKSHOP PANELISTS

Blair Beston  
Executive Director  
Historic Downtown Business Improvement District

Blair Beston serves as the executive director for the Historic Downtown Business Improvement District. She received her license in real estate after purchasing, rehabilitating, and reselling her own residential properties. Her enthusiasm for design and construction led her to a career in development in the Historic area of Downtown Los Angeles. During the beginning of the renaissance in Downtown, she worked with KOR Realty Group in project management on two high-rise developments: the Santa Fe Lofts and the Eastern Columbia Building. She also assisted with several retail business build outs and transitioned both projects from construction through their sales and leasing phases. Blair attended Rutgers University for two years before finishing her degree at Indiana University.

Claire Bowen  
City Planner, Policy Planning and Historic Resources Division  
City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning

Since joining the Los Angeles Department of City Planning seven years ago, Claire has spearheaded the development of the City’s Green Building Ordinance, the River Improvement Overlay District, the 2010 Bicycle Plan, and the Cornfield Arroyo Seco Specific Plan. Claire currently leads the Citywide Unit, overseeing updates to the Mobility and Housing Elements and the establishment of a new Health and Wellness Chapter for the City’s Framework Element. Prior to joining the City, Claire’s career covered design and community development roles including the development of affordable housing, construction project manager, community organizer/peace corps volunteer and most notably 15 years as an art director in the Motion Picture Industry. Claire received a B.S. in Architecture from the University of Virginia and has made Los Angeles home since 1986.

Madeline Brozen  
Program Manager  
Complete Streets Initiative, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs

Madeline Brozen is the Program Director for UCLA’s Complete Streets Initiative. Her previous experience includes work for Ryan Snyder Associates on Safe Routes to School and working on Bicycle/Pedestrian Master plans. As part of her current role with the Initiative, she conducts research, manages research projects, lectures in urban planning classes and hosts civic engagement events. She has a background in transportation planning, non-motorized transportation, GIS, and applied research. She has helped work on publications such as “Reclaiming the Right-of-Way” and, “Characterizing Co-Variability Among Satellite- Derived Variables for Predicting Pacific Hake Distribution.” She has a bachelor’s degree and a certificate in GIS/Remote Sensing from the University of New Orleans and a master’s degree in urban planning from UCLA.

Carlos Callejo  
Artist/Muralist

Carlos Callejo is a public art advocate who has more than thirty years’ experience in implementing public art projects. He has received public recognition and formal commendations from public officials, art institutions, schools and community groups who have benefited from his artistic talents and his dedication to community empowerment. Carlos has been founder/co-founder of several different organizations including El Centro Cultural del Pueblo, Echo Park L.A., and SPARC “Social and Public Art Resource Center”. Carlos has provided training to numerous community-based groups, and has served on boards and councils. Carlos Callejo was born in El Paso, Texas and moved to Los Angeles at the age of nine. He has pursued a degree in graphic arts at California State University and studied at Otis Art Institute.

Elizabeth Carvajal  
Urban Planning and Public Health Specialist  
Raimi + Associates

Elizabeth Carvajal is currently embedded within the City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning and is project lead for the preparation of the new Health and Wellness Chapter that will be incorporated into the General Plan Framework Element. Elizabeth has over eight years of progressively responsible achievements in urban planning, project management, and program delivery. She holds a Masters in Planning from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor’s degree in History from the Claremont Colleges: Pitzer College.
Guillermo Cespedes  
Deputy Mayor  
City of Los Angeles  

Guillermo Cespedes serves as Deputy Mayor, guiding the conceptualization, implementation, and coordination of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s comprehensive gang reduction and youth development initiative. During his tenure in the Mayor’s Office, Mr. Cespedes has combined empirical data and program design principles to implement the “GRYD Model” throughout the areas of Los Angeles most impacted by gang related violence. These include: the Summer Night Lights Program, the Multi-Generational Family Gang Prevention Program, and the Gang Intervention Incident Response and Case Management Program. Mr. Cespedes came to the Mayor’s Office in 2007 with over thirty years of experience working with socially and economically marginalized families in communities such as the Bronx, South Norwalk Connecticut, East Oakland California, and South Central Los Angeles. He received a Master’s Degree in Social Work from Columbia University in 1976 and completed post graduate studies in family systems theory and practice at Bronx State Hospital Family Studies Unit, Bristol Hospital in Connecticut, and the Nathan Ackerman Institute in New York City in 1978.

