

## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGY

### *Demographic and Political Challenges*

The Northeast San Fernando Valley Sustainability & Prosperity Strategy is a highly-ambitious endeavor that covers an area the size of Cleveland, with an even greater population—half a million residents. As substantial as the Northeast region is, there is a tendency for it not to be recognized as a quarter of the fifth largest metropolitan area in the United States—the San Fernando Valley (Valley).



Civic coalition of San Fernando Valley transit leaders and stakeholders meet in Van Nuys

### GEOGRAPHY OF THE NORTHEAST VALLEY

The San Fernando Valley is generally accepted<sup>1</sup> to be divided North and South by Roscoe Boulevard and split East and West by the Interstate 405 freeway.

Included in the Northeast San Fernando Valley (Northeast), the communities fall primarily within the municipal boundaries of the City of Los Angeles. The Northeast also includes the entire City of San Fernando and several unincorporated sections the County of Los Angeles. These areas are subject to each jurisdiction's General Plan.

In addition, land use within the City of Los Angeles is governed by a series of 35 individual Community Plans. Northeast plans include: Arleta-Pacoima, Mission Hills-Panorama City, Sun Valley-La Tuna Canyon, Sunland-Tujunga-Lakeview Terrace-East La Tuna Canyon, and Sylmar.

The named communities of the City of Los Angeles in the Northeast Valley are Arleta, Lake View Terrace, Mission Hills, North Hills, Pacoima, Panorama City, Shadow Hills, Sun Valley, Sunland, Sylmar, Tujunga, and a nominal portion of the Angeles National Forest.

*See also Appendix F, About This Project*

<sup>1</sup> Source: United Chambers of Commerce, San Fernando Valley, as part of their San Fernando Valley Mapping Process, c.1993

## THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Southern California grew up first around a vast network of rail lines, including two significant Pacific Electric lines serving the San Fernando Valley, connecting it with Downtown Los Angeles. The lines gave shape to the roads and access among community centers during the first decades of the twentieth century. Canoga Park was established at the terminus of one line running west, while the City of San Fernando was situated at the end of the northeast line. Both lines connected to over 1,100 miles of interurban coaches and streetcars that blanketed the Southern California Area.

As the ubiquity of the automobile edged out the public transit rail lines, freeways and more highways began to appear, forming the new backbone for circulation in Southern California. Los Angeles was eventually dubbed the “car capital” of the world—the first such major city primarily dependent on the family car. Freeways connected to arterials, and arterials connected to secondaries and collectors. This near-perfect grid configuration created a matrix of sorts, upon which an endless stream of single-family neighborhoods could be attached.

As the greater Los Angeles area grew to connect with Orange County and then to San Diego County, a massive, and seemingly endless, megalopolis was created. Each of the millions of vehicles on the road had a different pair of origins and destinations (O&Ds). The stage was thus set for an eventual crisis in circulation—what came to be known as “gridlock.” Congestion worsened, making it difficult to travel, especially during peak morning and evening commutes.

As time wore on, traffic congestion became the primary issue dealt with in the planning process. There was a great deal of debate between residents, developers and local jurisdictions. Unfortunately, by the time the problem was fully recognized, commuting patterns had become well-established and the only solution appeared to be more and wider streets. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 became the tool of choice to test the adequacy of mitigation and impacts on transportation, traffic, greenhouse gas emissions, air quality, noise and other automobile-related factors.

CEQA has been regularly invoked to protect neighborhoods and open spaces. But, for the most part GHGs were not a leading issue until climate change took to the global stage.

## WHAT SETS THE NORTHEAST VALLEY APART

### *Introduction to the Subregion*

While the Northeast San Fernando Valley is often thought of as a monolithic area, a more careful analysis reveals a cluster of unique and distinct communities. Within the area are a great variety of demographic profiles, lifestyles, cultures and local features. From recycling centers to landfills—from hiking and equestrian trails to crowded urban thoroughfares; the area is a microcosm of the greater Southern California region. Tucked away in the northeast corner of a natural valley—surrounded on all four sides by mountains, and separated from the Los Angeles basin by the massive Santa Monica Mountain range—the Northeast can be easy to overlook. However, its infrastructure deficiencies and aesthetic challenges are not so easily ignored.

In spite of these constraints, the residents tend to be quite outspoken when it comes to matters of local public policy. They generally feel shortchanged in terms of return on their tax dollar investments. They also feel that an inefficient political structure works against them.

By every measure, the Northeast Valley is a region of great need—and great opportunity. Large swaths of housing built after WWII were designated for low-income minority residents at a time when restrictive covenants prevented their settling elsewhere in the region. To compound the problem the area was prone to flooding and runoff from the San Gabriel Mountains, making it very rich in alluvial sand and gravel deposits. This led to extensive surface mining aggregates and excavation. Sand and gravel pits dotted the landscape.

These virtually unlimited resources, coupled with its ready access to rail lines and highways, positioned the Northeast well to benefit from the post-war demand for materials and supplies needed to grow the economy and infrastructure of Los Angeles. This also gave rise to the Northeast as a logical center for other heavy industry as well.

Unfortunately, as the sand and gravel played out, the dredging left gaping ravines behind, whose only practical use was as landfills—at a time when remediation was not a priority. This brought with it more truck traffic, pounding the pavement into loose chunks, and the accompanying dust, dirt and odor of dumped and spilled refuse. Not only are the pits home to the region's waste, but some of the adjacent mountain canyons—once pristine—have also been pressed into service, filled for all time with metropolitan waste.

These environmental challenges have been exacerbated by the densification of nearby housing in recent years and by unpermitted multiple tenancy. They will likely be compounded by future plans for more in-fill construction and mixed uses.



Cactus in bloom on the face of Hansen Dam

## ROOTS OF THE REGION

The principles of this *Sustainable Communities Strategy* (SCS) can only be fully embraced if they include ways to re-think the urban form and history of this potentially-vibrant region.

This once-rich farmland of olives and citrus gave way to middle class neighborhoods at the end of World War II, and was absorbed into the vast suburban landscape of the San Fernando Valley.

Owing to the modesty of the housing, and proximity of heavy industry and aggregates, the Northeast became the de facto center of affordable housing for the region.

Unfortunately, some of the same industries and activities that provided post-war job opportunities, also had a dramatic effect on the quality of life, and the residents of the region. One of the pillars of this strategy is to build on an Environmental Justice agenda being ably led by a cadre of local non-profits.

Unknown to many Angelenos are the somewhat secluded equestrian communities still situated in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and up into the western Angeles National Forest. Foothill Boulevard comprises the main thoroughfare of the communities of Sunland-Tujunga, and once was the main highway prior to the construction of the Foothill Freeway, Interstate-210 in the early 1970s.

