

los angeles placemaking academy



June 3rd & 4th, 2009



Gilbert Lindsay Plaza

Gilbert Lindsay Plaza is a 5-acre landscaped pedestrian plaza situated along Figueroa Street that was developed and designed as the major urban outdoor amenity of the Los Angeles Convention Center 1993-94 expansion project. This Plaza serves multiple purposes: pedestrian entry to the Convention Center-West Hall; staging and drop-off area for busses; public open space; and outdoor special event space for Convention Center or Staples Center activities. Named in honor of the first African-American elected to the L.A. City Council, the plaza was dedicated in 1995 with the unveiling of the Gilbert Lindsay memorial tribute (shown below).



SITE CONTEXT

Gilbert Lindsay Plaza is located immediately east of the Convention Center-West Hall and south of Staples Center. The adjacent Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District (blue areas on map below) includes L.A. Live, the 54-story Convention Headquarters Hotel & Condos, and the future Figueroa Central and Figueroa South mixed-use development projects. 5,000 housing units and 1,400 hotel rooms (existing, under construction or entitled) are within ¼ mile of the Plaza, as are the Metro Blue Line Pico Station and several bus stops serving Metro and DASH lines.

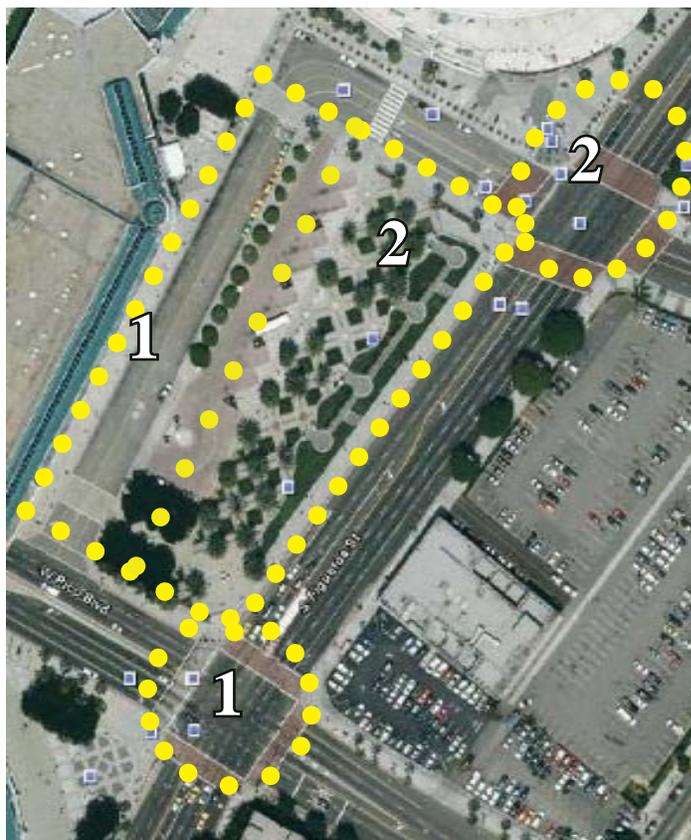


THE PROJECT

According to an October 1988 CRA/LA Board Memo, the plaza was designed to have three zones: a landscaped and seating area for the public located adjacent to Figueroa Street; an open area with palm trees and decorative pavers which could be used for exhibition space; and a paved exhibit area located closest to the Convention Center structure. The same Board Memo also noted CRA/LA staff concerns that the proposed tall landscaped berms and decorative metal gates along Figueroa Street, as shown in the Schematic Design Drawings, could make the plaza seem inaccessible and unwelcoming to the public.

Gilbert Lindsay Plaza will be redesigned in the near future. \$2.8 Million has been allocated thus far (\$0.8 from LACC and \$2.0 Million from the \$30 Million Figueroa Corridor grant awarded through the Prop 1C Infill Infrastructure Program). Potential components for the redesign include a stormwater retention and filtration system demonstration project via the Bureau of Sanitation, as well as a bike station facility.

Place Evaluation Site Map



RESEDA

The Site is anchored by an Orange Line BRT station, a fixed guide rapid transit system. While the site is part of the greater Tarzana Crossing area, which is approximately 1300 acres in size, the focus of the Placemaking Assessment/Innovations will be the sites proximate to the Orange Line.