Shannon Davis  
Urban Designer and Planner  
Meléndrez  

Shannon Davis is an urban designer and planner with Meléndrez, Landscape Architecture, Planning & Urban Design in Downtown Los Angeles. She has worked in the private, public, and non-profit sector, within the field of urban design and planning. Her experience has included space needs programming projects, organizing and translating for community workshops, campus master plans, and conceptual spatial design. Her current work has focused on enhancing accessibility and connections within the built environment through multi-modal streetscape design. Shannon holds a Master of Planning from the University of Southern California.

Jennie Carreon DeLacey  
Director  
City of Los Angeles, Office of Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa  

Jennie Carreon de Lacey has extensive experience in public policy having worked for the City of Los Angeles since 2003. She grew up in East Los Angeles and was the first member of her family to graduate from high school and pursue higher education. Jennie has studied in fifteen different countries around the world and graduated from the University of California Santa Cruz and attended graduate school at California State University Sacramento. She is currently the Director for the Office of Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa and was the Lead to work with the Department of Recreation and Parks on the Mayor’s ‘50 Park Initiative’.

Donald R. Duckworth  
Principal  
Duckworth Consulting  

Don Duckworth serves as the Executive Director of the Westchester Town Center Business Improvement District and is a Principal of Duckworth Consulting, a firm that specializes in business improvement district formation, redevelopment, community participation, municipal finance, and real estate consulting. He has thirty years of experience in municipal government in northern and southern California, having served as City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Department Head and staff assistant for a number of local agencies. Mr. Duckworth has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and an MPA from California State University at Northridge.

Luz Echavarria  
Project Manager  
City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation  

Ms. Echavarria has been the Project Manager for the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) award winning Emmy “Watch the Road” campaign for the last ten years. “Watch the Road” seeks to educate the public about the importance of being safe while walking, biking and driving. Its primary goal is to raise awareness and change people’s behavior in order to reduce traffic related
injuries and fatalities. As project manager, LADOT has been awarded over 3.4 million in grant funds to develop, design and promote this highly successful program. Ms. Echavarria is also a practicing Transportation Planning Associate for LADOT. She has worked in transit operations, short-term and long-range planning and project management of transportation and traffic safety projects. She has a joint Master’s Degree in Urban Planning and Latin American Studies from UCLA.

Susan Gray
Creative Services Manager
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

Susan Gray is a Creative Services Manager with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority who oversees the art and design projects for the Regional Connector, Crenshaw/LAX, Purple Line Westside Extension and the Union Station expansion. Susan has experience working on several different art projects some of which include working with the Long Beach Arts Council as a Public Art’s Director and as a Project Manager for the San Francisco Arts Commission’s Public Art & Civic Design Review Programs. Susan holds a Masters in Visual Art from Griffith University, Australia.

Ulises Gutierrez
Director, Youth Alliance Program
Santa Anita Family YMCA

Ulises Gutierrez is currently working as the Director for the YMCA Youth Alliance program at the Santa Anita Family YMCA. Mr. Gutierrez was formerly involved with drugs and gangs but since then has become an assistant pastor to the Jesus is Lord Christian Center. Substance abuse, parent education, and character development are just a few of the classes that the Youth Alliance program provides. In 2010, Mr. Gutierrez was recognized with the Monrovia Chamber of Commerce Iris Award (Citizen of the Year).

Simon Ha
Co-Founder, Metro Charter Elementary School
Managing Partner, TSK (Tate Snyder Kimsey Architects)

Simon Ha is an architect with TSK, who has designed over 1000 units of housing in Downtown LA. In 2011, Simon and his wife Nikki along with 4 other Downtown families started the efforts to bring a charter elementary school to a growing community in Southpark. Metro Charter Elementary School was approved and is planned to open in September 2013. Simon has a passion for community involvement and development. He serves as a Co-Chair for the Planning and Land-Use Committee for Downtown LA’s Neighborhood Council and Co-Chair of Downtown LA’s Education & Childhood Development Committee for Central City Association. He has an Architecture Degree from Woodbury University in Burbank and a Master’s Degree from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University in Cambridge, MA.