## PACIFIC ELECTRIC AND RELATED RAIL

### *Historical Perspective*

In the late 1800s, the Pacific Electric and related rail lines established a network of streetcars and interurban coaches that included over 1,100 miles of track, and covered an area of California from the City of San Fernando and Redlands on the north to Balboa Island and Corona on the south—spanning four counties: Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside. The highest point was near the peak of Mount Lowe at 5,600 feet and was constructed in 1896 as a scenic attraction.

The promise of freeways and family cars ultimately led to the demise of the entire system. The ethos of public transportation systems has been revived in the last several decades, mostly because of worsening traffic congestion. “We are going back to the future in terms of transit development here,” said Hasan Ikhata, CEO of the Southern California Association of Governments, in a reference to the old Pacific Electric Red Car network that used to crisscross the region. “It may take 50 to 100 years to change people’s behavior.”

The Red Cars came to the San Fernando Valley in December of 1911. (See map, Appendix C) Lines emerged from the Los Angeles Basin through Cahuenga Pass; traveled west on the median of Chandler Boulevard; and then turned north, up what is now Van Nuys Boulevard. The tracks split at Sherman Circle, with one route heading west out Sherman Way to Owensmouth (Canoga Park), and the other continuing up Van Nuys Boulevard to Parthenia Avenue. This second line angled west to Sepulveda Boulevard, taking another turn north—up to Brand Boulevard east, and terminated in the City of San Fernando. The Owensmouth line closed down in 1938, and some remaining segments lasted until 1952.

Besides decommissioning the Red Cars, Los Angeles County also rejected a 1963 proposal from the Alweg Group<sup>2</sup> to put in a 41.8 mile monorail system with 40 stations at a cost of \$123 million, or about a billion of today’s dollars. The cost per mile in today’s dollars would have been about \$24 million. The first phase of the system would have served the San Fernando Valley, Wilshire Blvd. and Los Angeles’ Civic Center.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Alweg Company built the original Disneyland Monorail

<sup>3</sup> Source Alweg Group Proposal to Los Angeles County, 1963

## HISTORIC STONEHURST

Valley residents treasure their rural areas. The Stonehurst neighborhood is comprised of 92 homes in the Sun Valley community of the Northeast Valley. Many of the structures were built between 1923 and 1925 by Dan Montelongo, a local artisan and stonemason, using stone selected from the nearby washes and the foothills of the Tujunga Valley. The neighborhood boasts the highest concentration in Los Angeles of homes utilizing native river rock as a primary building material.<sup>4</sup>

The preservation and acknowledgement of these existing residences is very important to the community.



Historic Stonehurst homes are constructed of local river rocks

The Stonehurst Community is generally bounded by Sunland Boulevard, Wentworth Avenue and Chivers Avenue. There is strong support for the protection of these unique and historic structures. Stonehurst and La Tuna Canyon are planned to be preserved as rural open space communities that act as a buffer between urban areas and the wildlands.

## SAN FERNANDO MISSION



Mission San Fernando Rey de España, the seventeenth of 21 missions established by Father Junipero Serra

<sup>4</sup> <<http://preservation.lacity.org/hpoz/la/stonehurst> May 22, 2016>

## GOALS OF THE STRATEGY

### Community-Based Implementation

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) Sustainability Planning Grant Program (formerly known as Compass Blueprint Grant Program) was established as an innovative vehicle for promoting local jurisdictional efforts to test local planning tools. Since starting in 2005, 133 projects have been completed through the program, with another 69 projects to be completed by the end of 2016. After many years and lengthy processes, the program comes down to a few core principles:

- Mobility
- Livability
- Prosperity
- Sustainability

Applying the subsequently enacted mandates of AB 32 and SB 375, we have arrived at a primary strategic goal:

*Linking land use and transportation planning to support community sustainability*

—developing an overriding strategy for “Location Efficiency” to complement transit modes and technologies being identified and brought on line by SCAG and Metro. By rethinking the basic urban form of our communities, we can enjoy the dividends of reduced travel times, and reduced fuel consumption. The result is less environmental impact, and more time to enjoy an improved quality of life.



Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station - Northbound Antelope Valley Line

## FOCUSED OPPORTUNITIES

This strategy ultimately focuses on five primary commercial centers, and recognizes other areas with great potential for longer-term development and renewal. The planning team has adopted five line, point and area features upon which to focus future strategies, analyzing demographics and conditions within a uniform half-mile band or radius around each of the subject “centroids.”

The Northeast Valley is a populous, complex region that combines bedroom communities, employment centers, major transportation and transit arteries and hubs; and a diverse and varied population. For this *Sustainable Communities Strategy* to serve as a model for other locales, it must succeed in the Northeast San Fernando Valley. In this way, success here is an indicator of what is possible in many parts of the broader region.

The area is representative of the overall region’s lower-SES population, and of its history. With the north Valley serving as the de facto urban growth boundary during one of the Southern California’s greatest periods of growth (1945 to 1975), it also exemplifies the makeup of communities, local economies and urban developments that characterize many areas of the City of Los Angeles’ urban landscape.

To understand how this dynamic plays out in the Northeast Valley, it is necessary to sharpen focus on the region and understand how a sustainable communities strategy can unfold in practice to benefit those who live in typical local areas. Toward that end, this analysis focuses on five specific centers within the Northeast Valley to serve as starting points. With this focus, we can better understand the opportunities and challenges that implementation of the SCS goals represents.

These communities were selected for two reasons: (1) they typify in many ways the serious demographic and economic challenges in the region experienced by many of its most vulnerable residents; and (2) their current level of transit opportunity and status of their infrastructure is quite typical of the Northeast Valley region—largely dependent on buses and automobiles for travel. They also represent some of the best prospects for creating new infrastructure and opportunity within the region as they show what is possible with new transit initiatives and economic development programming.

## FIVE FOCAL AREAS

1. Half-mile radius around the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station
2. Half-mile band along San Fernando Road, primarily in the City of San Fernando
3. Half-mile band along Van Nuys Boulevard in Pacoima
4. Half-mile band area along Van Nuys Boulevard that makes up the Panorama Mall, Panorama Plaza, Plaza del Valle
5. Combined half-mile radii around significant “Remediation Areas” of the industrialized portions and landfill/surface mining operations in Sun Valley

The first four of these areas are included on the path of the proposed East Valley Transit Corridor, while the fifth has the potential to be a critical component of a regional economic plan; one that would greatly advance the goals of the *Sustainable Communities Strategy*.

The team based the demographic analysis on different geographies depending on the topic and the quality of data available. In the City of Los Angeles, the named community, community plan area and Neighborhood Council jurisdiction is very relevant. State and county data provide meaningful qualitative and quantitative benchmarks for the subject communities. The subject communities share geography and are contained within an actual topographical valley surrounded on all sides by mountains. They share infrastructure, transportation, modes of media and communication, and enjoy cultural relationships with one another.