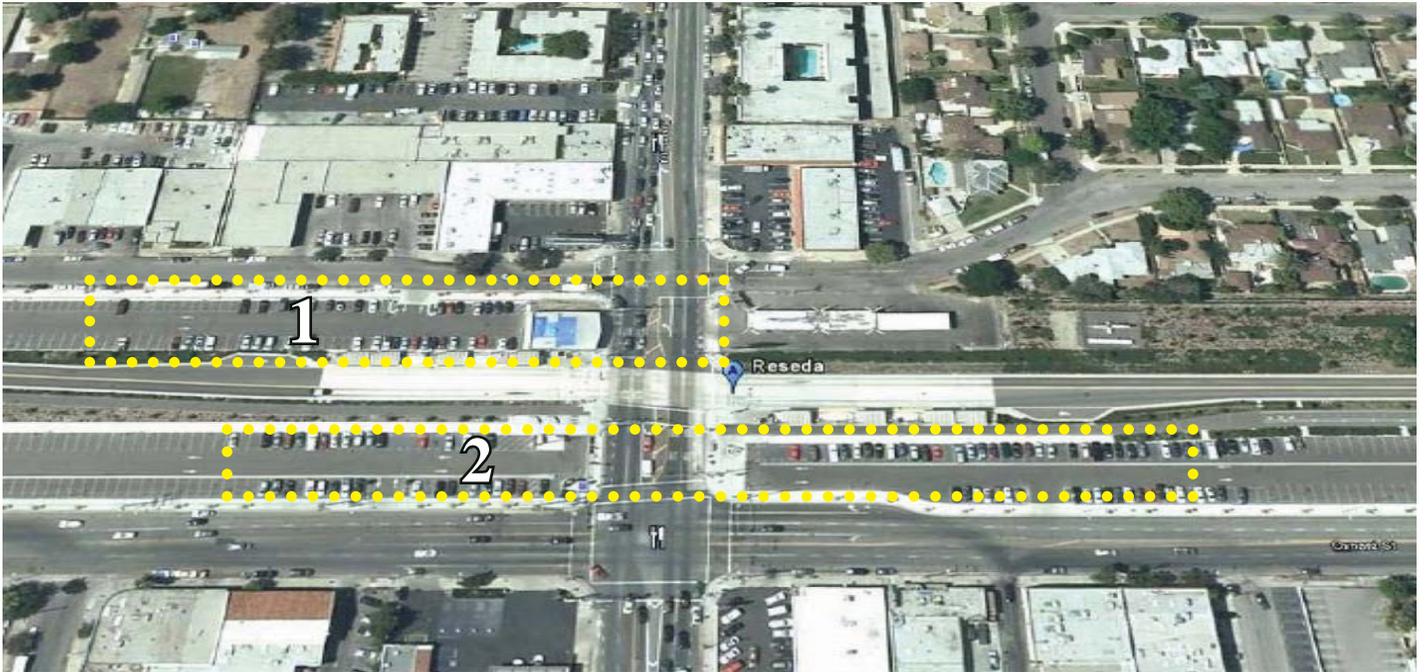
Tarzana Crossing was created by the local Tarzana Neighborhood Council. Its Land Use subcommittee expressed a desire to establish a new pedestrian-friendly mixed use village in Tarzana for the area located within one-quarter mile in all directions from the Reseda Boulevard Station of the Orange Line and creating a community vision for the future development and redevelopment of this village.

THE ISSUES

Using the Power of Ten the placemaking assessment will consider the following:

- What key land use features should be brought into the new vision?
- What opportunities exist to maintain the light industrial uses?
- What key physical features would enhance and attract more Orange Line riders: are there adequate bike facilities?
- How can the existing uses be enhanced?
- Are there opportunities for temporary uses to attract crowds?
- Are there groups and organizations that could be brought into the design of open spaces?
- Where are key open spaces to be located?
- Are there key views to be preserved?
- What opportunities exist in the immediate vicinity of the Station/Stop where streets could be reconfigured for stormwater filtration, road diets or other techniques that provide a "setting" for the Station?

