Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Metro Station Master Plan & Transit Oriented District
Honoring the legacy of an historic icon, Rosa Parks, by inspiring cultural identity and empowering the Willowbrook community.
The Rosa Parks Master Plan team would like to thank key people involved in the process and influential in the development of the Rosa Parks Station Master Plan. Metro’s Transportation Planning Manager, Irving Taylor was instrumental in getting the project “off the ground” and providing leadership throughout the process.

County Supervisor, Mark Ridley-Thomas and his staff provided guidance to the project team by recommending the direction for the Station study and contributing at each Community meeting. The Supervisor’s staff assisting with the process included Dan Rosenfeld, Fernando Ramirez, Jacqueline Martin and Karly Katana.

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Finally, we wanted to thank the Community, for sharing their goals and visions for the future of Willowbrook.

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INTRODUCTION
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2 Introduction Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan 2010
The Rosa Parks Metro Station is uniquely located in a multi-jurisdictional area including unincorporated Los Angeles County, Los Angeles City and the City of Compton. Positioned at the entrance to the Willowbrook community, the Rosa Parks Metro Station has the opportunity to serve as an active and vibrant gateway village. A transformative Station design has the opportunity to provide an identity for the Willowbrook community.

Executive Summary

Projecting to the year 2030, land uses in the area could be significantly different in response to population pressures. Intensification of land uses will occur as a result of transit improvements and increased demand. At issue is how to manage the sequence of changes, and identify the appropriate candidates to facilitate these changes.

The unique history of Willowbrook and the rights of the people who live there to retain their culture, must be embraced and respected. Increased land utilization can serve to empower the community in terms of employment and quality of life. Guidelines must be established to ensure that new development maintains respect for the existing scale and context of Willowbrook.

We will identify the housing, retail and development typologies that are appropriate for the Willowbrook community. Opportunities for growth and development in the community start with a vision for 2030.

The purpose of the Master Plan for the Imperial/Wilmington/Rosa Parks Station (renamed Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station) is to recommend specific improvements for the Station and to set goals for the surrounding area as a Transit Oriented District. The Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Plan has been prepared for Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) through a Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant. The development of a Master Plan for the existing Station is intended to help improve transportation services in the Station area and to facilitate appropriate transit oriented development. Among the desired outcomes is the development of a series of transportation-related improvements and creation of a cohesive pedestrian environment focused on the transit Station area.

The Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station is situated in the community of Willowbrook, just south of Watts and southeast of the City of Los Angeles. Willowbrook is an unincorporated area surrounded by Lynwood on the east, Watts on the north, Compton on the south and Rosewood on the west. Major destinations within a one mile radius include the Imperial Courts housing project, Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Center, Watts Towers Art Center and Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center.

Approximately 16,500 people board and 14,500 disembark at the Rosa Parks Station each weekday from the Blue Line, Green Line and a variety of bus lines.

The focus of the study area includes the Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station and an approximately 1/4 mile radius extending south and west, bounded by Imperial Highway to the north, Willowbrook Avenue to the east, Compton Avenue to the west and 122nd Street to the south.

The Rosa Parks Willowbrook Station is situated in the community of Willowbrook, just south of Watts and southeast of the City of Los Angeles. Willowbrook is a Los Angeles County unincorporated area surrounded by Lynwood on the east, Watts on the north, Compton on the south and Rosewood on the west. Major destinations within a one mile radius include the Imperial Courts housing project, Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Center, Watts Towers Art Center and Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center.

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Master Plan Goals

The primary goal of the Rosa Parks Station Plan is to develop a Transit Oriented Plan with solutions that address safety, aesthetics, signage and other amenities in creating a unified design concept that encourages greater walking and biking, promotes public health and upgrades the physical environment through a series of landscaping and public amenities. Recommended improvements within the Metro Design Guidelines are developing the improvement plan, including the use of drought tolerant planting, solar powered lighting, art integrated into the Station design and easily maintained sustainable materials.

There is a dramatic visual contrast between the existing Rosa Parks Station and new stations planned for the Expo Line Light Rail. By contrast, Rosa Parks Station appears barren, blighted, unattractive, dark and unsafe. To address these deficiencies, the primary goal of the Rosa Parks Station Plan is to develop a comprehensive Station Improvement Plan for the entire Station area. This Master Plan will promote the use of public transit, facilitate the movement of people and provide safer and more attractive access to both rail and bus modes of transit serving the community.

The Master Plan provides a more efficient land use pattern by concentrating growth around the existing transit station area and modifying existing R-2, R-3, C-2 and C-3 zoning, with ripening to increase the allowable density. In addition, proposed modifications include higher density, building heights and lot coverage allowances.
Overall goals of the Rosa Parks Station Master Plan include the following:

Create a well designed Metro Station Plan that encourages transit use and provides a positive image for the Community.

- Redesign the Station to create an identity
- Create a public plaza
- Relocate parking to adjacent structured parking
- Extend the Blue Line platform to 117th Street

Integrate new development with transit to encourage ridership.

- Create urban oriented development opportunities
- Add 1,500 multi-family residential units by upzoning existing single-family residential areas
- Realignment Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center with orientation to the station and surrounding streets
- Add parking structures and lots which are convenient, yet hidden from view

Create a ‘Wellness’ oriented transit Oriented District by changing the traditional zoning.

- Create building sites for medical related businesses and industries, including:
  - Fitness
  - Nutrition

Use the Martin Luther King (MLK) Medical Center transition as a new opportunity to encourage transit use and development

- Provide a prominent ‘front door’ to MLK Hospital from Wilmingtom Avenue
- Provide a clear pedestrian pathway to MLK Hospital, Multi-Services Ambulatory Care Center (MACC) and medical office buildings
- Provide for hospital, MACC, medical office building and workforce housing in the project area

Huntington Hospital Main Entrance
Provide a "front door" to Charles Drew University (CDU) and integrate with the University’s master plan for development of the college campus of buildings and grounds.

Provide athletic facilities that can be shared by Charles Drew University, King-Drew Medical Magnet, Lincoln Elementary School and Barack Obama Charter School.

Create new buildings for Lincoln Elementary and Barack Obama Charter School, with shared athletic facilities and outdoor areas.

Provide innovative streetscape improvements to create a safe and walkable community, promoting pedestrian activity and bike paths.

Improve pedestrian access with wide sidewalks, street trees and open landscaped spaces.

Implement sustainable design technologies, including water reclamation, recycling, photovoltaic cells, light tubes, green roofs, energy efficient lighting and provisions for alternative fuel vehicles.

Sustainability - Bike Path

Outdoor Educational Facilities

Bike Path

Mitigate physical barriers (freeway, railroad tracks, fences, etc.)

Metro intends to utilize the Rosa Parks Station Plan to assist in securing funding for design and construction of the proposed improvements. The Master Plan provides an outline to allow Metro to undertake design and final project engineering on Station improvements. It also provides the County with a set of guidelines which will help encourage transit-oriented development. These improvements, when completed, will help establish the Station as a welcoming, comfortable transit plaza that the community will use and enjoy, as well as attract more transit ridership. The improved transit Station will serve as a centerpiece and distinguished local landmark for commuters and riders, giving a sense of entry into the Willowbrook neighborhood. The improved Station, a physical gateway to Willowbrook, will create a sense of community, identity and pride, and enhance the sense of safety and security in the area. Improvements in the surrounding area will enhance the connection between the Station and community, improving access to transit facilities and connect them with primary and secondary destinations in the Station area.
Existing Conditions

Rosa Parks Station has connections to and from the Metro Green Line and Blue Line Light Rail systems. Since completion of the Blue Line in 1990 and the Green Line in 1995, the Station has evolved from a neighborhood Station into a major gateway Station that is now one of the most heavily used interchanges in the Metro system, with connections to multiple bus and shuttle lines. Although Metro has maintained and operated this Station over the past 15 years, no major renovations have taken place. Time, growth in patronage and its exposed location have created a definite need for upgraded amenities. Typically “Gateway Stations” feature more extensive customer amenities that are designed and located to help facilitate circulation flow in an organized, attractive, safe and comfortable manner.

Green Line Platform

Locked gate at Kenneth Hahn Plaza and Rosa Parks Metro Station

Existing Conditions (Continued)

A neglected, unattractive transit facility sends signals that the transit agency is discouraging commuters from using transit. This message, in turn, shapes economic development, attracts crime and encourages urban blight. This master planning effort provides specific guidelines for the implementation of design ideas that are appropriate for comprehensive, long-term design solutions. Good planning and design of public facilities not only protect spending of taxpayer dollars, but also maximize the value of the re-creation process for patrons, residents and business. Given the poverty rate in this neighborhood, Metro has potential to offer a valuable and affordable transportation choice in a high quality space. The Rosa Parks Station Plan explores public private opportunities, generates new arts and community activities, links to job opportunities and helps with the movement of visitors from the busy downtown to the neighborhood.

Patron safety, in terms of security and accident prevention, is another critical consideration for the improvement of this Station. This Station ranks second in the Metro system for citations and the Station is located in the middle of reputed gang territory. The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department patrols the rail system, surveillance cameras and intercom connection to the Rail Operations Control Center (ROC) located to the east of the Station. However, lighting and way-finding systems need replacement to improve the quality of space, provide a positive image of the community and reduce the effects of crime during both daytime and evening hours.

Rosa Parks Station is located in an economically depressed and crime-ridden area. Many associate this neighborhood with the negative connotations of the closure of MLK Hospital, declining economic achievement, class disparity and crime. Station improvements can emphasize transit as a more attractive option and can encourage visitors, developers and businesses to the area. The Rosa Parks Station Plan provides Transit Oriented District development opportunities, Design Guidelines and implementation recommendations.
Chapter 2

Transit Oriented Districts

What is a Transit Oriented District? Primarily, a Transit Oriented District or TOD is an area where a municipal agency supports high density development and related activity adjacent to a transit station site. TODs potentially return greater value to investors or developers than other sites, which may have to rationalize road, parking and infrastructure improvements. With transit projects, municipalities can ease parking restrictions, allow for mixed use zoning, permit taller buildings or simplify the entitlement processes. Transit Oriented Districts encourage a mix of development, including multifamily residential, retail, civic uses, education and businesses. Smaller residential units at transit sites can attract younger people where they can live without depending upon an automobile.

TOD projects leverage the value of transit by having sufficient critical mass and density close to stations, and a variety of land uses that create neighborhoods and a sense of community, not just development density parked at a transit site. For example, if a TOD has local businesses and employers, the district will include places to shop, visit a library or see a doctor, reducing overall automobile trips.