Thus, the San Fernando Valley Census County Division<sup>5</sup> (CCD) is the most relevant geography for the Valley’s larger questions involving public policy, governance, sustainability and economic strategies. The Valley region encompasses the cities of Burbank, Calabasas, Glendale, San Fernando; and that area of the City of Los Angeles north of Mulholland Drive.

<sup>5</sup> Census County Divisions (CCDs) and equivalent entities are statistical geographic entities established cooperatively by the U.S. Census Bureau and officials of state and local governments for reporting census data that have stable boundaries and recognizable names. The San Fernando Valley CCD was established in 2005

## LOCATION EFFICIENCY

Simply stated, the goal of the SB 375 *Sustainable Communities Strategy* is to improve Location Efficiency and thereby reduce the length and frequency of automobile and light truck trips. A reduction in VMT will necessarily reduce the amount of GHG emissions. Contemporary Lifestyle Centers provide a park-once experience by providing a variety of goods, services, dining and recreation all within one easily walkable area. The use of public transportation is being encouraged by policy makers, as well as what is known as “Active Transportation,” broadly defined as human powered travel: walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized means.

With better planning in our Town Centers, we can assure a full range of amenities and assets close to our homes and neighborhoods, and in many cases accessible by transportation alternatives. By re-industrializing local manufacturing, we can reduce toxins, pollution and blight—at the same time preserving the economic base, cultivating employment, and promoting prosperity through quality well-paying careers.

As technology takes us ever closer to a preference for renewable energy resources, innovations such as Plug-in Electric Vehicles (PEVs) allow for the mobile consumption of alternative fuels—alternatives that are generated from fixed renewable sources, such as solar, wind and geothermal. Improvements are on the horizon for the efficiency of PEV batteries in terms of power to weight ratios, and overall range between charges. Charging stations for PEVs are still not as abundant as they ideally could be. But, this too seems to be improving rapidly.



High-capacity articulated Metro Liner vehicle serving the Panorama Mall on Van Nuys Boulevard

Aside from the transportation framework around which the region grew, there are other complications with the existing urban form of Los Angeles. Much of the commercial zoning is shallow, and the streets of business districts are often too narrow for meaningful streetscape improvements. These limitations can discourage some of the more advanced tenants and hinder streetscape initiatives.

## CHALLENGES FACING THE NORTHEAST VALLEY

### Important Overarching Challenges

- Poor planning for land use and complementary transportation
- Sprawl-based low-rise growth patterns
- Public policy disconnects and inequities
- Underserved and disenfranchised residents and communities
- Lack of meaningful public transportation or alternatives for reducing vehicle miles traveled
- Homeless population, vagrancy, shortage of housing and lack of affordability
- Insufficient industrial vacancy for attraction of new businesses, careers and occupations
- Need to conform to AB 32 and SB 375 in a way that improves employment and the local economy
- Lack of local capital in Northeast communities
- Educational deficiencies and lowered expectations
- Aesthetically challenged main streets, gateways and corridors
- One of the densest population regions in Los Angeles County
- Difficulty preserving access to existing housing and maintaining its current relative affordability
- Need to add housing capacity to accommodate a projected increase in population



Clients of MEND, Meet Each Need with Dignity line up for assistance with food, clothing, health care and other essential services

## ANALYSIS

Woven into the fabric of virtually all communities, is the desire to create a sustainable quality of life—one that meets the needs of residents and businesses. Safety, security and healthy surroundings are paramount. Residents also need access to quality education, careers and opportunities—providing incomes and building human capital—essentials for economic prosperity. Culture, recreation and an aesthetically pleasing natural environment round out the equation. What results is a physically and intellectually stimulating setting for families to grow and prosper.

While these are laudable goals, all too often, communities lapse into obsolescence. They fall into disorder and a downward spiral of disinvestment. As communities deteriorate, properties become less desirable—and comparatively less expensive. As a result, theirs is the housing stock that becomes more affordable as it loses value. This is the default condition in many underserved communities. It is the lack of desirability that causes one area to be more moderately priced than another.

Purveyors of goods and services lose their incentive to offer quality, and instead focus on lower prices to appeal to more price-conscious demographic. They are apt to defer maintenance on their premises and to join in the confusion of signage and gimmicks that are the signature of blighted commercial centers. First-rate stores and shopping areas tend to lapse into second-rate uses. As a result, they are not as apt to serve the community or offer as complete an array of goods and services.

Lower Socioeconomic Status (SES) refers to community demographics—an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation.<sup>6</sup> When there is a concentration of poverty of this type, the entire community suffers from lack of income and lack of capital. The lack of *discretionary* income tends to drive out businesses that offer higher quality goods and services. The lack of basic income will drive out the remaining businesses—those that offer core goods, services and amenities—essential to feed, clothe and shelter families.

As a result, those who can least afford it, are forced to travel great distances to find goods of any quality, to find healthy foods, and to enjoy amenities that most communities take for granted. Often, businesses will surface in these neighborhoods who sell inferior goods at inflated prices.

<sup>6</sup> <<http://www.merriam-webster.com/>>

As a result of community deterioration, homeowners are often motivated to move out, and rent their residences. If this occurs in larger numbers, it can unwittingly expand the population of shorter-term residents who have much less interest in the condition or future of their neighborhoods.

These are the challenges facing many of the communities and pockets of population in the Northeast Valley.



Residents complain of an over-concentration of liquor outlets, unsavory loitering, and unsightly conditions, along Foothill Boulevard; here is a liquor store only a few yards from the Discovery Cube, Los Angeles, and the Lake View Terrace Library

## STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS

For a community development strategy to be successful, it must be carried forward by local community leaders who have a vested interest in their neighborhoods and “Town Centers”— those whose lives are the most affected.

- Establish a continuous and ongoing alliance for civic implementation
- Collaborate among interested groups to develop proactive consensus on principles
- Establish persistent and ongoing programs for civic implementation.
- Assemble human capital in the form of stakeholders and civic organizations.
- Raise seed capital sufficient to field a grant-writing team and limited administration.
- Aggressively pursue foundation grants through a not-for-profit fund of the *Community Foundation of the Valleys* or *The Valley Economic Alliance*.
- Aggressively pursue government grants and subventions through the *San Fernando Valley Council of Governments*, or a participating jurisdiction.
- Provide guidance and support for community-friendly local initiatives as early in the process as possible.