Amber Hawkes, AICP
Urban Designer
Meléndrez

Amber Hawkes, AICP is an urban designer at Meléndrez, Landscape Architecture, Planning , & Urban Design in Los Angeles, managing and collaborating on the firm’s urban design vision planning and multi-modal streetspace redesigns. Some of Amber’s current projects include: Rethinking the Figueroa Corridor: a major overhaul to the streetspace from USC to downtown Los Angeles; urban design and connectivity studies for the Metro First Mile / Last Mile; and for a freeway cap park atop the 134 Freeway in the heart of Downtown Glendale, among others. She holds a lecturer position at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, where she teaches Visual Communication for Urban Planners. Amber speaks at conferences and universities about visual communication and the links between urban design and urban planning, with publications in design and planning related fields.

Councilmember José Huizar
Los Angeles City Council

José Huizar represents Los Angeles City Council 14th District. Prior to his Council election, Councilmember Huizar served as a member and President of the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Board of Education overseeing the largest construction and modernization public school project in U.S. history. Mr. Huizar is currently leading Bringing Back Broadway initiative’s implementation of an ambitious ten-year plan focused on the revitalization of the Historic Broadway Theatre District in Downtown. Councilmember Huizar also serves as Chair of the City
WORKSHOP PANELISTS

Council Energy & Environment Committee and Vice-Chair of the Planning & Land Use Management Committee. Mr. Huizar received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley, a Master’s degree in Public Affairs and Urban Planning from Princeton University and a Juris Doctorate from UCLA School of Law.

Ken Husting P.E.
Senior Transportation Engineer
City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation

Ken Husting is the Highway Program Manager at the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. He brings over 18 years of government experience with the County and City of Los Angeles. Ken is responsible for approximately $100 million worth of City capital projects, coordinates with Caltrans and Metro on billion dollar freeway and transit projects, and helps manage an annual budget of $35 million in Measure R Local Return funds. He is a licensed civil engineer, holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from California State University, Long Beach, and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Southern California. He is also an Eno Transportation Foundation Fellow, USC Town and Gown Scholar and Emmy Award winning producer.

Misty Iwatsu
Executive Director
Highland Park BID and North Figueroa Association

Misty Iwatsu has served as the executive director for the past eleven years for the North Figueroa Association, where she oversees Highland Park’s Business Improvement District which was founded in 2001. Misty oversees the maintenance, security, marketing promotion, as well as the farmers market that occurs within the BID.

Tori Kjer
Program Manager - Parks for People
The Trust for Public Land

Tori Kjer is the Senior Program Manager for the Parks for People - Los Angeles Program. She manages urban park and open space renovation projects for Trust for Public Land. From site identification, community outreach and design all the way through construction, Tori oversees a wide range of urban design projects throughout the County of Los Angeles, including parks, green alleys and outdoor fitness zones. Tori holds a Master’s Degree in Landscape Architecture from CSU Pomona and is a LEED accredited professional specializing in green and sustainable design.

My La
Planner
City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning

My La is a planner for the Los Angeles Department of City Planning. Her professional experience revolves around environmental consulting, GIS, and transportation planning. Since October 2011, she has been working on updating the City’s Mobility Element. Her work involves long-range policy development, research, and coordination. My grew up in the Lincoln Heights, El Sereno, and Boyle Heights area. She obtained her BA from UCLA in Geography/Environmental Studies and her Masters from Cal Poly Pomona in Urban & Regional Planning with a research focus on pedestrian safety and urban form.

Chang Y. Lee
Korean American Chamber of Commerce

Chang Lee is part of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce. He also serves as a Chairman of the Board for the Korean American Federation of Los Angeles. He owns his own business and has come to be known as one of the most important figures in the Korean American community in the City of Los Angeles. He has worked on countless community efforts and has created a strong bond within the Koreatown community as well as with the neighboring communities. Mr. Lee received a B.S degree in Chemical engineering from the University of Southern California.