Governments are now savvy enough to know that the market responds well to amenities such as transit, public spaces and well appointed City streets and sidewalks. Governments can support these amenities to help a market coalesce and encourage new development. Investments in public infrastructure encourage private development. Municipalities are trying to leverage assets they have to obtain development which will best serve their communities. At transit sites, there is a chance to build at greater densities and realize projects that have a cleaner impact on the environment because of the advantages of transit.
District Overview

The Willowbrook Community will be brought together through its transition to a Transit Oriented District. The district naturally divides into three areas: Transit Oriented Development close to the Rosa Parks Station, Healing at the Martin Luther King Jr Medical Center and Learning adjacent to the University and schools. A summary of each of these areas follows.

Three areas – Transit Oriented Development, Healing and Learning

Transit Oriented Development

The Gateway District has the opportunity to create the first impression for Willowbrook. Existing conditions at the 105 freeway exit include an assemblage of suburban style buildings, surface parking and vacant land – along with the feeling of blight. This first impression will change with the implementation of the Master Plan. Wilmington will be changed to a landscaped Boulevard. The parking lot surrounded by the freeway ramps will become a garden element, filled with Willow Trees and water, reconnecting with Willowbrook's history and namesake. Suburban development will be replaced with urban edges and parking that, although convenient, will be tucked behind, out of view. The Rosa Parks Metro Station will be clearly visible, with a major entry portal at Wilmington Avenue and the 105 Freeway.

Healing

The community will be expressed in a modern feel of buildings and landscaping. At recent community meetings, the request was to:

- Connect the Station to the community
- Add a water element with seating near the Station.
- A light tower could be placed near the Station to help illuminate the area.
- Create a more modern feel
- Establish open space guidelines, for the County to adopt

Housing development should be authentically appealing (the new development at 103rd and Central was cited as a positive example). Residential development will include Urban Village style, with lofts and affordable housing. Mixed use will be encouraged, especially close to the Station. Senior housing within walking distance to the Station and retail will also be encouraged. Density of housing options was presented in the community meetings with 15 residential units per acre and with a balance of green space, noted as ideal. Specific comments from the community with regard to the Transit Oriented District included:

- Needs to match fabric of neighborhood
- Hahn Shopping Center needs face lift
- Senior housing, perhaps atop of retail
- Community-based Farmers Market and local food
- Local food, produce, natural
- Sidewalk dining – with tablecloths
- There should be a restaurant near the Station.
- No fast food, outside seating
- Show parking area with lots of lights

Learning

The community will be expressed in a modern feel of buildings and landscaping. At recent community meetings, the request was to:

- Various educational institutions within walking distance of the Station
- Classrooms to be rehabed
- Affordable housing

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Willowbrook - Three Areas - Transit Oriented Development, Healing and Learning

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Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan Design Principles - Transit Oriented District
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Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan Design Principles - Transit Oriented District
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Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan Design Principles - Transit Oriented District
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Healing
The cornerstone of the Healing District is created by the Martin Luther King Medical Center. The overall goals for the MLK Medical Center, as outlined by County Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas, include construction of a new hospital, a new medical laboratory center, walk-able housing and perhaps a new National Institute of Urban Health.

Significant pedestrian access will be provided from Wilmington Avenue. Wilmington Avenue will be connected to the Transit Station with wide sidewalks, street trees and pedestrian friendly street crossings. The entrance from Wilmington Avenue will become one of the community’s entrances to the Medical Center. The main entrance to the new MLK hospital is planned to be from 21st Street. The main entrance and the formal entrance to the community, will form land use design and an entrance gate. Pedestrian access will be provided along the east side of the roadway, leading to the hospital’s formal entrance. Parkways will be created throughout the district, linking various existing and proposed buildings with landscaped paths and gardens.

Rosa Parks TOD - Healing Facilities Master Plan
Huntington Hospital - Public Open Space

Learning
The Learning District includes Charles Drew University, King Drew Medical Magnet High School, Lincoln Elementary School and Barack Obama New Beginnings Charter School. These school facilities need a dynamic building blocks for creating a dynamic learning center. The facilities have been designed to be a separate campus, each would benefit from shared parking, athletic and other facilities.

Charles Drew University is difficult to find, as there is no marker on 120th street at the campus’ main entrance. The University will transition to a campus feeling, with the addition of a main lawn marking the main entrance to the campus. The main entrance to the new MLK hospital will be linked with green space and landscaping. The King Drew Medical Magnet High School is an impressive multi-story modern building, but lacks in parking and athletic facilities. A shared athletic field is shown on a site that is currently owned by the university and partially owned by a private party, but vacant. This athletic field will be shared with the High School, College, Elementary School and the community, reinforcing the district’s focus on wellness. The Elementary School’s buildings are out-of-date and the Charter School is housed in temporary trailers. Both campuses need new buildings with 21st century amenities such as large classrooms, natural light throughout, updated technology and faculty facilities. The outdoor areas will be shared between the two elementary campuses, including play areas and a field. Learning area across the street is community garden will support the curriculum of the schools. The street is the transformed from narrow sidewalks without any greenery to wide sidewalks with street trees.

Rosa Parks TOD - Learning Facilities Master Plan
School Learning Garden
Outdoor Education Space
Maintain the important hospital connections at the community meetings:
for walkable streets and made the following
The Willowbrook community identified the need
and creating friendly, walkable communities.
The Willowbrook community identified the need
for walkable streets and made the following
connections at the community meetings:
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For walkable streets and made the following
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Pedestrian-oriented streets play an important role in creating walkable communities, where all people, regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation, feel safe and welcome on the street. As a safe pedestrian environment is as essential to the health of individuals and communities as access to health care and food, it is crucial that streets be designed to enable people of all ages and abilities to feel safe and comfortable while walking or standing on the street.

The National Association of Landscape Architects recommends that streets be designed to accommodate a wide range of users, including people with disabilities, and to encourage walking and bicycling for health and environmental benefits.

Local governments and transportation agencies can play a critical role in creating safe and inviting pedestrian environments. This can be achieved through the implementation of pedestrian-oriented design principles, such as:

- Creating pedestrian-friendly streets and sidewalks
- Incorporating landscaping and open space
- Providing safe pedestrian crossings
- Encouraging walking and bicycling
- Promoting compact, mixed-use neighborhoods
- Supporting robust public transit services

By implementing these design principles, communities can create environments that are not only attractive to pedestrians but also beneficial to the overall health and well-being of residents.

Pedestrian-oriented design: Walkable neighborhoods

Pedestrian-friendly streets and sidewalks
- Provide sidewalks along the entire length of the street
- Ensure sidewalks are well-maintained and free of obstructions
- Provide ramps that are accessible to people with disabilities

Public places to gather
- Provide public places that are accessible to all people
- Encourage community engagement through public events

Pedestrian-oriented streets are essential in creating walkable communities. Local governments and transportation agencies can play a critical role in creating safe and inviting pedestrian environments. Implementing pedestrian-oriented design principles can create environments that are not only attractive to pedestrians but also beneficial to the overall health and well-being of residents.
Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan Design Principles - Transit Oriented District Design Principles - Transit Oriented District

Rosa Parks Station - Existing View looking East towards Kenneth Hahn Plaza from 105 Freeway Exit

Rosa Parks Station - Proposed View looking East towards Kenneth Hahn Plaza from 105 Freeway Exit
Complete Streets

Complete streets are roads designed for everyone who uses them, including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and people getting on and off transit. A national coalition, called National Complete Streets Coalition, recommends the following attributes to included Complete Streets for all:

- Well-connected: Streets form a connect- ed grid that improves traffic and provides many routes to any destinations.
- Built for the right speed: Lanes are nar- row or traffic calming is in place to control speed.
- Accessible: There are wheelchair ramps, plenty of benches with shade, sidewalks on all streets, etc.
- Comfortable: Pedestrian medians at inter- sections, count-down crosswalk timers, bicycle lanes, pedestrian plazas, etc. make the street work better for those outside of a car.

Within the Rosa Parks Station Master Plan, several key changes have been made to existing streets, including changing dead-end streets to streets that connect within the community by replacing the streets taken away by Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center and the Blue Line rail lines. The streets are also ‘greened’ with street trees along the sidewalks and within center medians. In addition, we have incorporated ADA accessible ramps at all intersections, bicycle lanes on key streets, street furnishings along the sidewalks, and public art open space within the two plazas.

Development Principles

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is defined as compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use de- velopment consisting of housing, high den- sity residential, office and retail uses within ½ mile of rail transit stations. Willowbrook TOD should incorporate good design principles and an appropriate mix of uses to ensure full, mixed-use development and promote a vital, vibrant neighborhood center at these locations. The Rosa Parks TOD is:

- Focus on Wellness
- Create Economic Opportunities
- Enhance Safety and Security
- Willowbrook seeks to accommodate future resi- dential and employment growth and expand choices for residents and businesses by encourage- ing transit-oriented development (TOD) as a means to achieve compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use community focused around the exist- ing and planned rail transit stations.

The following guidelines and design principles are intended to effect well-planned transit-or- iented development and should be considered in all zoning efforts for the existing station area and those efforts for the existing station area in subject to a major re-planning effort. These principles should be used in the review of major rezoning cases for development around the exist- ing existing rail stations. These guidelines are intended to provide guidance for TOD development.
Mix of Land Uses:
Provide for the rezoning of existing Commercial zones to
C-3 Unlimited Commercial zoning or MXD Mixed Use
Zones to encourage mixed-use development and allow for higher density projects to be built. Promote a mix of uses to ensure the efficient use of transit, to
increase ridership during peak and off-peak travel periods in all directions, and to encourage different types of activity throughout the day. A balanced mix of residential, office, retail, governmental, institutional, health industry related, entertainment and recreational uses should be included to encourage a critical mass of pedestrian activity as people live, work and play in these areas. Increase maximum building height limit to 75’. 

Transit Proximity and Station Area Boundaries:
Focus and concentrate the highest density or land use intensity close to the rail station and, where feasible, within 1/4 mile radius from the station platform and subject to site-specific considerations, with density and intensity tapering away in a ½ mile radius from the station platform.

Station Specific Design:
Examine the unique characteristics and needs of the Willowbrook station area when evaluating TOD development and designs to ensure the appropriate development intensity and mix of land uses relative to the existing and planned uses for the surrounding areas.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Access:
Encourage safe pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from the station and the area. Provide 15’ sidewalks at major streets and access points and 12’ sidewalks at all other streets. A high level of service should be maintained for pedestrians and cyclists, including safety and security, direct pathways, comfortable grades and maintained sidewalks at intersections.