- Recruit credible and proactive advocates.
- Take ownership of issues where you are in favor—not just opposition.
- Preserve what is good and be willing to make it better
- Fully and aggressively participate in local government by organizing and allocating responsibilities in the most efficient fashion.
- Monitor business and residential opportunities, and be prepared to intervene in positive ways.
- Seek out responsible investment in the community to fulfill unmet needs.
- Embrace public transit and active transportation.
- Focus on compact “last-mile” destinations for most efficient use of public transportation.
- Create Town Centers with a complete range of shopping, amenities and opportunities.
- Intervene and assist with more viable tenant mixes
- Support mixed-use planning particularly near transit.
- Develop capital in the subregion by inviting quality investment.
- Shop locally - Patronize local merchants and service providers.
- Develop a Culture of Education Focused on Careers and Prosperity.
- Encourage local innovation.
- Cultivate local entrepreneurship.
- Establish subregional industry clusters
- Showcase unique assets and points of difference



Sifting through discards in the Northeast Valley

## SECTION 2 - SUSTAINABILITY

### *Environment, Economy, and Equity*

Earlier definitions of sustainability focused primarily on the environment. Recent practitioners are viewing sustainability through a more holistic lens. The goal is to balance the elements of environment, economy, and an equitable society—not on one element at the expense of the others.

### HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Justice is one of the cornerstones of sustainability. The environment can be defined in numerous ways. It may be the condition of local landscape and streetscape, homelessness, poverty, or pollution of air and water. Environmental sustainability can also involve local and regional open spaces, recreational areas, lakes and beaches; and, in general refer to conservation of wild lands, woods, and forests.

Getting to the root of environmental problems, leads us to questions of causation. Lower SES families tend to cluster in modestly-priced housing, which is, by definition, less desirable in terms of the housing itself—or in its location. The real estate market is all about “location.” This is even more the case when it comes to the lower end of the housing market. Lower- to moderately-priced housing tends to be situated in undesirable locations; near heavy industry, polluting sources and noise nuisances. The Northeast has more than its fair share of rail lines, storage lots, freeways and major highways; run down and deteriorating neighborhoods, crime-prone areas, and areas lacking in infrastructure. Many areas are without street lights, street trees, curbs, or flood control, and are lacking in street and sidewalk maintenance.

While industry is beneficial for the jobs it produces, certain types of heavy, toxic and obsolete industries have more of a detrimental effect on the broader community than they return in economic benefit. Others, such as storage-only facilities return very little in the way of jobs, and provide little or no economic benefit to surrounding communities.

When compared to the greater region, the Northeast offered more open space and agricultural land well into the 20th Century. It was rich in sand, gravel and other aggregates, and its industrial foundations



Fig. 1 - The Three Pillars of Sustainability

were in more intense uses: construction, storage, freight, mining, auto wrecking, and heavy manufacturing.

As the sand and gravel pits played out, the logical use for the resultant excavations was as landfills, where they served ably through the latter 20th Century.

The city-owned Lopez Canyon Landfill was closed down with decades of capacity remaining. But, the surrounding communities were growing more and more dense, and the stakeholders more resistant to noxious uses. The infrastructure was decaying, and residents were being subjected to an intolerable parade of truck traffic, odor and pollution of their air and water. What remains is the task of how best to remediate decommissioned sites and repurpose them for activities that will improve aesthetics, help create jobs, and build additional capital within the community.

### ROBUST ECONOMY

A sustainable community economy is one that has a reasonable proportion of jobs to residents and housing. Workforce housing cannot be supported without adequate family incomes, and families cannot be maintained without quality jobs and careers.

When a community is out of balance, the result will be blight, high resident turnover, vagrancy, crime, despair, and displacement. On the other hand,

many communities have been brought to equilibrium, only to find that their traditional residents have been displaced by what is commonly referred to as “gentrification.” It is a hollow victory indeed, to reshape a community, and fail to include its core population.

Stakeholders need to be made aware of the role they themselves can play in improving the local economy. Support for local businesses keeps capital and incomes circulating within the community. It maintains the availability of goods and services in each neighborhood. More importantly, it stimulates home-grown innovation and entrepreneurship.

Active encouragement of community-friendly development can also help in the attraction and retention of much-needed quality businesses and well-paying employment-producing industry.

### SOCIAL EQUITY

One of the most effective approaches to sustainability is to emulate the efforts of others who have successfully dealt with the topic—what are referred to as “best practices.” In the case of redevelopment and renewal of underserved communities, the biggest risks are leaving behind certain populations and displacing others. It is a hollow victory indeed if the elevation is not as inclusive as possible. In this context, our strategy embraces the notion of “Opportunity Urbanism.” The first step is to gain an understanding of the history and culture of the current population. Assess challenges and weaknesses in each community.

Education is an important metric in underserved communities. There will always be debates on causation, whether it is the deficient education that causes the poverty, or whether the poor simply cluster in neighborhoods where services are lack-



Plaza del Valle open air market in Panorama City



Improvised residence in Panorama City shopping area



The Panorama Towers is one of two such buildings planned in the community's 1960s heydays. Only the first was built. This prominent feature has been boarded up since being damaged by the Northridge earthquake in 1994.

ing. On balance, both are true. While one generation might be forced into a lower socioeconomic geography, the next generation—their children—can also be caught up in the cycle of underperformance. Chronic underperformance in the community lowers expectations, and can create a sense of exclusion.

The only long-term cure for this situation is to develop a “culture of education.” Emerging age groups must realize the value of education and careers to their future prosperity and well-being. It is the social responsibility of the community to cultivate opportunities and promote prosperity and sustainable lifestyles for all.

## THE SCAG RTP/SCS

### 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/ Sustainable Communities Strategy

Regional Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCSs) are being developed to help California meet its climate goals and the requirements of Senate Bill 375 (SB 375). The state mandates of Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) and SB 375 require that land use and transportation planning be viewed in a whole new way. AB 32, California's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006,<sup>1</sup> gives the California Air Resources Board (CARB) authority over sources of GHG emissions, including cars and light trucks. According to the CARB, transportation accounts for some 40% of GHG emissions, with cars and light trucks accounting for almost three-quarters of those emissions (30% overall).

Local jurisdictions are now required to conform to targets set by the CARB for reduction of GHG emissions from these mobile sources. Under the 2012 SCS, the initial target for the year 2020 is an eight percent reduction, and for the year 2035 is a 13 percent reduction—as contrasted to the 2005 base year.<sup>2</sup>

Plan implementation is expected to result in regional benefits to mobility, economy, health and sustainability. SCAG's conforming and complementary plan is also expected to play a major part in helping California reach its GHG reduction goals: reductions in per capita transportation emissions of nine percent (9%) by 2020 and sixteen percent (16%) by 2035.

Benefits of the 2012-2035 RTP/SCS:

1. Mobility
2. Economy
3. Location Efficiency
4. Cost Effectiveness

The State of California has imposed planning mandates on regional and local jurisdictions to reduce GHG emissions to established target levels. SB 375 mandates integrating transportation planning with land use that:

- Represents the long-term vision and accompanying investment framework to address regional transportation and land use challenges and opportunities within a region

<sup>1</sup> California Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, AB 32 and Regional Planning Coordination SB 375 (Steinberg)

<sup>2</sup> The 2016 RTP/SCS is anticipated to result in an 8 percent reduction in emissions by 2020, an 18 percent reduction by 2035, and a 22 percent reduction by 2040 as compared to 2005 levels.