Karen Mack
Founder and Executive Director
LA Commons

LA Commons is an organization dedicated to promoting Los Angeles’ diverse neighborhoods through locally based, interactive, artistic and cultural programming. LA Commons has implemented community art projects, tours and cultural development initiatives in communities throughout LA and in partnership with organizations such as the Central American Resource Center, the South Asian Network, Thai Community Development Center and
Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative

WORKSHOP PANELISTS

UCLA. Prior to work with LA Commons, Karen served as a Public Service Fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University where she researched the role of culture in community building. She holds an MPA from Harvard University and an MBA from the John Anderson School of Management at UCLA. She is currently president of the board of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative and an appointed member of the City’s Board of Neighborhood Commissioners.

Jessica Wethington McLean
Executive Director, Bringing Back Broadway
Director, Downtown Economic Development Office of Los Angeles City Councilmember José Huizar

As Executive Director, Jessica oversees the complex implementation of all aspects of the Bringing Back Broadway vision on the Councilmember’s behalf. She is the liaison between numerous City and public departments and agencies, civic and business organizations, and community stakeholders who work on the initiative. And on behalf of Councilmember Huizar, she leads the Board of Trustees and spearheads work in the many active committees and working groups related to the initiative.

In her role as the Councilmember’s Director of Downtown Economic Development, Jessica functions as lead staff on numerous large development projects in Downtown Los Angeles. She handles business and economic development policy for the Councilmember and is active with programs and issues related to promoting business incentives and job creation for Downtown as the Los Angeles region’s economic engine.

Lys Mendez
Outreach Coordinator
Raimi + Associates

Lys Mendez is an Outreach Coordinator for Raimi + Associates. Mendez is part of a team that is working on creating a new Health and Wellness Chapter for the city of Los Angeles General Plan. This Chapter will help serve as a guiding policy document to elevate health as a priority for future planning and development efforts. Mendez is currently engaging with Los Angeles residents in order to create a new vision for a healthier Los Angeles. Before joining Raimi + Associates, Mendez worked on communications for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the County of Riverside. She has a master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning from UCLA.

Daniel E. Mitchell, P.E
Senior Transportation Engineer
City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation

Daniel Mitchell is a Senior Transportation Engineer for the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT). Over the past six years, Dan has led the technological overhaul of the City’s 38,000 metered parking spaces, growing the operation from $21 to $52 million in annual revenue. Prior to this assignment, he managed the City’s ATSAC Traffic Management Center, where he was responsible for the daily operation of 3,000 traffic signals. Mr. Mitchell is also currently managing the implementation of LA Express Park, an $18.5 million federally-funded program to reduce traffic congestion and pollution in Downtown Los Angeles through demand-based parking pricing and real-time guidance. He earned a bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering from Loyola Marymount University and a master’s degree in Transportation Systems Engineering from the University of California, Irvine.

Simon Pastucha
Head of the Urban Design Studio
City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning

Simon Pastucha is an Urban Designer who is currently the head of the Urban Design Studio for the City of Los Angeles Planning Department. He has reviewed and improved the design of major planning, transportation, and neighborhood projects with a total value in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Simon sits as a Commissioner for the Marina Del Rey Design Control Board which sets design standards for the community. Simon is has also been a Lecturer at several major US Universities. Simon graduated from California State Polytechnic University Pomona with a degree in Landscape Architecture with an emphasis on ecosystematic design and sustainability.
WORKSHOP PANELISTS

David Plaza  
Prevention Specialist  
City of Norwalk’s Department of Public Safety

David Plaza is a Prevention Specialist for the City of Norwalk’s Department of Public Safety. He has been the coordinator for the “I Am Somebody” program for the last 22 years. “I Am Somebody” is a 10-week curriculum and instruction program that targets all the 4th graders in the Norwalk-La Mirada and Little Lake Unified School District. Each lesson taught in the classroom ranges from dealing with gang peer pressure and fostering self-esteem to commitment to higher education. David was born and raised in Los Angeles and experienced the killing or incarceration of many of his childhood friends. He has an Associate of Arts degree from East Los Angeles College and a Bachelor’s in Criminal Justice from Cal State Los Angeles.