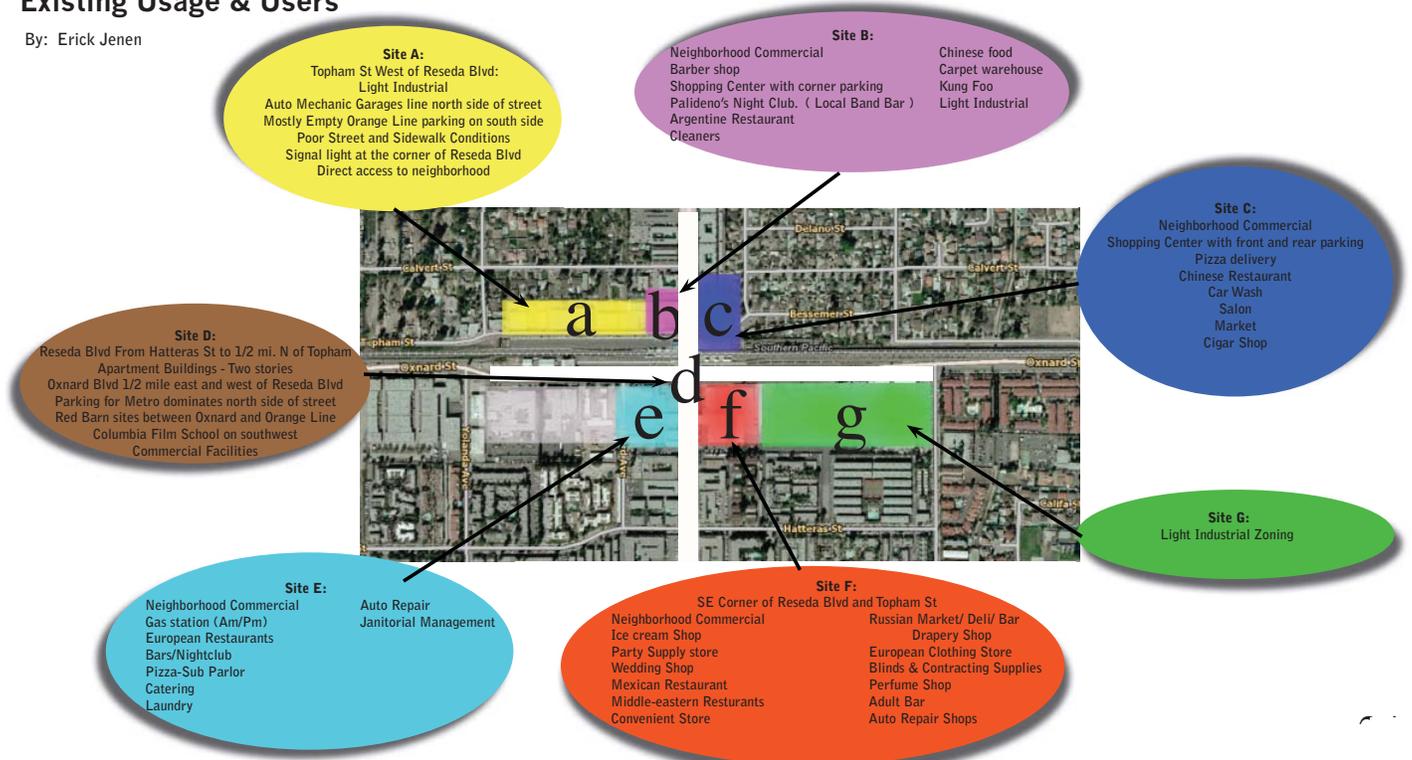




Place Evaluation Site Map

Existing Usage & Users

By: Erick Jenen



Boyle Heights

CONTEXT

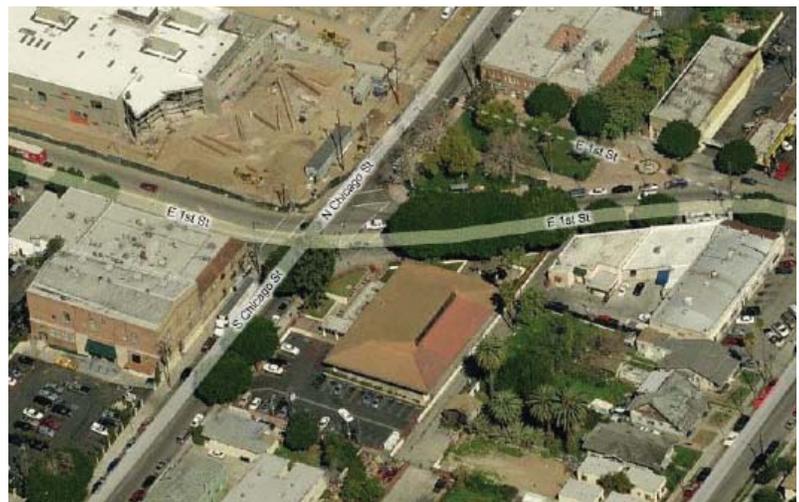
The library facility is located on the 1st Street commercial corridor in the middle of Boyle Heights, one of Los Angeles' first streetcar suburbs. The new Metro Gold Line light rail travels under 1st Street, with a station two blocks to the east at Soto Street. The other three corners of the intersection of 1st and Chicago Streets are also occupied by public facilities, including the LANI Park, the CD14 Constituent Service Center, and the new Hollenbeck Police Station.

BEN FRANKLIN LIBRARY

The Benjamin Franklin Branch Library was founded in 1889 as the Boyle Heights Library Association, located in a succession of storefronts in Boyle Heights. The first permanent home for the branch was designed and built in 1915 as the Carnegie Library, located at the corner of 1st and Chicago Streets. Serving a diverse community, the branch carried materials for readers whose languages included English, Spanish, Russian, Yiddish, Polish, and others.

In 1975 the library was demolished and replaced by the current structure, which replicated the branch library in Exposition Park.

More recently, the library installed a fence to address issues of vagrancy and vandalism.



THE PROJECT

The Council Office and the CRA/LA are interested in improving the appearance and pedestrian orientation of the library. Working with the Library Department and Recreation and Parks, the CRA/LA has engaged a landscape architect to prepare conceptual plans for improvements to the landscaping and hardscaping of the facility.

The project intends to explore public improvements or programming for the entire intersection to turn this mini-Civic Center into a vibrant public space.

Place Evaluation Site Map