- Secures federal funding for transportation projects
- Meets federal requirements
- Is based on a long-range planning horizon, 20+ years into the future
- Is financially-constrained in that revenues equal costs
- Meets regional emission standards (Conformity)
- Meets state requirements
- Addresses SB 375 by meeting state GHG requirements

This Northeast Strategy takes these factors into account, and is based upon the Northeast Valley's existing conditions, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. It also considers existing policies, input received from public, private and volunteer individuals, and invites comment from public outreach including federal, state, and local governments and agencies. It is produced with the assistance and oversight of the San Fernando Valley Council of Governments, the City of Los Angeles, the City of San Fernando, the public, and leaders from Neighborhood Councils in the affected communities.

An important goal is to demonstrate that not only are these GHG initiatives economically neutral, but, addressing these needs can actually result in economic improvement, additional employment, aesthetic enhancement, and an improved quality of life. This strategy should not be an imposition, but a benefit for the residents embracing it.

Implications of changing demographics in the six-county SCAG region are, as defined by SCAG:<sup>3</sup>

- Increased demand for housing choices in central cities and mixed communities with shopping, health services, church and transportation options
- Surplus of large-lot homes and increased demand for small-lot homes
- Increased demand for health care and social services
- Downward pressure on tax revenues
- Changing transportation preferences

<sup>3</sup> < <https://scag.ca.gov/calendar/Documents/demo24/Panel4-PamOConnor.pdf>>

## ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a six-county Southern California Region. Their planning provides information and guidelines to cities and counties to improve and coordinate their efforts toward housing needs and sustainable community development.

SCAG is the largest Metropolitan Planning Organization and Council of Governments (COG) in the United States. SCAG territory covers over 38,000 square miles, six counties, 191 cities and over 18 million residents. The SCAG region comprises the 16th largest economy in the world, and takes responsibility for over 10,000 lane miles of freeway.

The Southern California Association of Governments region comprises more than half the population of the State of California, and is projected to add four million residents and 1.7 million jobs by 2035.<sup>4</sup> The 2012-2035 RTP/SCS sets forth the region's transportation and sustainability investment strategy for protecting and enhancing quality of life and economic prosperity through this period.

The Northeast San Fernando Valley Sustainability & Prosperity Strategy is intended to complement SCAG's 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/*Sustainable Communities Strategy*.

The San Fernando Valley Council of Governments (SFV COG)—a subregion of SCAG—was established in 2010, in part to provide a vehicle for Valley-based concerns and programming. It has been adopted as SCAG's 15th planning subregion, and also designated as a subregion of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA [Metro]) through which it has developed the *San Fernando Valley Mobility Matrix*.

The San Fernando Valley COG's regional geography includes the San Fernando Valley Census County Division portions of the City and County of Los Angeles, the entire cities of Burbank, Glendale, San Fernando and Santa Clarita.

SCAG undertakes a variety of planning and policy initiatives on behalf of the greater region, in coordination with its members and stakeholders. SCAG worked with Metro, elected officials and local jurisdictions in Los Angeles County to develop the

<sup>4</sup> SCAG 2012-2035 RTP/SCS, Growth Projections, p.10 - Period covered is 2008-2035



California State Senate, President Pro Tem Daryl Steinberg addressing the Southern California Association of Governments Regional Council regarding Senate Bill 375 (2008)

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS SUBREGION		
Projected Population Growth		
2008	2020	2035
2,005,000	2,145,000	2,346,000
Projected Household Growth		
2008	2020	2035
677,000	752,000	836,000
Source: Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)		

Fig. 2 - SFV COG Subregion - Projected Growth

*2012–2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy*, a long-range plan that improves overall mobility, reduces GHGs and enhances the quality of life for the region's residents.

Approved by state and federal agencies in June 2012, the plan includes \$180 billion in transportation projects for Los Angeles County. The 2012-2035 RTP/SCS is guided by, and incorporates all projects from Metro's own Long-Range Transportation Plan.

A Metro proposition expected to appear on the November 2016 ballot, would provide up to \$120 billion to fund many of the projects in the Regional Transportation Plan. This is in addition to such other federal, state and local funds as may become available.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### *Northeast San Fernando Valley*

The northeast San Fernando Valley, as defined, covers 189 (78) square miles<sup>5</sup> and in 2013 was home to 407,129 residents.<sup>6</sup> It is located in the geographic San Fernando Valley, an urban-suburban region of nearly two million residents. To many, the area is simply referred to as “The Valley.” And in this role it has developed an iconic status for its entertainment industry and pop culture roots.

## THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

The San Fernando Valley (Valley) is topographically defined by mountain ranges on all sides, and is bordered on the south by Mulholland Drive—a scenic highway that traverses the ridges of the Santa Monica Mountain range. Over 65 percent of the Valley’s land and 80 percent of its population is situated in the City of Los Angeles. The state-designated San Fernando Valley Statistical District<sup>7</sup> circumscribes the area that is within the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles. The Valley makes up 47 percent of the City’s population and 65 percent of its land area. The Northeast Valley has 11 percent of the City’s population and 15 percent of the land.

There are six cities included in the federally-designated San Fernando Valley Census County Division: Burbank, Calabasas, Glendale, Hidden Hills, Los Angeles and San Fernando. Not included in the CCD are the neighboring cities of Agoura Hills and Westlake Village, as they are situated to the west of Calabasas between the Valley and the Ventura County line.

In 1874, San Fernando became the Valley’s first organized community, thus earning the title “First City of the Valley.” San Fernando lays claim to having “accessible city services, a responsive city government, low business taxes and a range of programs for all ages.” San Fernando, at 2.4 square miles, has a rich cultural history and a population of 23,830.<sup>8</sup>

The Valley was annexed by the City of Los Angeles in 1915 as part of an expanding water system. Nearly all of the Northeast communities were included. The City of San Fernando opted out, and

5 For data consistency, includes a 111 square mile census tract that comprises a major watershed in the Angeles National Forest

6 U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Area Analysis of Census Tract Block Groups, Mulholland Institute, 2016

7 See California Government Code, Section 11093

8 U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Area Analysis of Census Tract Block Groups, Mulholland Institute, 2016

became an island, surrounded on all four sides by the ever-expanding City of Los Angeles.

Valley residents live in every type of housing, ranging from post-WWII bungalows and higher-density multi-family complexes to sprawling ranch style estates. Overall public inputs suggest these residents cherish their single-family neighborhoods and suburban lifestyle more than almost anything else.

Originally built as higher-end housing, many of the area’s mid-century neighborhoods feature large homes set on estate-sized rural properties, particularly in the hills and equestrian areas. Celebrity-owned ranches were commonplace in the Valley in the early 20th Century. Many are still in residence to this very day.