Residential Development and Affordability:
Increase the number of residential units within the Transit Oriented District by 2,000 units. Provide for a range of housing opportunities by incorporating a mix of housing types and sizes and including housing for a range of income levels. Multi-family, rental, affordable housing, workforce housing, and town homes are encouraged within the residential component of a TOD. Provide higher density residential closest to the station, with stepped reduction in density farther from transit. Provide a variety of residential densities with green and open space.

Urban Design:
Encourage excellence in urban design, including site planning, streetscapes and building design, which creates a pedestrian focused sense of place. Urban design elements to achieve an appropriate sense of place and a pedestrian friendly environment include: well-landscaped public spaces, urban parks, courtyards, an integrated pedestrian circulation system, well-landscaped building forms with a pedestrian focus, mixed use development, appropriate density with highest density close to the transit station, appropriate street widths and block size, walkable mixed-use, well designed street parking integrated with development and high quality architecture.
Street Design:
Provide a grid of safe, attractive streets which provide connectivity throughout the site and to and from transit stations. Establish pedestrian networks for the entire globe where streets have been closed or blocked, with no dead-end streets. Complete the street design with street medians, appropriate street widths, on-street parking, street trees, bicycle pathways and universal access.

Parking:
Encourage the use of transit while maximizing the use of available parking throughout the day and evening, and minimizing the visual impact of parking structures and surface parking lots. Wherever possible, ground floor uses and activities should be incorporated into structured parking, particularly where parking structures are located adjacent to streets and where pedestrian activity is encouraged. Allow for lower parking requirements for multi-family residential development and provide for shared parking conveniently located to the Station.

Transportation and Traffic:
Provide for and accommodate high quality transit, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and services, and other measures to limit single occupant vehicle trips. Provide parking, traffic-calming measures, road alignment and other design techniques to balance pedestrian accessibility and vehicular access.

Vision for the Community:
Institute a broadly inclusive, collaborative, community participation process when evaluating TOD plans that propose substantial changes in use, intensity or density for existing or new transit station areas. Monitor that land use and design requirements are included in the design and construction process.

Regional Framework:
Provide a more efficient land use pattern by concentrating growth around the existing transit station area. Modify existing R-2, R-3, C-2 and C-3 zoning, with up-zoning to increase the allowable densities for residential and commercial uses. Establish higher density, building heights and lot coverage allowances. The regulatory requirements are outlined in the lighter color (left) column and the proposed changes to the regulations are in the darker color (right) column.
Environmental Benefits:

Seek opportunities for mitigating environmental impacts of development. Improvements in air quality due to reduced vehicle miles traveled and reduced automobile emissions can also be viewed as a benefit of the TOD. Sites undergoing development should optimize stormwater management and water quality controls, green roofs, photovoltaic (solar energy) cells and green building practices for redevelopment consistent with revitalization goals.

Economic Benefits:

Create an employment base and encourage commercial activity adjacent to transit facilities. Employment uses near transit can provide opportunities for local transportation modes by reducing carbon emissions and increasing public transportation use. Employment uses and higher building heights can help to achieve similar transportation savings and reduced carbon emissions.

Open Space:

Provide publicly-accessible, high-quality, multi-use open space, such as urban pocket parks, community gardens and open space contribute to a community’s sense of place. Transit Oriented Development plans should provide opportunities for landscaping and open space such as public plazas, civic town centers and green space and utilize a variety of calculations such as dining, casual games, recreation, farmers’ markets and special events. These spaces should be accessible to the larger community as well as the immediate transit-oriented development area.

Public Facilities and Infrastructure:

Evaluate opportunities to include public facilities and services within the TOD area. The County should increase the number of and improve public facilities including schools, parks, libraries, medical centers, wellness-related facilities, and security police, fire and other publicly owned community facilities within the TOD districts. Laying out public facilities in station areas provides important public services in areas accessible to public transportation and can increase activity within the TOD.

Phasing of Development:

Ensure that projects are phased in such a way as to include an appropriate mix of uses in each phase of development. A balanced mix of residential and non-residential uses should be provided to encourage a critical mass of pedestrian activity. Phasing plans should include a pedestrian and bicycle access plans. Landscaping, open space and property improvements should also be phased.

Regional Framework: [Continued]

Proposed Residential - Zone Area

Rosa Parks Station TOD District Proposed Changes:

No Change

Residential 22 Dwelling Per Acre Paseo Colorado, Pasadena CA

Community Garden

Street Vendor
Station Plan Overview

The Master Plan provides a combination of design solutions which will help change the current negative attributes of the Rosa Parks Station into a first class transit experience. These ideas stem from Metro Station Standards, analysis of existing conditions and comments from the community about aspects of the Station experience that they would like to see changed.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a broad term that generally means living within the means of what the earth can provide over the long term. A community focus on sustainability and environmental responsibility leads to a healthier environment. These issues can be addressed by shaping the built environment including development patterns, building design and landscaping. Transit is a key element of sustainability and will help to create a sense of community. Encourage community gardens, green roofs, photovoltaic energy and natural lighting in development and throughout the community.

Included within the Master Plan are design elements that protect the environment and are economically viable. Environmental sustainability, creating pedestrian friendly streets and incorporating landscape elements are all present in this report with these goals in mind. In addition, key sustainability elements should be encouraged throughout the community, including:

- Energy efficient design including natural lighting and LED lights
- Photovoltaic cells on rooftops and parking structures (solar energy)
- Green roofs on multi-family residential units

Wayfinding Guidelines

The Rosa Parks Station Master Plan includes a recommendation for a community-wide system of wayfinding signage. This wayfinding system will help guide visitors to key community destinations as well as provide stronger identity for the Willowbrook community.

The goal of the wayfinding system is to create a community brand, such as the Willowbrook logo developed for this Master Plan. Objectives include:

- Creating a quality brand image for Willowbrook which the community is in harmony
- Promoting community destinations and attractions, including the Rosa Parks Transit Station, Metro Blue Line, Metro Green Line, Charles Drew University, Martin Luther King Jr. Medical Center
- Enhancing the visitor experience and encouraging scenic routes and use of transit
- Increasing civic pride of all residents for their own community

Design Principles - Station

DESIGN PRINCIPLES - STATION

CHAPTER 3

The wayfinding system is an extension of the Rosa Parks logo, which will be adapted to Willowbrook. The logo, symbolizing strength and beauty, will be applied to signage, banners, and other materials. This will help create a more cohesive and welcoming environment for visitors.

Willowbrook

Proposed Willowbrook Logo

Sustainability Green Roof

Sustainability is a broad term that generally means living within the means of what the earth can provide over the long term. A community focus on sustainability and environmental responsibility leads to a healthier environment. These issues can be addressed by shaping the built environment including development patterns, building design and landscaping. Transit is a key element of sustainability and will help to create a sense of community. Encourage community gardens, green roofs, photovoltaic energy and natural lighting in development and throughout the community.
Lighting:
Lighting is key to creating a Station that feels safe and accessible. The lowered ceiling will be created by a canopy of lights, a grand expression filling the space with light and color during the day and night. These LED lights will be sustainable, with low energy usage and long life. Lighting height can be increased with the use of tube lights, which allow sunlight to reflect through colored tubes and provides pools of natural light.

Noise:
Noise is a significant issue, both before and at the freeway level. Noise at street level is caused primarily by cars on Wilmington and at the Imperial Boulevard and freeway on-ramps. The transit patron experience at the Green Line platform is diminished by the intense sound of cars and trucks whizzing by. Noise will be reduced in both these areas by the addition of glass and metal sound walls.

Art:
There is art at the existing Rosa Parks Station, including Rosa Parks’ benches and playful 'Hide and Seek' metal figures. While the benches and a couple of the metal sculptures are well placed, the sculptures on the freeway columns are remote and inaccessible. In addition to relocating these sculptures, the Plan recommends additional art be added throughout the Station area. To start this conversation with the community, the artists will be locally based and will encourage community involvement.

Access:
The existing Blue Line platform is accessible from only one point in the Station, which is too narrow to accommodate the number of passengers transferring from the Green Line and the bus plaza. The community has asked for additional access. The Rosa Parks Master Plan includes an extension of the Blue Line platform, north to 117th Street. Pedestrian access across 117th street is added to provide better access to the Blue Line platform and recreation with the community to the east and west.

Landscaping:
Landscaping and open space are key to creating quality space that the transit community can enjoy. Two existing bus plazas are located on Willowbrook Avenue, separated to the east and west of the Blue Line rail tracks. The west bus plaza is a higher quality space filled with trees, landscaping, vendors, benches and bus shelters. The east bus plaza, under the freeway, is barren, except for a few benches. Although the west bus plaza remains free of fumes, fumes from buses build up under the freeway. The Master Plan shifts the east bus station to the south, with adequate space for landscaping and an art filled bus plaza.

Signage:
The final element to tie together the Rosa Parks Station is signage. Metro has established a set of signage standards which will be used to provide consistent wayfinding between the Blue Line, Green Line, buses and shuttles.
Station Identity

The Rosa Parks Station suffers from being 'under the freeway', which creates a station that is dark, bleak and unfriendly to transit passengers. The design of a station is critical to creating a Station Identity that connects with the community, identifies the importance of transit and provides a high-quality transit patron experience. Station identity can be accomplished with four elements: reinforcing entrances to the Station, creating significant design elements within the Station, introducing light and color and honoring the Station's namesake, Rosa Parks.

There will be large scale symbols, pictures, artwork and/or signage that commemorate Rosa Parks. Existing Metro standards are a starting point, but not comprehensive. The following design principles will be utilized for the design of Rosa Parks Station:

- Brand Rosa Parks Station as the official name on all Maps and signage
- Emphasize Station entrances with design elements
- Create a design element ceiling, creating a space within the Station
- Establish an iconic lighting ceiling or light feature to create color, light and safety
- Develop stronger connections between all design features to the Station's namesake: Rosa Parks
- Honor Rosa Parks through art

Pedestrian Connections

Pedestrian connectivity will scale through a walkway, pedestrian path and pedestrian barrier walls. The design of Rosa Parks Station transitions will encourage use of open space and pathways for pedestrians. Art and safety are important drivers in the development of the Station. The streets must be safe for vehicular and pedestrian traffic, but when it comes to transit, the pedestrian needs will be served first. Pedestrian connections start with widened public sidewalks, double rows of street trees and light fixtures.

- Encourage and facilitate pedestrian activity
- Create strong pedestrian links with Rosa Parks Station
- Create pedestrian friendly and walkable sidewalks with street trees
- Create ‘entrances’ to the Station
- Create clear and direct connections to Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center
- Skillfully traffic to avoid potential conflicts with pedestrians

The Station design should include bike racks, restroom facilities and a "Rest Area" for the transit users.