Marcel Porras  
Senior Economic Development and Planning Deputy  
City of Los Angeles, Office of Mayor-Elect Eric Garcetti

Marcel Porras has been working on transportation-related policy and initiatives as the Senior Economic Development and Planning Deputy for mayor-elect Eric Garcetti. He has worked on transportation policy at the Center of Sustainable Transportation in Mexico City and as a transportation planner with Transconsult before he turned his attention to reducing traffic congestion in Los Angeles’s 13th Council District. Marcel was born and raised in Southern California. He completed a double major in History and Latin American Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). As part of his undergraduate studies, he spent a semester in Rio de Janeiro and had an internship at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He also earned his master’s degree in Urban Planning at UCLA.

John Ruhlen  
President  
Ruhlen & Associates, Inc.

John Ruhlen serves as president to Ruhlen & Associates, Inc., a space planning and commercial interior design firm that was established in Westchester in 1978. He also serves as the president to the Board of Director’s Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association and as acting secretary to the Westchester Town Center Business Improvement District. Mr. Howard Drollinger, a local property owner in Westchester and Mr. Ruhlen both helped spearhead the creation of the Westchester Town Center Business Improvement District. He has served on the Westchester and Playa del Rey Neighborhood Council representing Residential District 7 and co-chaired the Neighborhood Council’s CDO ad-hock committee for Playa del Rey.

Bruce Saito  
Executive Director  
Los Angeles Conservation Corps

Bruce Saito has a long history of outstanding service to Los Angeles and California. Bruce joined the Los Angeles Conservation Corps in 1985 and has served as the organization’s Executive Director since 1995. He also serves on the boards of the Los Angeles Community Garden Council, LA Neighborhood Land Trust and Little Tokyo Nutrition Program. Bruce has been recognized with numerous awards for his service by the City and County of Los Angeles, the State of California and the federal government, and has been honored with a National Philanthropy Day Outstanding Professional Award. Bruce received his bachelor’s degree from San Francisco State University.

Doug Semark, PhD  
Executive Director  
GAP

Doug Semark has vast experience in nonprofit organizations and education. Prior to coming to GAP he served as a college/university professor, director of a rural arts association and national executive director of a youth sports organization. In addition Doug’s development of a national program for child and volunteer protection and his work with the Nonprofit Risk Management Center have been models for many national and international organizations. Doug came to the Gang Alternatives Program in 2000. Working with the board and staff, he accelerated organizational growth by implementing the CDC’s Public Health Model and Social-Ecological
Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative

WORKSHOP PANELISTS

Framework for primary prevention, then adding a middle school program, Parent Project® training, numerous other programs and improvements in staff training. GAP serves tens of thousands of children and adults each year.

Michael Shull
Assistant General Manager
Planning Construction and Maintenance Branch
City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks

Michael Shull began his career with the City of Los Angeles 23 years ago with the City’s Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering after graduating from Pennsylvania State University with a Bachelor’s of Science in Civil Engineering. Mr. Shull worked for the Bureau of Engineering for more than 14 years before coming to work for the City’s Recreation and Parks Department in July 2005. Today, Michael is responsible for a team of over 800 employees that work in the Advance Planning, Real Estate, Environmental and Construction and Maintenance Divisions. His responsibilities include overseeing all park planning, capital improvements, property acquisitions, environmental issues including water and energy conservation programs, leasing, and building and grounds maintenance on over 430 parks on nearly 16,000 acres of land.

Melani Smith
Director of Planning and Urban Design
Meléndrez

Melani has 24 years of experience in the design professions, and has a Master’s Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from UC Irvine. She is a 23 year resident of Long Beach, and has served on the City’s Planning Commission since 2007. Melani’s recent work has included leading the consulting team developing a Streetscape Master Plan for the historic Broadway theatre district in downtown Los Angeles. She is also leading the design of the groundbreaking Figueroa Corridor Streetscape Project, linking south Los Angeles to Downtown and including the City’s first fully separated bicycle lanes. The firm is also working with the University of Southern California to develop the streetscape and open space guidelines for the University Village Specific Plan, including the streetscape concept for a reimagined Jefferson Blvd.