The Valley was home to John Wayne, Bob Hope, W.C. Fields, Kevin Spacey, James Cagney, Roy Rogers & Dale Evans, Lassie, Lucille Ball & Desi Arnez, Marilyn Monroe, Natalie Wood, Steve McQueen, Clint Walker, Robert Taylor & Barbara Stanwyck, Andy Devine, and a host of other movie and television stars. It served as a convenient getaway for nearby Hollywood and the studios to the southeast. Its ridges, trails and mountains were also a natural backdrop for any number of movies and television shows.

## CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The general consensus favors enhancement of the Northeast’s main thoroughfares, corridors and commercial centers as the key strategy for bringing in new employment and prosperity, along with retail and visitor activity. Residents want to shorten the distance they have to travel to access a full array of amenities. They want to work toward a variety of shopping, dining, recreation and entertainment opportunities—available locally.

Communities change over time, and risk decline and obsolescence if they lack a vision or lose their sense of direction. Northeast stakeholders are enthusiastic about enhancing their communities. The key, they all agree, will be in collaborative implementation—coordinating existing assets and opportunities, maintaining dialog with one another, with persistent focus on the goals and strategy.

## UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Owing to its rural and industrial background, the Northeast Valley has not received the investment in public infrastructure and amenities enjoyed by other communities in the City of Los Angeles. The area has had to endure extremely heavy truck traffic in serving the mining, excavation, landfill and major industrial needs of the region.

The City of San Fernando is the notable exception. Their independence has allowed their stakeholders to engage in hands-on local government. The benefits of being home to the County Courts, San Fernando Regional Pool Facility and the improvements on Maclay Street are but three examples of bringing quality development to a local Town Center.

In the Los Angeles portion, many of the streets—particularly residential—have little or no lighting at night, and lack street trees to give relief from the heat island effect during peak summer temperatures. There has been insufficient street maintenance, a lack of proper sidewalks in many areas, and insufficient attention paid to stormwater runoff and capture.

The area demographics indicate a high propensity for the use of public transportation. Unfortunately, except for the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink station, there are no major dedicated rail lines other than bus routes.

### VALLEY DEMOGRAPHICS

With the demographic shifts of the last several decades also come changes in the social and economic fabric of each neighborhood. Differing cultures, lifestyles, preferences and needs place ever-changing demands on suburban centers. In some—particularly poorer—neighborhoods this results in crime, clutter and deterioration. These conditions leave an unavoidable impression on visitors and passers-by. And more importantly, they

drive down values and the morale of residents in the adjacent communities.

The Northeast San Fernando Valley is a diverse area, with a very high proportion of minority residents. In part, this is due to its history and the origins of housing in the area. It is also a product of the comparatively modest housing costs. A large number of residents are first generation immigrants; others are entry-level homeowners; and many have familial ties in the neighborhoods of the Northeast.

At 72.4 percent, the Northeast Valley has 30 percent more Hispanic/Latino population than the Valley as a whole at 42.3 percent. The African American population at 3.2 percent is less than the Valley generally at 3.8 percent. Asian population Valley-wide stands at 11.0 percent contrasted to 7.6 percent in the Northeast. The Northeast is a noteworthy enclave for emerging populations, and an excellent “accelerator” for minority businesses. These demographic trends add to the rich tapestry of life in Valley communities. The Northeast’s median family income at \$58,338 tends toward the lower range when compared to the Valley-wide median of \$74,590. The percent in poverty<sup>9</sup> is at 15 percent versus 11.4 percent in the overall Valley.<sup>10</sup>

9 \$23,550 Poverty Level for a family of four in Los Angeles County 2013

10 U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Area Analysis of Census Tract Block Groups, Mulholland Institute, 2016

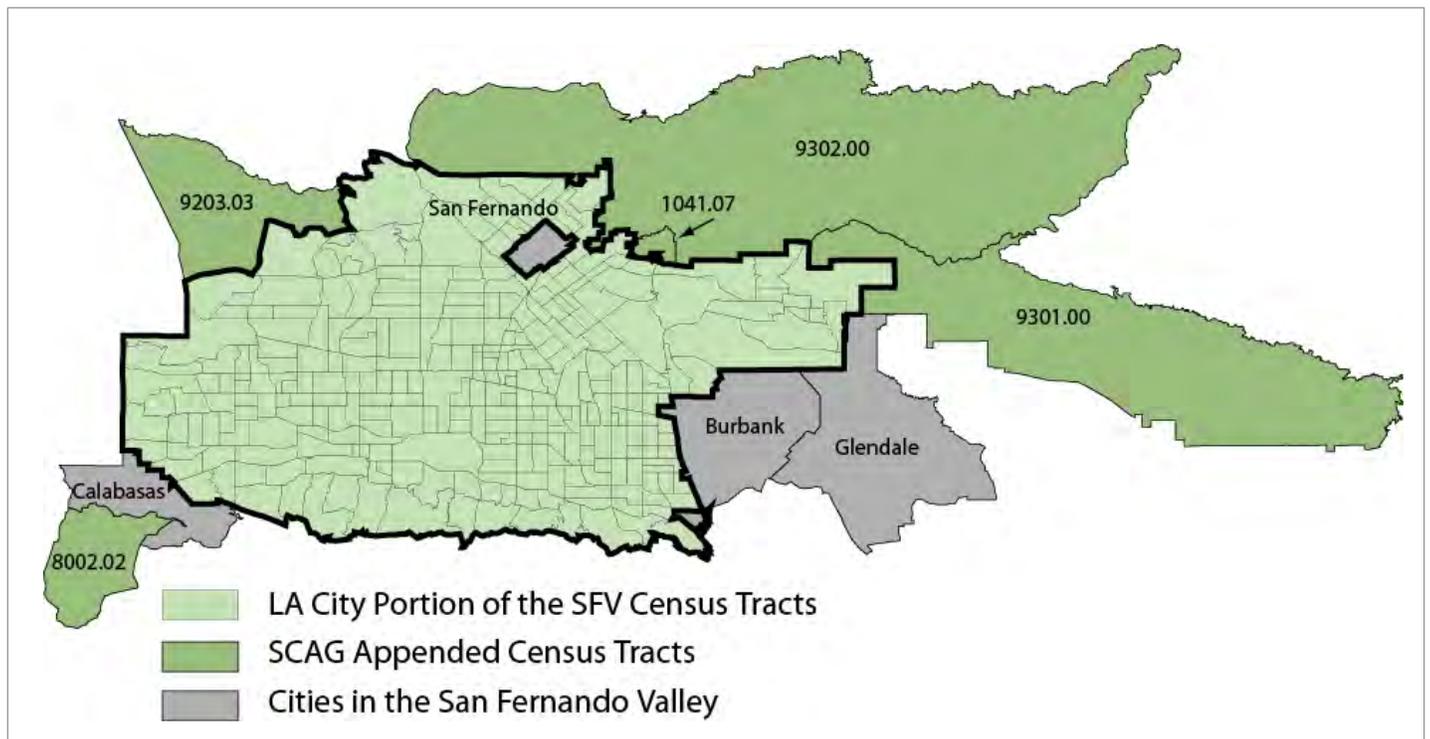


Fig. 3 - San Fernando Valley Census County Division

Source: San Fernando Valley Economic Research Center, Daniel Blake, PhD; Cal State University Northridge; Mulholland Institute