- Include a canopy over the Green Line.
- Include plenty of lighting and art to beautify the Station.
These connections will lead to a public plaza, Rosa Parks Metro Plaza, where community and transportation links will come together with vendors and a Farmer’s Marketplace. A pedestrian scale within the Station will be created by lowering the ceiling below the freeway structure. By reducing the height of this space, the Station will begin to feel like a more comfortable place, rather than the leftover area under a freeway.

Use better design to encourage people to strike and take care of Station

Create a pedestrian only ‘plaza’ at the Station

Relocate parking from under the freeway

Provide short-term parking and drop-off areas

Provide structural parking to meet current and future parking demands

Shift the bus exit (on the west side) to Willowbrook

Create space for a Farmer’s Marketplace and other vendors

Create space for seating and benches along the Blue Line.

Lighting

Lighting is key to creating a Station that feels safe and accessible. We heard from the community that the Station is “darker in the daytime than at night.” The community wants plenty of lighting. Lighting can be created by a carpet of lights, a grand expression filling the space with light and color during the day and night. These LED lights will be sustainable, with low energy usage and long life. Lighting can be increased in the daytime with the use of tube lights, which allow sunlight to reflect through a tube to provide a pool of natural light to the Station below. The lighting Design Principles include:

Use ‘green’, sustainable and effective lighting

Place bright LED lights throughout the Station area to create color and drama

Create a lighting program which will re-establish the control structure of Station design and help establish Station identity

Proposed Light Tube at Blue Line Station

Proposed Sound Wall at Green Line Station

Proposed Sound Wall at Green Line Station

Sustainability principles are included in the approaches to renovation of the Rosa Parks Station, including energy efficiency, local materials and trades and encouragement of pedestrian, transit and bicycle usage.

Use sustainable and durable materials and lighting

Use LED lights for energy efficiency and long life

Use light tubes to provide natural light within the Station

Use wind turbines to create electricity for lighting

Noise Reduction

Noise is a significant issue, both below and at the freeway level. Noise at most levels is caused primarily by cars on Wilmington Avenue and at the Imperial Freeway on-ramp. The transit patron experience at the Green Line platform is complicated by the intense and constant sound of cars and trucks passing by at high speeds. Noise can be reduced at both these areas with the addition of sound walls.
Public Art Opportunities

Transit systems around the world use the power of art to transform utilitarian spaces into places that enrich the everyday lives of transit customers. Metro commissions artists to incorporate art into a wide array of transportation projects throughout Los Angeles County. From bus stops to rail stations, streetscapes to bus interiors, art creates a sense of place and engages transit riders. Existing art at the Rosa Parks Station includes benches honoring Rosa Parks, called ‘Pathway to Freedom,’ and metal figurative sculptures called ‘Hide and Seek’.

Our recommendations for art integration within the Station include:

- Create an Art Park with existing ‘Hide and Seek’ sculptures, bringing existing sculptures down to ground level.
- Increase the number and scale of public art pieces, using vivid and active pieces to create a regional identity for the Transit Oriented District.
- Create a large mural honoring Rosa Parks. One potential location is the sound wall planned to run parallel to Wilmington Avenue, under the freeway, at the plaza level.
- Mandate community participation in art at the Station and use local artists.
- Provide additional art and cultural opportunities for engagement of those coming to the station including other public art installations, some temporary and performing arts programs.

Blue Line Access

The Blue Line platform is accessible from only one point in the Station, with access from the Blue Line and bus plaza. The community has asked for additional access. The Rosa Parks Station Master Plan includes extensions of the Blue Line platform to the south and west. The Blue Line platform extension across 117th Street has been proposed to provide both access to the Blue Line and reconnection with the community.

- Increase the number of entrances and exits to the Blue Line platform by creating a new access point at the south end of the platform.
- Extend the Blue Line platform to the south and create another entrance/exit at 116th Street.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings at 117th and 118th Streets.
- Replace the pedestrian crossing at the Blue Line, within the Station area, to create a safe pedestrian environment.

Bus Plaza

Two existing bus plazas are located on Willowbrook Avenue, to the east and west of the Blue Line tracks. The west bus plaza is filled with trees, landscaping, vendors, art benches and bus shelters. The east bus plaza, under the freeway, is barren other than a few benches. Although the east bus station is protected from rain, fumes from buses build up under the freeway. The Master Plan shifts the east bus station to the south to address these physical problems and provide adequate space for a landscape and art filled bus plaza.

- Reduce fumes under the freeway by relocating buses.

- Relocate the bus plaza on the west side of Willowbrook Avenue.

- Create a new bus plaza with trees, benches and other amenities on the east side of Kenneth Road Station Plaza Shopping Center facing Willowbrook Avenue.

- Coordinate with Los Angeles County’s Willowbrook shelter bus service.

Rosa Parks Proposed West Bus Plaza

Rosa Parks Existing East Bus Plaza

Rosa Parks Existing East Bus Kiosk

Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan - Station 42

Bus Plaza

Rosa Parks Proposed West Bus Plaza

Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan - Station 43

Blue Line Access

The Blue Line platform is accessible from only one point in the Station, with access from the Blue Line and bus plaza. The community has asked for additional access. The Rosa Parks Station Master Plan includes extensions of the Blue Line platform to the south and west. The Blue Line platform extension across 117th Street has been proposed to provide both access to the Blue Line and reconnection with the community.

- Increase the number of entrances and exits to the Blue Line platform by creating a new access point at the south end of the platform.
- Extend the Blue Line platform to the south and create another entrance/exit at 116th Street.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings at 117th and 118th Streets.
- Replace the pedestrian crossing at the Blue Line, within the Station area, to create a safe pedestrian environment.
Landscaping and Open Space

Landscaping and open space are keys to creating high-quality space that the local community and commuters can enjoy.

The Rosa Parks Station will be surrounded by landscaping and open space. With removal of parking, the space immediately north of the Station will be reconfigured as a new plaza, with landscaping filling the area immediately south of the Station. The proposed Rosa Parks Plaza will be connected to a variety of pathways leading to the community, new development at Kenneth Hahn Plaza and to the sidewalks.

The existing bus plaza along east Willowbrook is a good example of quality space, with palm trees and landscaped areas. The area includes integration of art, lighting, bus kiosks and vendors. The amount of trash and barren dirt in the area is significantly different from (less than) the other station areas without landscaping. The relocated west bus plaza will be an expanded public space with a similar design to the east plaza, with palm trees, art, benches, covered bus kiosks and wayfinding.

The community requested that the following issues be addressed:

- Increase the use of trees, flowers and planted areas
- Create public open space for landscaping
- Provide a double row of street trees on the sidewalks on both sides of Wilmingto Avenue and 120th Street leading to the Rosa Parks Station
- Provide a landscaped bus plaza
- Create a ‘green’ gateway to the Willowbrook community
- Use willow trees to create a connection with Willowbrook’s history

Community Garden

Farmers Market

Metro Signage

The final element that will tie together the Rosa Parks Station is signage. Metro has established signage standards which can be used to describe convenient connections between the Blue Line, Green Line, buses and shuttles.

Add wayfinding throughout the Station and Station area

Draw on Metro standards for signage and graphics
Design Standards

The following ideas stem from the Metro Station Standards, existing conditions and comments from the community on what they want to see changed.

Metro is in the process of developing design standards for light rail stations. In April 2009, Metro issued a report which studied non-motorized access at the Imperial/Wilmington Rosa Parks Metro Blue Line rail Station for the City and County of Los Angeles. This report was funded by a Caltrans Community-based Transportation Planning Environmental Justice Grant. “The purpose of the study was to assess existing conditions and make recommendations to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the Imperial/Wilmington/Rosa Parks Station. Community involvement and input were a key element of the study.”

The report addressed specific areas for improvement: pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, bike lanes and roadway improvements. Non-motorized access improvements are incorporated into the Rosa Parks Station Master Plan and include the following:

- Enforce parking violations and install ‘No Parking’ signs
- Willowbrook Avenue (south of Station, west side of track)
  - Add paved sidewalks and landscaping on the west side of South Willowbrook Avenue
  - Add lighting and landscaping to pedestrian crossings with auto-stripping Island (double perpendicular ramps for ADA access)

- Willowbrook Avenue (south of Station, east side of track)
  - Use sidewalk adjacent to fence
  - Add lighting and landscaping to sidewalk
  - Reduce lane width on roadway
  - North end of Station (near Platform)
  - Add directional signage to bike racks
  - North end of Station (access point)

- Wilmington Avenue (north from Willowbrook)
  - Build curb bulb-out at crosswalk
  - Install ADA ramps at corners (double perpendicular not single ramps)
  - Paint crosswalks (and add where missing)
  - Install pedestrian countdown signage and extend crossing times

- Wilmington Avenue (119th Street, 120th Street and Imperial Highway)
  - Build curb bulb-out at crosswalk
  - Install ADA ramps at corners
  - Paint crosswalks (and add where missing)

- Make dirt path into paved sidewalk

Other recommendations:

- Designate Compton Avenue as a “Share-Row” bike route (painted bike lane and connections to the Vernon and Florence Station areas)
- Designate Willowbrook as a signed bike route from 109th Street to south end of the study area

Urban Landscaping

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY OF OUTREACH

One of the objectives of our outreach plan was to ensure that design and implementation processes were guided by grass-roots community involvement, based on consultation and feedback with key stakeholders, arts and cultural advisory group members and input from community meetings.

Public participation for this project included community outreach to local residents and community members of upcoming community meetings, selection of a representative group of people to work as an Art and Cultural Advisory Group, presentations of scheduled community meetings to obtain input on design principles and a draft plan and a final presentation which will provide an additional opportunity for members of the community to comment.
**Community Workshops**

Three Community workshop meetings were held over the course of developing this Master Plan. Each of the meetings was held at McNair Elementary School in Compton. The three meetings are summarized as follows:

**Community Meeting #1**

The first meeting for the Imperial/Wilmington Rosa Parks Transit Oriented District planning effort was held October 14, 2009 at Ronald McNair Elementary School in Compton. Twenty nine members of the community attended the meeting. The three meetings are summarized as follows:

### Community Meeting #1

- **Title**: Residential Density
- **Presenter**: Willowbrook Station Master Plan Team
- **Date**: October 14, 2009
- **Location**: Ronald McNair Elementary School

The first meeting for the Imperial/Wilmington Rosa Parks Transit Oriented District planning effort was held October 14, 2009 at Ronald McNair Elementary School. Twenty nine members of the community attended the meeting.