Ryan Snyder
President
Ryan Snyder Associates

Ryan Snyder is the President of Ryan Snyder Associates, a transportation planning firm that prepares sustainable transportation plans. He is a former Vice President of the Los Angeles Board of Transportation Commissioners. His most recent work includes coordinating the development of the Los Angeles County Model Design Street Manual for Living Streets, which won a 2013 American Planning Association national award. He is a Federal Highways Administration Pedestrian Safety Design instructor as well as a Partner of the National Complete Streets Coalition. In addition to his many other roles, Mr. Snyder also teaches a class on Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning to graduate students in the UCLA Urban Planning Department. He holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Economics and a Master’s Degree in Urban Planning from UCLA.

Shiraz Tangri
Partner
Alston & Bird

Shiraz Tangri is an attorney with Alston & Bird whose practice involves all aspects of land use. From 2003 to 2013, Shiraz served on the Planning & Land Use Committee of the Downtown Los Angeles Neighborhood Council. Shiraz is currently serving as co-chair of the Housing & Land Use Committee of the Central City Association of Los Angeles. He is also working as the General Counsel for Los Angeles Streetcar, Inc. and is a trustee of the Bringing Back Broadway Initiative, which oversees the City’s efforts to revitalize the largest historic theatre district in the western United States. Shiraz was most recently recognized in the Daily Journal’s 2012 list of Top 20 Lawyers Under 40 in California, and its 2012 list of 30 Top Real Estate Lawyers in California.
Born in Tennessee, Huell Howser moved to Los Angeles in 1981. He had no idea he’d fall in love… with California. In 1985 he joined Los Angeles television station KCET, then a PBS affiliate, covering topics relevant to Los Angeles and adjacent communities. His enthusiasm inspired the idea for the television series, California’s Gold.

"We operate on the premise that TV isn't brain surgery. People's stories are what it's all about," said Howser. "If you have a good story, it doesn't have to be overproduced. I want our stories to reveal the wonders of the human spirit and the richness of life in California, including its history, people, culture and natural wonders."

After almost 20 years in production, California’s Gold was one of the longest running and most beloved series about California ever produced. The success and popularity of the show helped to launch six additional series about life in California, Visiting with Huell Howser, Road Trip with Huell Howser, California’s Golden Parks, California’s Green, California’s Water and Downtown with Huell Howser.

LANI had the honor of having Huell Howser deliver the keynote address at the 2007 Community Forum. “Our city is filled with amazing people with inspirational stories. This is what makes us feel good about our city,” said Howser. “The wonder of what you do in our neighborhoods and the wonder of the human spirit is what makes it worthwhile. The best days in Los Angeles are yet to come.”

Ted Pastras was deeply involved in the Byzantine-Latino Quarter (BLQ) community where he had partnered with LANI since 1997. He was one of the original proponents of the BLQ Business Improvement District (BID) and helped establish it through his dedication and hard work.

Since 2005, Ted served as the president of the BLQ BID board. His leadership was instrumental in creating the BLQ dining guide in 2013. He was also a member of the original LANI recognized community organization, formed in 1997.

In addition to being a financial consultant, Ted was an actor and singer and an active member of the Saint Sophia Cathedral Parish for over 35 years where he was the Vice President and Director of Cultural Affairs.

Both he and his wife served as the co-chairs of the highly successful L.A Greek Festival which over the years drew a large crowd of individuals into the BLQ. The tireless work of Ted and others to bring the L.A Greek Festival every year to the BLQ BID not only contributed to the revitalization of the corridor but also helped to fund the creation of a charter middle school.

Ted Pastras passed away suddenly on March 3, 2013. He will always be remembered for his enthusiasm, charisma, and tireless efforts to help the community in and around the BLQ BID. He will be greatly missed.
Community Partnerships

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power salutes the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI) as they host their 11th annual Community Forum.

We also join in recognizing all of the programs and efforts championed by LANI in helping to make Los Angeles a more prosperous and sustainable city for all residents. LANI strives for stronger neighborhoods and a better future for our children.

LADWP encourages all of our partners and LA residents to join us in conserving water and energy for a more sustainable LA.

Visit our website at www.ladwp.com or call (800) DIAL DWP (800-342-5397) for information on our many water and energy conservation programs, as well as our renewable energy efforts.

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