## NORTHEAST VALLEY DISADVANTAGES

- Poverty and lack of capital
- Perception of high crime
- Poor aesthetics
- City of Los Angeles gross receipts tax.
- Expensive and time-consuming development and redevelopment process
- Low housing affordability
- Lack of a variety of housing stock
- Shortage of modern commercial and industrial space
- Overabundance of obsolete commercial and retail space
- Insufficient retail/shopping facilities
- Shrinking manufacturing sector
- Lack of services and other amenities
- Inadequate social, cultural and entertainment amenities
- Poor image and economic attraction
- Lack of a workforce preparedness
- Higher ratio of poor educational attainment
- Lack of coordinated public, non-profit and private approach to reaching potential
- Deteriorating infrastructure from heavy truck traffic and industrial demands
- Inadequate code enforcement in residential and heavy industrial areas.
- Lack of lighting, curbs, gutters, storm drainage and landscape in many areas.



San Fernando Mall's deserted storefronts compound a less-than-optimal tenant mix

- Competition with other Los Angeles neighborhoods for limited resources
- Absence of personnel focused exclusively on the Northeast Valley

## NORTHEAST VALLEY ADVANTAGES<sup>11</sup>

- Strong regional economic base
- Local market of over 400,000 residents
- Proximity to the largest consumer market in the United States
- Geographic location - proximity to major metropolitan business centers and markets
- Potential industry, cluster development and re-purposing of remediation sites Access to regional supply chains, service providers and the Los Angeles central business district
- Close to important business clusters
- Existing goods movement infrastructure
- Proximity to transportation infrastructure: freeways, airports, rails and ports
- Diverse regional labor pool; professional, general and semi-skilled
- Proximity to a variety of world-class education and training resources
- Young families and labor force
- Eligibility for economic development initiatives
- Comparatively affordable housing
- Access to a variety of regional cultural recreation and entertainment facilities
- Low-density development and rural communities
- Equestrian lifestyle communities and facilities

## CHALLENGES

- Commute times/flows, distance from center
- Time taken to develop new projects
- Creating opportunity without redevelopment agencies
- Dense population compared to county

## OPPORTUNITIES

- East Valley Transit Corridor, as proposed
- Remediate and re-purpose industrial sites
- Promote economic justice
- AB 32 and SB 375 resource potential
- San Fernando Valley Council of Governments as a resource vehicle

<sup>11</sup> *Economic Development Assessment & Strategy* Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation, Valley Economic Alliance, Mulholland Institute, 2003

## SECTION 3 - PROSPERITY THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Commercial Revitalization

Economic stagnation is the primary reason why communities decline, especially in their commercial areas. The reason is simple: residents and visitors are repelled when an area is not well maintained or is unsafe. Decline breeds further decline, and the soul of the community gradually slips away.

Consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building. Or, consider a sidewalk. Some litter accumulates. Soon, more

litter accumulates. Eventually, people even start leaving bags of trash—or breaking into cars.<sup>1</sup>

Aesthetic decline is easy to recognize, and it makes a statement about the larger community—one that drives away customers and visitors. We have all seen people cringe at the thought of visiting certain run-down communities. The same effect applies to those who might invest or locate businesses in the Northeast Valley. They are less likely to invest in a community that appears to be declining.

Enlightened decision-making is the key to using public policy decisions for the betterment of the overall community. Not all decisions are easy, and most involve some sort of trade-offs. Location is *everything* in real estate, and the more wisely we can use properties near existing assets, the better.

<sup>1</sup> James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, "Broken Windows" The Atlantic Monthly, (March 1982)



Streetscape improvements

Although the community surveys from this process show a high degree community loyalty overall, many negative perceptions still exist. Stakeholders need to be empowered, to heighten their dedication to local stewardship. Public areas, streets and sidewalks, deserve the same care as residents give to their own front yards.

### COMMERCIAL CENTERS

In addition to the Transit-Oriented Development envisioned in the RTP and the SCS, the Northeast Valley has significant opportunities in the creation of commercial activity centers. Both San Fernando and Panorama City have significant office space that could be used to leverage their markets. The relative labor costs associated with entry-level workers in this region, could be an advantage and an excellent starting point if proper training infrastructure and career development were made available. Both communities are great examples of what may be possible, especially in implementing Pedestrian-Oriented Development (POD).

### COMPLETE STREETS

The California Complete Streets Act of 2008 and 2014 directs Caltrans to:

*The Department provides for the needs of travelers of all ages and abilities in all planning, programming, design, construction, operations, and maintenance activities and products on the State Highway System.<sup>2</sup>*

Caltrans develops integrated multimodal projects in balance with community goals, plans, and values. Motorists, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit travelers are facilitated by creating complete streets beginning early in system planning, and continuing through project delivery, maintenance, and operations.

Complete streets provide increased transportation and travel choices, giving people the option to avoid traffic congestion. They increase the overall capacity of the transportation network by providing accessible and efficient multimodal travel options, and connections between residences, schools, parks, public transportation, offices, and retail destinations.

From a private sector perspective, complete streets provide a framework for commerce and community activities. A full array of goods, services and amenities is important, as is the need for aesthetically-pleasing streetscape and adequate infrastructure. Vibrant civic spaces attract patrons and visitors.

Very important to this strategy is what effect complete streets have on reduction of GHGs and

Improved air quality—replacing vehicular trips with non-motorized or public transit trips.

Conflicts with existing plans and policies pose challenges for implementation of Complete Streets strategies. For example, each local jurisdiction has an adopted General Plan that includes a circulation element. Many of these plans were developed prior to the California Complete Streets Act of 2008 and primarily focus on prioritizing auto travel. Although



The San Fernando Mall has the necessary configuration, streetscape and location, next to the Sylmar/San Fernando Metro-link Station, to become an ideal Transit Oriented District

a number of jurisdictions within the county have updated their circulation elements to be consistent with state law, many local jurisdictions have yet to do so. This is complicated by the fact that local jurisdictions may face tight budgetary constraints.

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Nowhere is Northeast Valley's diversity more evident than in the business districts, and the Central Business Districts (CBDs) along the Van Nuys Boulevard and San Fernando Road corridors. With an eclectic mix of shops and restaurants, these boulevards are a showcase of retail, culinary, and ethnic diversity.