The meeting began promptly with an introduction by Chris Robert of the Robert Group, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas summarized the community goals, Irv Taylor, Metro’s Project Manager, spoke about the project scope and Roland Wiley, of RAW International presented a PowerPoint presentation with a definition of transit-oriented districts, characteristics of different housing stock and densities, landscaping options, and examples of stations improvement opportunities.

After the presentation, the audience was invited to review presentation boards and discuss their individual preference for specific station improvements. People placed green adhesive dots on the boards to show their preferences for the design options. When the audience gathered to discuss the results of the board/dot exercise, there was overall support for improvements to the Station, Station area and pedestrian connections to the Kenneth Hahn Plaza and MLK Medical Center.

### Residential Density

- **Table**: Willowbrook Station
- **Date**: October 14, 2009
- **Location**: Ronald McNair Elementary School

### Retail Implementation

When asked about concerns specific to the existing stations, the response included the following:

- **Green Line platform is very noisy with freeway traffic**
- **Too dark (even during the day time)**
- **Doesn’t feel safe**
- **Station area is difficult to maintain**
- **Landscaping has disappeared over the years**
- **Doesn’t have any Rosa Parks information or artwork**
- **Blue Line has only one entrance/exit**
- **Lack of wayfinding makes transfers very difficult**

The audience discussed support for increased public art at the Stations. By increasing the public art, using vivid and active pieces, the Stations should reflect the community in the area of the Station. There is also support for developing a stronger connection with the Station’s community. The audience asked for better light (not sodium vapor lights) be placed throughout the Station area, and that the number of entrances to the Station be increased.

There was enthusiastic support for increased landscaping, green space and a potential community garden around the station area. Housing developments should be aesthetically appealing (the new development at 103rd and Central was cited as a positive example), and the audience encourages an increased sense of safety. The audience favored community gardens and space for farmers’ markets. They identified the benefits including sustainability, environmental responsibility and greater health. Increased housing density would allow for more community green space, including community gardens.
Community Meeting #2

The second meeting for the Imperial/Wilmington Rosa Parks Transit Oriented District planning effort was held January 9, 2010. Organizations represented at the meeting included East Rancho Dominguez Community Association, Metro’s South Bay Governance Council, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, City of Inglewood and the office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas.

The meeting began with an introduction by Chris Robert and Irv Taylor. Mr. Taylor briefly reviewed the purpose of the project and of the meeting. He then introduced James Rojas, who led the group in an “Artistic Urban Design” exercise as a tool to help the community design and explain their vision for a Transit Oriented District in Willowbrook.

Comments from the attendees of the meeting included:

- Medical Center connection to the transit Station is important.
- The Station design should include bike racks, restroom facilities and a “Rest Area” for transit users.
- There should be seating and benches along the Blue Line.
- Rosa Parks is important. There should be symbols, pictures, artwork and signage that commemorate Rosa Parks under the Green Line Station.
- Include a canopy and sound barrier over the Green Line. Include plenty of lighting and art to beautify the Station.
- Increase flow from transit Station to shopping center.
- There should be strong images of Rosa Parks in the transit area. Rosa Parks loved the color blue, there should be blue in the area.
- Include historical writings and sayings place in and around the transit center from Rosa Parks, Charles Drew, Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez.

Metro’s Irv Taylor then introduced Roland Wiley, of RAW International, who presented an overview of transit-oriented districts, characteristics of different housing stock and densities, landscaping options, and examples of station improvement opportunities. Mr. Wiley’s presentation included descriptions of potential improvements to the Station area that would help improve pedestrian flow and safety.

Proposed Station Changes
Office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas represented at the meeting:

The following organizations were represented at the meeting:

- Office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
- Los Angeles County Arts Commission
- City of Los Angeles Department of Community Development
- Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
- City of Inglewood City Council
- Watts Neighborhood Council
- Los Angeles County Community Action Agency
- Watts Village Development
- Watts Jordan Community Action Committee
- Watts Opportunity High School
- Watts Jordan School Center
- Watts Center Latino Organization
- Watts Labor Community Action Committee
- Compton Bullets

The majority of the discussion focused on increasing the sense of security in and around the Station, as well as using the success of projects to help stimulate the growth of jobs and commerce around the Station.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Roland explained the next steps regarding the conceptual plan. Participants emphasized the need for additional lighting, increased security and improved accessibility from Wilmington Avenue. They also expressed a desire to have representatives from the community participate at the next meeting to be held in February, and that community participation at the meeting is unknown.

The meeting ended promptly at 10 a.m. with an introduction on behalf of the Robert Group. She introduced Roland Wilkie, of RAW Incorporated, who presented an overview of the conceptual plan and discussed the development of the plan and identified next steps, which were well received.

Participants were invited to provide comment and feedback regarding the conceptual plan. Participants emphasized the need for additional lighting, increased security and improved accessibility from Wilmington Avenue. Many in the audience expressed the need for the improvements to take place in a timely manner.

Proposed Station Improvements Plan

The purpose of the Master Plan for the Imperial/Wilmington Metro Station (Rosa Parks Station Plan) is to recommend specific improvements for the Metro Station and to set goals for the surrounding area as a Transit Oriented District (TOD). The plan focuses on the transit Station area. The Rosa Parks Metro Station is uniquely located in a multi jurisdictional area including Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, the City of Compton, and unincorporated, Los Angeles City and the City of Compton. Positioned at the entrance to the Willowbrook area. The Rosa Parks Metro Station has the opportunity to serve as an active and vibrant gateway village. A environment focused on the transit Station area.

Compton Bulletin

Watts Labor Community Action Committee

Watts Neighborhood Council

Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan Summary of Outreach

Important to consider in the development of this plan are the culture and ethnic aesthetic of the people who live and work in the surrounding area. Art and cultural considerations provide a dynamic, rich and visually appealing lens through which to view the design and development of the Station area. Additionally, aesthetic and cultural considerations will be paramount in the implementation of the Master Plan for the Station.

Art and Design Advisory Board

Guillermo A Villas-Rodriguez, artist director of the Watts Village Theater Company and Community College Professor, was born in Compton, California, and raised in Watts. A graduate of the University of Utah conservatory of Drama and Speech of the University of California San Diego, he has served in a variety of artistic roles including assistant director of the La Jolla Playhouse Summer Theater Program and collaborated with some of the world’s best known and most respected theater professionals. In addition, he has taught at Los Angeles Community College and is an active and vibrant gateway village. A environment focused on the transit Station area.

Art and Design Advisory Board Members included:

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LOU MITCHELL has been an active member of the Watts community for over 30 years. She has held paid positions in a variety of roles in the Los Angeles Unified School District, but her most important work has included roles on Watts/LA Neighborhood Council and Watts’s South Bay Community Coalition, which are important in a period of era of the Metro transit system.

JANINE WATKINS is currently a consultant at Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) using her expertise in culture, business management and community activism to further the mission of the organization. Prior to this position, she ran WLCAC’s successful landscaping business, part of a portfolio of business endeavors that this Watts-based non-profit has engaged in to promote economic opportunity in the area. Ms. Watkins has additionally been very involved in the development of the cultural Focus at WLCAC and the positioning of Watts as a cultural destination in Los Angeles. She is also an active volunteer with a focus on building opportunities and quality of life for residents of Watts and surrounding communities.

WILLIE MIDDLEBROOK was raised in Compton and received his Associate of Arts degree from Compton Community College. He considers his digital “photographic paintings” to be collaborative endeavors between his subjects and himself. His work features a diversity of subjects, including family relationships, ages, and abstract ideas, such as love, death, hope, and dreams. He has received numerous awards including two Visual Artist Fellowships in photography from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as a Gentilly East Visual Artist Fellowship and a residency at the Individual Artist Fellowship from the California Community Fund. He is also an active public artist, having worked with Metro as well as many other public organizations. As an educator, he has taught at Cal State University of Los Angeles, Santa Monica College, Los Angeles High School for the Arts, and El Camino College Compton Community Educational Center (formerly Compton Community College).

The Rosa Parks Station area has the potential for economic development far beyond the implementation of much needed Station improvements. In actual terms, this station provides rail connections to virtually all of Los Angeles major transit systems including the Los Angeles World Airports, Union Station and all of Metro’s rail lines. The regional connectivity of this station, in addition to its proximity to major activity generation, demands a strategic vision to implement a plan for a Transit Oriented Development District.

**A Vision for 2030**

**CHAPTER 5**

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

The Rosa Parks Station area has the potential for economic development that supports the implementation of much needed Station improvements. In actual terms, this station provides rail connections to virtually all of Los Angeles major transit systems including the Los Angeles World Airports, Union Station and all of Metro’s rail lines. The regional connectivity of this station, in addition to its proximity to major activity generation, demands a strategic vision to implement a plan for a Transit Oriented Development District.
In establishing an economic development strategy for the Rosa Parks Station area, there must be at least a 20 year vision for the community. This 20 year vision reflects the reality of the time required to fund, design, construct, and implement transit improvements and a Transit Oriented District Master Plan. This vision also identifies the socioeconomic trends of the 21st century, which are the programmatic parameters of the implementation strategy.

The概念 of Transit Oriented Development as a catalyst for economic development in historically under-served urban areas is not new, but it is perhaps the first time that this has become a viable alternative. The over-arching issue of the economic development strategy is to empower the community through catalyzing extensive development through the use of market forces. Empowerment will leverage transit investments to provide opportunities to improve the economic well being of the residents and existing businesses. New development around station areas, in and of itself, is not a viable strategy unless specific steps are taken to ensure that local residents and businesses participate in the development and share in the returns on this investment.

Another issue is the promotion of the Rosa Parks station and Willowbrook area as viable locations for public and private investment. Several significant features of the corridor have been identified that make it uniquely feasible for investment. These include access to Martin Luther King Jr. Medical Center and access to transit centers (LAX-Union Station, Blue and Green Line). A key component of the implementation strategy must be the promotion of the station area as a Transit Oriented District by public officials.

As we enter the second decade of the new millennium, we are confronted with an unprecedented level of global inter-connectedness, facilitated by the proliferation of electronic media, the application of universal technology and the flow of capital and international trade. This has influenced the phenomenal growth of our cities. Challenges to existing environments and increasingly limited natural resources, are the most conspicuous reminders of the demands that our new communities must meet.

The trends that affect the Rosa Parks and Willowbrook Station Area relate to the following:

Demographic Changes: The situation in Rosa Parks/Willowbrook area is similar to the growth of our urban populations elsewhere. Specifically, the growth is characterized by the growing Latino base and the predominance of larger extended families, with limited incomes. Inexpensive public transportation is necessary for them.

Economic Changes: The monopoly of the marketplace has diminished over time. The restraint and order of governmental guidance has resulted in the downsizing of government and their movement to concentrated Central Cities. The growth of communities is sustained largely by commercial-retail enterprises and the growth of entertainment complexes.

Public-Private Partnerships: Limited government spending must be used effectively to stimulate the growth of the marketplace, the economic engine of development. The Joint development partnerships between Metro and private developers in Hollywood is one good example. The station-area development within the station area can be shaped by such partnerships.

Cyberspace in the Electronic Age: The development in communications and the Internet has resulted in the phenomenon of telecommuting. There is significant potential of taking advantage of Internet base businesses in the station area.

Environmental Concerns: The growing interest and concern for the environment has resulted in major shifts in the development of alternative fuels, solar and wind power, as well as investment in public transit. The trends in commuting and preserving fuel can easily be addressed by the development of densified housing and commercial/retail venues at the station area.
Phased Development

A number of mechanisms must be in place in order to implement the Transit Oriented District Master Plan. The following outlines a methodology for the implementation of the Rosa Parks Station Area. The success of the phased development is based upon the understanding of both the existing conditions as well as the potential for future expansion. Land must be strategically planned so that further expansion of land is possible once the transit investment is implemented. Thus, plan for the future and implement now.

- Inventory of Assets:
  1. Preparation of an inventory of assets that comprises the four zones identified in the Master Plan; these include:
     a. Zone 1: (Healing) – Martin Luther King Medical Center
     b. Zone 2: (Learning) – Charles Drew University Kings/Drew Magnet High School, Compton Unified Elementary School
     c. Zone 3: (Transit Oriented Living) – Blue Line Transit Station, Green Line Transit Station, Kenneth Hahn Plaza
     d. Zone 4: Local Businesses

- Programming of Asset Development:
  A. Prioritize those areas that have the most crucial assets and the potential to be developed further in station areas.
  B. Determine immediate needs of the station area. Include needs such as housing, goods and services, recreation, traffic requirements, and so forth.

- Funding Strategy:
  Current funding strategies for transportation improvements are primarily dependent on MTA’s transit revenue. If the Rosa Parks Station Area is able to project itself as an integrated land use and transit project then a whole series of other funding opportunities become available.
  - Identify federal, state, regional, and local funding opportunities. In particular, the project is eligible for assistance from Federal Transit Assistance, Federal Land Use Cooperative Agreement, and Federal Transit Administration funding opportunities.

- Enlist Public Agencies and Officials to Promote the Corridor:
  - Enlist and Empower the Community in Implementation:
  - Enlist and Empower the Community in Implementation:
Demographic Goals

Demographic goals for the Willowbrook community include an increase in transit use, increase in residential units available, increase in job opportunities and increase in education opportunities. The goals for 2030 include:

- 50% of residents using public transit
- 50% of residents residing in the Willowbrook Community for over 10 years
- 25% of residents who have relocated to Willowbrook in the past 10 years
- 25% of residents K – 12 school age
- 75% of residents with a High School Degree

Community Maintenance District

The Willowbrook Maintenance District (WMD) should be created as a non-profit business organization that creatively plans, manages and develops Willowbrook as a unique, authentic and vibrant downtown experience. The WMD should contract with the County of Los Angeles to manage and develop the Willowbrook Business Improvement District (BID). The BID will utilize the basic County services by funding district-wide security, marketing and maintenance programs to provide clean, safe vibrant downtown experiences. All operations should be financed through assessments on privately owned commercial property. This organization should be led by a cross section of Willowbrook stakeholders and managed by professional staff. The geographic boundaries of the BID should be the Willowbrook community.

Economic Development

The purpose of an economic revitalization zone is to create sustainable economic opportunities within the Transit-Oriented District to create jobs and business possibilities for local artists, vendors, residents, merchants and service professionals. Creating an economic revitalization zone consists of:

- Identifying sustainable economic opportunities as identified under Economic Revitalization Zones and the Office of Economic Development (OED) that encourages government participation through grants or other funding that creates an environment that encourages innovation, rewards risk-taking and promotes equal opportunity.
- Encouraging and supporting comprehensive approaches to community and economic development that emphasize local initiatives, private sector opportunities and self-sufficiency. The economic development programs will be designed to create a context in which private sector investment and job creation in communities struggling to reverse the burden of the new economy.
- Developing programs that will support sustainable economic strategies that leverage investments from other public and private sources in order to increase the long-term viability of local economic development efforts.
- Creating opportunities for residents and private agencies and organizations to invest in their community.
- Creating Landscape Maintenance Districts that encourage community based agencies to maintain green belts, open spaces, public art and streetscapes especially designed for the TOD.
- Creating opportunities for local artists to design and fabricate site amenities used as street furnishings, light standards, bus shelters and signage.

Rosa Parks Station will be leveraged to transform the community into a safe, vibrant, active regional center, accommodating more than 35,000 transit patrons per day.

Community Maintenance District in Downtown Los Angeles

Housing Construction

Martin Luther King Medical Center will be transformed into a nationally recognized hospital for wellness, including AIDS research, diabetes research and high blood pressure research. Auxiliary businesses will be located to support and expand the hospital and focus on wellness.

Up-zoning will allow construction of multi-family residential units to accommodate the anticipated population increase in Willowbrook.

New small development will serve a historically underserved population, in addition to the new residents.

Urban design principles will encourage development,

Including requirements for buildings extending to the sidewalk and use of buildings with mixed residential, retail and parking.

Rosa Parks Station will be leveraged to transform the community into a safe, vibrant, active regional center, accommodating more than 35,000 transit patrons per day.
3. Redeveloping Communities to Reduce Greenhouse Gases Act (AB 32): This act is known as the anti-sprawl initiative. Regional planning agencies are given the task of developing sustainable communities’ growth scenarios. The bill includes regulations and incentives to encourage more compact new developments and transportation alternatives. A Sustainable Communities Strategy will be comprised of a Regional Transportation Plan and regional greenhouse gas reduction targets. Regulations include:

- Create regional targets for greenhouse gas reductions, tied to land use
- Regional planning to create a plan to meet those targets
- Regulate regional transportation funding decisions to be consistent with the plan
- Consider together regional transportation and housing planning
- New CEQA exemptions for projects that conform to regional plans

Reduction targets for emissions will be established by September 30, 2010, with the goal to change growth patterns to reduce overall driving. Reduction in energy consumption, increase in sales and property tax, and employment centers and parking charges.

The Regional Planning Agency will identify special corridors and switch point zones. Plans for development of transportation funding include transit demand models with criteria for travel and induced land development, split modes of transportation, priority of residential users to employment centers and parking changes.

The most powerful provision of the bill includes CEQA exemptions and streamlining. Certain development projects can be excepted or streamlined if they conform to a sustainable community strategy and are part of residential or mixed-use transit priority project.

CEQA exemptions include projects of less than eight stories or 200 units, served by existing utilities, not impacting historic resources, not impacting historic resources, and better income housing, 10% low income housing, 5% very low income housing.

In June 2009, the Urban Land Institute of Los Angeles organized a five-day technical assistance panel to pursue the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Campus and surrounding community. The study area encompasses 100 acres and is bounded on the south by Imperial Highway on the north by Imperial Highway. The following report elaborates the recommendations from the panel.

**Recommendations from the ULI Report Include:**

- Replace, re-vision and expand the antiquated care services at the Willowbrook Medical Center and create a new identity through the street fronts.
- Create a neighborhood park with shared uses for sports and physical wellness.
- Expand and improve schools and park sites.
- Create a community garden and ribbon school yard.
- Create a connection between Charles Drew University and the Medical Center.
- Develop connections between the transit station and Medical Center.
- Create a mixed-use center that incorporates health and wellness – including a library, learning center, clinic and fitness center.
- Build a new identity through the Village at Willowbrook, El Segundo Terrace Apartments, Century Park Townhomes, Century Community Childrens Center, El Segundo Park, Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center, and Denny’s restaurant.
- Accommodate the I-105 Freeway (noise, traffic flow, visual and physical barriers).
- Reconstruct undervalued lands and residential use.
- Employ local residents in redevelopment project and planning.
- Enhance and stimulate investment for businesses.

**Improve pedestrian links between the transit station and Medical Center.

**Create a mixed-use center that incorporates health and wellness – including a library, learning center, clinic and fitness center.

**Develop transit-oriented housing.

**County of Los Angeles Redevelopment and Regulations

Following is a summary of redevelopment plans and regulations for the Willowbrook area, including the Willowbrook Redevelopment Area designated by the County of Los Angeles Willowbrook Community Standards District, the County of Los Angeles Willowbrook Central District Designation and the Willowbrook textile land-use classification.

1. Willowbrook Redevelopment Area Designation

The Willowbrook Redevelopment Area was established on October 16, 1977 and consists of 551 acres project area located on the west by Imperial Highway, on the south by 118th Street, and on the east by 124th Street.

The current redevelopment plan expires in 2012. The County is researching options for expanding the current redevelopment plan term and expanding the area covered.

**Goals of the redevelopment plan include:**

- Improve range and quality of housing
- Eliminate economic and environmental deficiencies of deep lots
- Provide land for recreational, community, educational and commercial facilities
- Accommodate the 3-105 Freeway (noise, traffic flow, visual and physical barriers)
- Reconstruct undervalued lands and residential use
- Employ local residents in redevelopment project and planning
- Enhance and stimulate investment for businesses.

**Rehabilitation projects in the Redevelopment Area include:**

- Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center
- Denny’s restaurant
- Child Care Center
- King Drew Magnet High School of Medicine and Science
- Charles Drew University property acquisition (future campus expansion)
- Willowbrook Zoning Consistency Plan
- Transit Oriented District, adjacent to Blue Line Station
- Willowbrook Avenue Streetscape Project
- MILK/Dove Medical Center Oasis Clinic
- South Health Clinic (under development)
- Housing projects, including Willow Springs, County Park, Rosewillow, The Village at Willowbrook, El Segundo Multi-family rental housing, rehabilitation grants and loans and affordable housing on vacant sites.

Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan 2010

Rosa Parks/Willowbrook Station Master Plan 2010

Implementation Strategies

Implementation Strategies
2. County of Los Angeles Willowbrook Community Standards District: Community standards are part of the Redevelopment Project Area Standards include:

Zoning:
- R-1 and R-2 zoning:
  - Building heights – 35’ and 2 story
- R-3 zoning:
  - Building heights: 35’ and 2 story
  - Lot Coverage: 50%
  - Landscaping: 30% landscape coverage
  - C-1, C-2 and C-3 zoning:
    - Building heights: 35’ and 2 story
    - Lot Coverage: 50%
    - Landscape Coverage: 10%

Parking:
- R-1 2 space per dwelling unit
- Bachelor: 1 covered space per dwelling unit
- 1 bedroom: 1 ½ covered spaces per dwelling unit
- 2 bedroom: 1 ½ covered space plus 1 uncovered space per dwelling unit, guest parking at 1 space per 4 units
- Commercial: 1 space per 250 sf

District Standards:
- Zoning
  - Building and structure floor yards: 30 feet, residential 20 feet
  - Side and rear yards: Single story 10 feet, two story 15 feet, three or more stories 20 feet
- Green Building goals:
  - Conserve water, energy, and natural resources
  - Drought tolerant species are noted in the LA County Code, Chapter 22 44.

Theater and dining: 1 space per 3 seats
Hospital: 2 spaces per patient bed
Hotel: 1 space for each 2 guest rooms
Public parks: 1 space for each 45 sf of floor area plus 1 space for each ½ acres (35 acres) or 1 space per acres (15 acres)
Schools (up to 6th Grade): 1 space per classroom, plus parking for administrative use at 1 space per 5 pupils.

Drought tolerant species are noted in the LA County Code, Chapter 22 44.

Density bonus for affordable housing: range from 5% to 35%

Setbacks:
- Green Building goals:
  - Conserve water, energy, and natural resources
  - Drought tolerant species are noted in the LA County Code, Chapter 22 44.

3. County of Los Angeles Transit Oriented District Designation:
The County of Los Angeles has designated the area within a ¼ to ½ mile radius from Blue Line Stations as Transit Oriented Districts. The intent is to comply with the Transit Village Development Planning Act of 1994 (summarized above).

4. Wilmington streetscape landscape improvements plan:
Street improvements in Wilmington Avenue have been planned and partially completed by the County of Los Angeles. These improvements are planned for Wilmington Avenue from the 105 Freeway to south of El Segundo Boulevard. Improvements are completed south of 120th street, with the balance planned when funding is available. Improvements include landscape medicine, structures planting of, impervious concrete, box Culverts, bus shelters, trash receptacles and pedestrian level lighting.
Willowbrook is a small community, covering 3.74 square miles. The area, which includes a little over 9,000 housing units, is mostly comprised of single family tract homes. Although it bears some markings of an area where poverty (per capita income = $11,658) and unemployment are significant, its history as a middle class African American enclave, when options for residence location were limited for this group, continues to define the neighborhood’s character.

Carver Manor, Designed by African American Architect Paul Williams

At least one tract was designed by famed African American architect Paul Williams, Carver Manor, and the well-kept lawns and tree-lined streets to be found in some pockets are in keeping with this legacy.

Willowbrook stands out for its better than average access, when compared with other South Los Angeles neighborhoods, to shopping and other amenities. There is stopping center on the west side of the community at El Segundo and Avalon Boulevards, and one on the east side, Kenneth Hahn Plaza. Additionally, there are several parks within the geographic area, including 94-acre Earvin “Magic” Johnson Recreation Area, which includes a stocked lake as well as walking paths, soccer fields and a children’s play area.

Another recreation option for the area’s youth is the beautiful 27,000 square foot Roy Roberts II Watts-Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club, founded in 1957, with a gift from LA Times Charities. The historic photo at right shows LA Times representatives presenting this gift.

Willowbrook’s population of 34,591 continues to include a significant number of African Americans (42%), with the balance made up largely of Latinos. Fifty percent of the residents speak English but only 37% claim they speak English well.

Compton College and Southwest Community College are also located nearby.

Willowbrook is served by the Compton and Los Angeles Unified School districts. In the area surrounding Rosa Parks Station there are four elementary schools, Lincoln Elementary School, New Design (Barack Obama) Charter School, King/Drew Medical Magnet High School, and Charles R Drew University of Medicine and Science. Additional educational options for students in the area include Willowbrook Middle School and Harbor Classroom and Continuing Education Schools. Compton College and Southwest Community Colleges are also located nearby.
### 2005-2007 Census Data for Willowbrook

#### Willowbrook Social Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average household size</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>2.89</td>
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<td>Average family size</td>
<td>4.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population 25 years and older</td>
<td>18,464</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High School graduate or higher</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability status (population 5 years and over)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
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<td>15.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign born</td>
<td>4,222</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male, married</td>
<td>4,680</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female, married</td>
<td>4,371</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
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<td>Household population</td>
<td>14,991</td>
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<td>Not Available</td>
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<td>Group-quarters population</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
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#### Willowbrook Housing Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median household income (in 2007 inflation-adjusted dollars)</td>
<td>32,423</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>48,807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median family income (in 2007 inflation-adjusted dollars)</td>
<td>36,557</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>48,374</td>
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<tr>
<td>Median home value (in 2007 inflation-adjusted dollars)</td>
<td>11,258</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>26,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home value (in 2007 inflation-adjusted dollars)</td>
<td>342,000</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>174,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of a mortgage (in 2007 inflation-adjusted dollars)</td>
<td>1,427</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Willowbrook Housing Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total housing units</td>
<td>9,864</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>9,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied housing units</td>
<td>9,231</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td>88.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied housing units</td>
<td>4,239</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter-occupied housing units</td>
<td>3,672</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant housing units</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner-occupied vacant units</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median value (dollars)</td>
<td>342,000</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>174,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median of selected monthly owner costs</td>
<td>1,427</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a mortgage (dollars)</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### American Community Survey (ACS) Demographic Estimates for Willowbrook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>35,269</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17,062</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18,207</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age (years)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>1,272</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 17 years</td>
<td>22,335</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years and over</td>
<td>10,180</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One race</td>
<td>14,998</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>7,982</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African-American</td>
<td>14,759</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race</td>
<td>11,918</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino (of any race)</td>
<td>19,181</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Years

The original Spanish land grantee of the 3,599 acres of land comprising Rancho La Tajauta was Anastacio Avila, a member of the prominent Avila clan and alcade, or Mayor of Los Angeles, from 1819 to 1821. The land grant included what we now know as Willowbrook, as well as Watts and Florence-Firestone, within boundaries extending from Firestone on the north, Alameda on the east, Rosecrans on the south and Central Avenue on the west. Enrique Avila, who followed his father in stewardship of this land was also involved in politics as an alcade and a member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for two terms from 1868 to 1872.

CHAPTER 7

Willowbrook Farmland

The neighborhood of Willowbrook was essentially created in 1903 when a housing tract given this name was filed with the Los Angeles County Recorder. The area was so called because of a small stream that flowed next to a landmark willow tree standing at the boundary of the original rancho. The name stuck for the entire community, as there was a stop on the newly opened Pacific Electric Red Car Line to Long Beach at 126th Street, ensuring that Willowbrook became known throughout Los Angeles.

Over time, the presence of the Red Car changed the character of the community, transforming it from an agricultural setting to a conglomeration of suburban housing developments, although it would retain aspects of its rural beginnings until late in the 20th Century.

In addition to its prominence as a stop on the Red Car line, Willowbrook also gained a measure of notice as the site of the first branch of the Los Angeles County Free Library, as it was then called. In 1912, the first branch of the library was located in the home of Mrs. Belle Jenks. As the library grew and space needed expanded, it had several homes over the years, including a facility on El Segundo Boulevard which was damaged by the 1965 Watts Riots and rebuilt. In 1987, the library was moved to its current location in the Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center.

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From its earliest beginnings, the Willowbrook area was used for gardening and farming. Anastacio Avila was using the land for gain until he received the land grant from the Spanish government in the 1820s. In the years just before Willowbrook was developed, it was a mix of sage brush hills between a few scattered Atlantic white cedars. After subdivision, the area remained in rural character due to the number of people and the deep rich soils, in which many created 300 foot- wide gardens. People took advantage of the space, especially during the Depression and for many years beyond, using them for growing a variety of produce and raising livestock during the Depression and for many years beyond, using them for growing a variety of produce and raising livestock.

The Great Migration

Willowbrook developed relatively slowly until the 1940s. Following the rehabilitation of the rail line, Willowbrook was considered a suburban area, as the area was developed directly as a result of being a stop on the Red Car Line. The Willowbrook tract actually established the rail line, and there is evidence that a "pseudo-subsidiary" was established prior to the Red Car Car, a (street plans) were coordinated with adjacent tracts.

The Pacific Electric Red Car

Willowbrook was located along the very first Red Car line, which began operation in 1902 along Long Beach Avenue and Willowbrook Avenue, which aligns with the Blue Line operating today. Willowbrook can be considered a suburb today. Willowbrook was a key social services planning group, and Willowbrook was part of the Mid-Cities District Welfare Council, with Compton and Lynwood. This body was a key social services planning group, and Willowbrook was fairly marginalized within the group based on its majority African American population.

Annexation by Compton

During the same period that the great influx of African Americans was entering from across the country, Willowbrook was populated by whites who were attracted to the area. This was a developmental laboratory for an impressive roster of noted African American artists, created by the now internationally renowned assemblage master John Outterbridge. Of course, there was also the Watts Towers Arts Center for which Noah Purifoy was the first director with John Outterbridge following in this post. The well-known Watts Writers Workshop, founded by recently deceased Hollywood screenwriter Budd Shulberg (Author of On the Waterfront), also emerged from this period. Willowbrook was fairly marginalized within the group based on its majority African American population.

The Watts Riots

Because of the geographic proximity of Watts-Willowbrook, the histories of these communities are intertwined. Both became majority African American communities as a result of the demographic shifts described above, which further enmeshed their opportunities and challenges. Two major challenges were the perception of hopelessness experienced by many living in these communities. According to some analysts, these were key causes of the Watts Riots of 1965. Although this instance of civil unrest was shocking in its scale and fervor of destruction, it was an important catalyst for change throughout the city of Los Angeles. The most significant impacts were on Watts and Willowbrook, but both neighborhoods were affected by the Watts Riots. In the years following the riots, government agencies spent more than $100 million in Willowbrook alone, including development of Martin Luther King Jr. High School, discussion of development of a major outlet to the City of Los Angeles. 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Since the 1950s, prominent community advocates, such as Dr. H. Claude Hudson, Dr. Leroy Weekes and fighter Joe Louis, pressured Federal, State and County officials to build a health care facility that would serve the needs of people in South Los Angeles. They had allies in Kenneth Hahn, who served as an Los Angeles County Supervisor in the 2nd District for 40 years, and Brenda Shockley, Founding President of Drew Economic Development Corporation. Ms Shockley recalled during the dedication of housing connecting with the hospital, “I thought he (Kenneth Hahn) owned the whole community, because his name was on everything.”