Commercial properties certainly involve more than retail, but it is the retail corridors that serve as gateways to each community. This is the first impression of the area, how visitors and passers-by judge it—and what might attract them to return, to shop and to spend time in the area. This, in turn provides employment, vitality and economic prosperity for local residents and businesses.

In the Northeast Valley there is excellent potential for redevelopment through community and private-

<sup>2</sup> Caltrans, Deputy Directive-64-R2

investor partnerships. Stakeholder organizations can join with private developers to revitalize the connection with the local community. Groundwork is needed in advance, establishing working relationships with local residents, organizations and Neighborhood Councils. Those interested in investing in community renewal and commercial development are thus able to develop invaluable allies to assist them in the entitlement and permitting process.

The Northeast Valley is situated along the Metrolink Antelope Valley rail line. There are two main rail lines that were originally zoned and developed as the Valley’s main industrial corridors. These clusters extend from Chatsworth to Glendale, and from Glendale to Sylmar.

Although no longer as dependant on rail as they once were, these manufacturing corridors support high-wage service and production employment for many local residents. In spite of losses to U.S. manufacturing, the County of Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley still have strong industrial bases. Even in times of economic recession, the regional industrial real estate market is robust, with a vacancy rate at two percent in Q1 2016, compared to 1.5

Smaller local jurisdictions, such as San Fernando, are considered to be more nimble and user-friendly where higher quality community-friendly projects are concerned.

Traffic in Los Angeles County makes it difficult to recruit employees from distant areas. However, with funding from Propositions A and C, and Measure R, Metro has been able to develop an impressive network of transit options, especially suited for commuters. Transit-Oriented Development is key to future realization of the promise of these projects.

In spite of recent drought conditions, water is relatively abundant and provides quality from well-managed systems. San Fernando’s water supply comes primarily from dedicated wells. Imported water is purchased from Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California to supplement the local ground water supplies. There is also an emergency connection to the City from the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power system.

Water and power are reasonably priced from the city-owned Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and power from Southern California Edison in San Fernando.

Study Area	Number of People Who Commute to Area	Number of Residents Working in Area	Number of Residents Commuting Elsewhere	Percent of Residents Working in Area
San Fernando	5,944	283	7,163	3.8%
Pacoima	2,959	283	10,553	2.6%
Panorama Mall	5,508	297	13,273	2.2%
Sun Valley	13,864	379	6,933	5.2%
<b>Overall Total for Focus Areas</b>	<b>28,275</b>	<b>1,242</b>	<b>37,922</b>	<b>3.2%</b>

Fig. 4 - Share of Local Communities Working in Area

percent for the total Valley, and year over year, one percent for the east valley in Q1 2015. The asking price for Q1 2016 was 71¢/sq. ft. versus 69¢/sq. ft. in Q1 2015.<sup>3</sup>

The lack of modern industrial space and the scarcity of available industrially-zoned land is a major barrier to effective business attraction. When this is added to lengthy and sometimes hostile entitlement processes, it tends to discourage investment.

3 San Fernando Valley and Ventura County Market Report Q1 2015, Q1 2016, Collier International

### REDUCING VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED BY BETTER MATCHING JOBS AND WORKERS

Perhaps the primary mode of achieving the GHG reduction goals of the SCAG RTP/SCS in the Northeast San Fernando Valley will be through the reduction of vehicle trips throughout the region. To achieve this goal, destinations such as housing, employment, amenities, and necessary services should be brought into closer proximity to each other. The new planning model is charged with reducing the number of vehicle trips that workers who commute to and from these communities

undertake. This can be done directly by shortening the distances between these destinations, or, alternatively, by ensuring that public transit modes can provide the reliability, accessibility, affordability, and usability necessary to make these trips.

Figure 4 shows the number of workers in each of the focus areas who are working within the area they live. On average, only three percent of the residents in each of the five centroids (and no more than 5.2 percent) actually work within the centroid where they live. While this is driven in part by the idea that these are realistically “walkable” or “bikeable radii,” the reality is that increasing this number will produce precisely the kind of returns on our economic investments that will promote more sustainable communities. This jobs-housing balance is an important goal of the SCS, and of this strategy.

Even for those workers who commute outside their immediate areas, the key is to ensure that the number of these workers who live in High-Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs) is maximized, so that their commute can be handled by the transit infrastructure rather than private vehicle trips. Not only will this advance the goals of transportation demand management by reducing vehicle trips, but it will also result in lower GHG emissions because of less vehicle miles traveled.

Often the approach when this set of issues arises, is to focus on jobs-housing balance where the number of housing units and employment opportunities are measured and the results compared. What is lost in that approach in this case is the 97 percent of individuals who live in one community and work in another. In this analysis, the attention is on the jobs-resident mix, where the attributes of workers who live in each area are compared to the employment opportunities present there.

To achieve a better jobs-worker balance, this strategy identifies approaches that can allow for better alignment between the skills of the workforce residing in each centroid and employers who are seeking those skills. This involves two basic strategies: (1) through land use planning, by creating mixed-use spaces that will encourage local employment in their commercial sections; and (2) by establishing nodes and workforce training infrastructure in key locations where the potential for attracting new employers who can hire residents is maximized. Since these types of spaces are limited, it is crucial to also identify the key transit infrastructure that must be added to accommodate these employment clusters.

## HIGH QUALITY TRANSIT AREAS (HQTAs)

At the heart of many of the new opportunities for improving sustainability in the region is the development and enhancement of the two High Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs) in the form of the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor (ESFVTC) and the San Fernando Road Transit Corridor proposed herein. These two transportation corridors present significant opportunities for unique economic development strategies, although each one has its own set of unique features.

All five of the focus areas in this strategy are connected by these corridors. Four of the five areas are closely aligned with Transit-Oriented Development: (1) the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station area; (2) the San Fernando Road and Mall Area TOD; (3) the Van Nuys Boulevard – Pacoima Center TOD area; and Panorama Mall and Shopping Area TOD. The economics of opportunity in each of these areas is discussed in detail in Section 4.

## STRATEGY FOR BUILDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The overarching goal of this project is to implement the vision of SCAG's RTP/SCS by “focusing the majority of new housing and job growth in high-quality transit areas—and other opportunity areas in existing main streets, downtowns, and commercial corridors, resulting in an improved jobs-housing balance and more opportunity for Transit-Oriented Development.”

One of the necessary foundations for implementing this goal is the identification, creation, and maintenance of High Quality Transit Areas (HQTAs). The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority has recently designated a critical part of the needed overall transit infrastructure in the Northeast San Fernando Valley as a priority project—the East San Fernando Valley Transit Corridor. As proposed, a rail line will be constructed that will serve as an HQTA link for four of the five focus areas targeted in this strategy, providing key connections to Metrolink in the north, and the Orange Line to the south, as shown in Figure 19.



Compact Development adjacent to Orange Line transit hub in Warner Center