His support was not enough though. It took the Watts Riots to catalyze the necessary political will as this monumental occurrence shed light on inequities in services through the McCone Commission study. This analysis documented lack of access to health care as one of the major issues in South Los Angeles, with the closest hospital being Los Angeles County General, ten miles away.

Three years later, April 10, 1968, six days after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., ground-breaking ceremonies for the acute care hospital were held. Charles R. Drew University joined forces with the hospital in 1982, and it became known as King-Drew Medical Center.

Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center

Another major investment by the County of Los Angeles in the years following the Watts Riots was the development of Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center. At the time, the 14-acre, 172,000-square foot, $24-million Kenneth Hahn Plaza was the largest development project ever carried out by the County’s redevelopment program. The award winning shopping center at 120th Street and Willowbrook Avenue included developers Aesthetic Houses Development Co. and the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLACC). It represented the first substantial private investment in the Willowbrook area in more than 20 years.

Watts Labor Community Action Committee

WLACC was founded in league with the United Auto Workers Union (UAW), at which Ted Watkins, the organization’s founder, had just been appointed to the prominent position of international representative.

The idea behind the organization was to use techniques of collective bargaining, so effectively employed by the UAW, to improve social conditions in South L.A. The Watts Riots happened three days after the organization’s founding, again acting as a catalyst for what would become one of the most important institutions in the community.

Since its beginning in 1965, WLACC has implemented programs and activities that focus on economic self-sufficiency and growth for the members of the community. The institution, now run by Ted’s son, Tim Watkins, has under its umbrella a comprehensive range of programs serving every constituency in the Watts-Willowbrook community including community development activities, low and moderate income housing, child care, senior services, youth development, gang reduction and job development. In addition, it is a major cultural institution in the neighborhood, recognizing that culture is a significant community asset. WLACC hosts mostly Blues concerts as part of its “Blues and Black” series and has monthly rotating exhibitions in its gallery space.

The Century Freeway and Metro

Willowbrook retained its rural character until the late 1980’s. With the creation of the Century (105) Freeway, which was completed in 1993, came the opportunity to focus on development in the area. This new transportation artery brought possibilities of linkages with other communities and Los Angeles International Airport and new development, as land was claimed in an orderly fashion for the freeway.

The completion of the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s Blue Line (1990) and Green Line (1995) light rail systems also contributed significantly to the energy focused on transforming Willowbrook from a somewhat sleepy suburb to key hub in South Los Angeles. Los Angeles County planners and developers and WLACC took advantage of these changes to move the County approved development plan for the area forward. Under this plan, 365 acres of Willowbrook land was understood to include new commercial and residential facilities. As a result, present-day Willowbrook appears similar to other communities in the South Central section of Los Angeles.
The Arts

Rosa Parks Station is just 0.8 miles from the Watts Towers Art Center, now a City of Los Angeles facility and one of the premiere cultural attractions in California. The Center serves as a home where artists from throughout the area can find support and encouragement, and, as such, the area is rich with creative talent. Many well-known artists have been affiliated there, including Noah Purifoy and John Outterbridge mentioned above, Charles Dickson, Willie Middlebrook, Dominick Amaro and more. In 2008, a new Art Center building was opened providing a state-of-the-art facility for artistic expression, and for visitors to experience the artistic legacy of Simon Rodia, builder of Watts Towers.

As mentioned above, WLCAC also serves as a major cultural venue. In addition to Bones and Blues, a weekly musical offering, the organization is based on Freedom Hall, a permanent exhibition dedicated to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and an art gallery which hosts rotating shows featuring local artists of note. WLCAC views art and culture as a major asset in the area, with the potential to contribute to the beauty, sense of pride and economic development of woman.
Existing art pieces at the Rosa Parks Station, as described on the Metro website, include:

"Pathway to Freedom" by Michael Massenburg and Robin Strayhorn is an installation of five seating benches honoring the life of Rosa Parks and the Watts community at the Metro Blue Line Station named in honor of the civil rights leader. Viewing public transportation seating as symbolic of the Rosa Parks historical event, the team created five seating areas out of concrete and ceramic tile that bear images of the life and times of Rosa Parks intertwined with images from the lives of people from Watts. The five Pathway to Freedom benches are located in various areas in the Station, but additional benches are needed throughout.

"Hide-n-Seek" by JoeSam is a giant figural game located amid the numerous freeway supporting columns at the Rosa Parks Station site. Throughout the two levels of the Wilmington/Imperial Station, large vibrantly colored metal cutout figures appear to be playfully engaged in this universally recognized game. Over a period of three years, JoeSam worked with over 1,000 children from the community to realize this project. To initiate the project, young people from the Watts/Willowbrook Boys and Girls Club worked with the artist to produce cutout figures of themselves playing hide-n-seek.

**Churches and Seniors**

The Watts/Willowbrook community is home to over 75 churches. These congregations represent a significant pool of human capital to be inspired for the benefit of the community. Their members include many of the area’s seniors and have the potential to be tapped to provide knowledgeable input in community planning and the development process for the Station and related improvements.

Race Relations

Historically, Willowbrook has always had some diversity, with both African Americans and Latinos in residence, and even Whites in the early days. But, in the 1950s and 1960s, the area along with Watts and Compton, became an African American stronghold with people from this group assuming positions of leadership in the community. Starting in the 1980s, as immigration from Mexico and Latin America increased, the percentage of people from these countries has steadily increased. In general, however, there has not been a correlation with rising numbers of Latinos in the community and Latino participation in community leadership roles. This has resulted in some tension between the two groups.
**Education and Employment**

Educational opportunities for local youth in Willowbrook are very uneven. There appear to be some above average and even stellar educational options for those who can get into schools such as McNair Elementary and King Drew Medical Magnet. But for those parents and students wanting to ensure a solid educational foundation, going out of the area may be a requirement. This holds true for employment as well, as current employment options within the community are very limited. Thus, reliable transit access is critical for those living in this area.

**Health**

As in much of Los Angeles County Service Planning Area 6, health statistics for Willowbrook are worse than average for the County overall. In particular, there is a high degree of obesity, among both adults and children close to 30% of the population is obese. Perhaps because a significant portion of the population is overweight, the leading cause of death among adults is heart disease. Between 30 and 40% of the population is uninsured. Clearly, a huge opportunity exists, with redevelopment of the medical center and creation of complementary health services, to positively impact the health of the Willowbrook community.

**Transit**

Historically, the Willowbrook area was underserved by public transit. The Pacific Electric railway provided direct access to job centers throughout Los Angeles County until the late 1940’s. Once the freeway system was put in place, the community became increasingly isolated from economic opportunity. But for those parents and students wanting to ensure a solid educational foundation, going out of the area may be a requirement. This holds true for employment as well, as current employment options within the community are very limited. Thus, reliable transit access is critical for those living in this area.

**Proposed Street Section at Willowbrook Avenue**
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PROJECT TEAM

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LA Commons

LA Commons helps Los Angeles’ diverse neighborhoods give voice to their unique stories through community-based arts programs that express the cultural and historical essence of the communities. Developed by artists in collaboration with local youth, these projects create a genuine artistic expression that resonates with important aspects of the community’s culture or history. Since programming activities began in 2003, LA Commons has developed grassroots projects and initiatives in eight neighborhoods: MacArthur Park, Koreatown, Chinatown, Mid-City, Slynn, East Hollywood (Little Armenia and Thai Town), Leimert Park, and Highland Park.

Based on this earlier work, LA Commons established a partnership with the UCLA Department of Urban Planning to implement an action research project aimed at looking at the role of culture in economic development in neighborhoods. As part of this project, they introduced “Trekking LA” in 2006, providing visitors from other parts of Los Angeles, and tourists from outside the region, with the chance to discover and experience these arts and cultural projects, as well as the authentic local music, food, festivals, and rich cultural history of the communities. From sampling barbecues in neighborhoods across Los Angeles, to listening to jazz and dancing to music from around the world, these tours open up both cultural interaction and economic activity. Through these two inter-connected and integrated programs, they pursue a vision of educating, empowering and enriching neighborhoods, while promoting greater understanding, engagement, and connections for all residents of, and visitors to, the city of Los Angeles.

Over the last several years, LA Commons has built on its successful neighborhood initiatives through work on community planning projects emphasizing cultural development including the creation of design guidelines for Leimert Park Village and plans for the development of a Central American Cultural District in the Westlake area. These unique projects are based on their neighborhood relationships, their past research focusing on the role of art and community development and ongoing work bridging community development and culture.

Karen Mack led LA Commons’ efforts to organize the Art and Design Advisory Board, to write the Community Profile and consult on public art opportunities for the Rosa Parks Station. Additional information about LA Commons is available at www.lacommons.org.

The Robert Group

The Robert Group (TRG) is a certified woman and minority-owned public affairs firm with expertise in community outreach and legislative advocacy geared towards infrastructure development and environmental issues. The firm has offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco. TRG’s areas of expertise include work on Environmental, Transportation, Economic and Community Development, Energy and Public Health issues. The firm offers professional services in:

• Public Affairs
• Community Outreach
• Strategic Communications

Since its establishment in November 1993, the firm has completed a wide variety of planning and public affairs projects for both public and private clients throughout California. TRG has a solid track record developing both statewide and locally-based public education and community outreach campaigns, working on large public works and transportation related projects and crafting niche marketing programs geared towards ethnic communities. The Group has a reputation for shaping innovative solutions for complex public affairs challenges. TRG specializes in community outreach, public involvement, legislative advocacy and communications and has substantial experiences in land use, private sector construction and public infrastructure projects. Additional information about The Robert Group is available at www.therobertgroup.com.

Ginny-Maria Brubaker and Christine Robert led the public outreach process for the Rosa Parks Station Master Plan.
APPENDIX

Other documents prepared for the Rosa Parks Master Plan include:

- Appendix A: Metro Stations Existing Conditions Report
- Community Meeting #1 Presentation 10.14.2009
- Community Meeting #2 Presentation 01.09.2010
- Community Meeting #3 Presentation 02.13.2010
- Art and Culture Advisory Meeting notes dated September 10, November 19 and December 17, 2009

- Evans, Joseph Patrick
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Courts,_Los_Angeles,_California
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King_Jr.-Harbor_Hospital
- “Hahn Plaza Selected as a Top Project,” Los Angeles Times, November 6, 1988
- http://www.wattsvillagetheatercompany.org
- www.healthycity.org