

POLICY MOTION

COMMITTEE: Planning & Land Use Management (PLUM)

TITLE: Support for Livable Cities Initiative (LCI)

BACKGROUND:

The LCI Mission is to address the missing middle within LA's housing crisis by unlocking the development of gentle density – 3-5 stories of residential housing over small retail shops – along LA's underutilized commercial corridors transforming them for walkability and livability with added parking. We are collaborating with communities across Los Angeles.

<https://livablecommunitiesinitiative.org/how/>

THE MOTION:

MVCC Supports the efforts of the Livable Cities Initiative, advocating converting underutilized commercial corridors with "gentle" density (3-5 story residential over retail) and transforming the street, providing trees while slowing vehicle traffic and retaining street parking.

DIRECTED TO:

City Clerk -Clerk.CIS@lacity.org

Councilmember- Katy Yaroslavsky CD-5

Councilmember-Traci Park CD-11

ACTION/VOTE COUNT:

Motion by MVCC PLUM Feb 12, 2026

Vote: Five (5) Yes- Blue, Hedge, Paddock, Curry and one (1) community member

Zero (0) No

MVCC Board Meeting,

Motion of approved moved by Director XXX, seconded by Director XXX

Motion of approved by the MVCC Board XX-XX-XX

What is the Livable Communities Initiative?

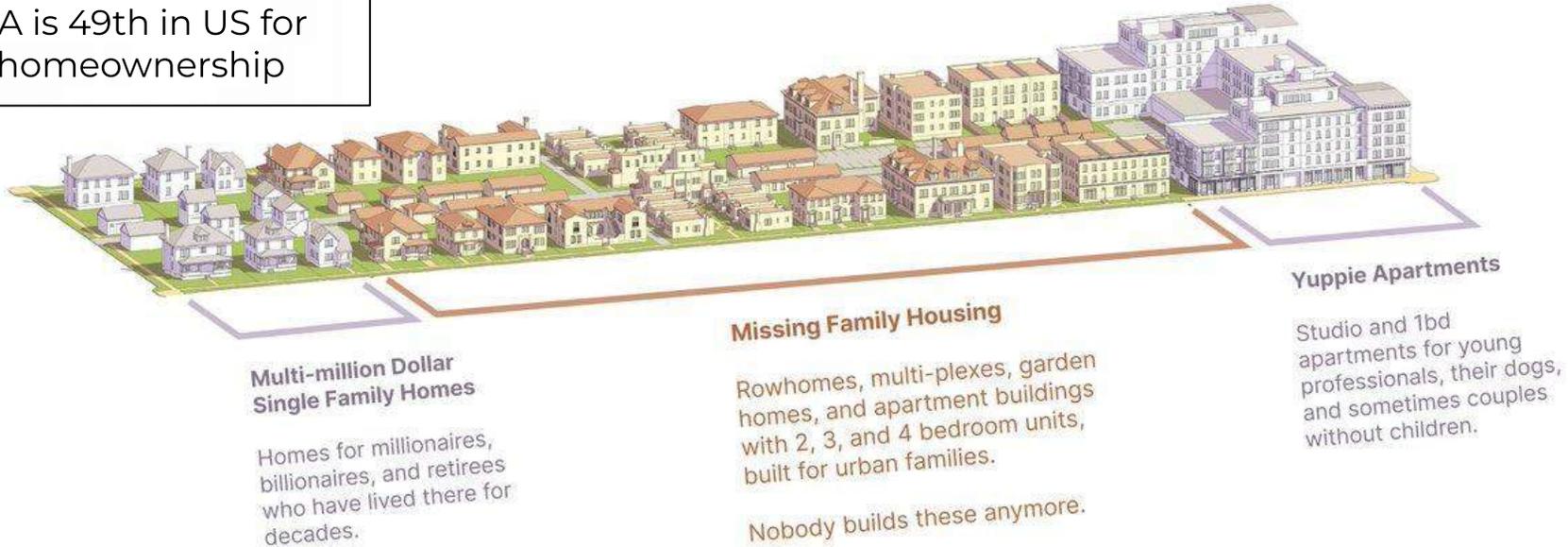
It is a program for neighborhoods to embrace housing that makes the neighborhood better



Livable Communities is a non-profit and Program #131 in LA's Housing Element

Problem: LA is missing 400,000 Starter Homes with no *system* to build it at scale

CA is 49th in US for
homeownership



Our Solution: Livable Communities

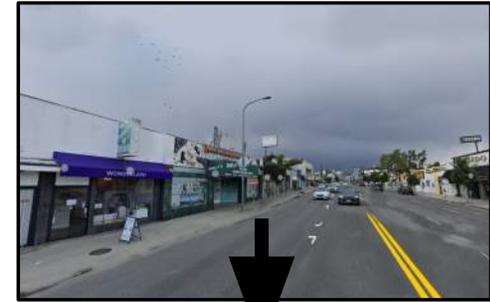
High quality housing in walkable neighborhoods



Residential-over-Retail
Repeatable designs
Built cookie-cutter



High quality
aesthetics



Concentrating on one
street



We can turn an underutilized commercial corridor...



Into this



Dense Housing

Add Gentle Density, 3-5 stories
Residential over retail

Transformed street

Trees
Slow cars
Keep street parking

LCI buildings are high quality Courtyard Buildings with air and light and great ground-floor retail.



Advantages include: High quality architecture that can be replicated for economies of scale. Bright and airy homes and high quality retail spaces that meet daily and weekly needs. Courtyards can self-cool homes and create safe and calm shared green space for quality of life. Affordable, Zero-carbon sustainable homes.

Versus low quality 'double-loaded corridor' buildings that we build today with low light and air and unusable retail.



Drawbacks include: low light, lack of airflow. Poorly designed/no retail. Windowless bedrooms. High carbon, high AC use. No outdoor space. Doesn't require retail for daily/weekly needs (ie, a grocery store); car-dependent.

Part 1: Standard Plans

Parcels on commercial corridors are the same size (by design, this is how cities are laid out.)
The same high-quality building can be replicated on any/all available parcels.
The average block has 20 parcels, and 50% are underutilized.



Same-size parcels along commercial corridors



The **same design** can be reused



Creates charming streetwall

How it works: Cities and/or neighborhoods can create a menu of Standard Plans with accurate visualizations. Neighborhoods can go to a website, pick the ones they like, and the city will pre-entitle them for a Pilot LCI Street.

Part 2: Change the street

Idea: Start with a Parking Ramblas

Adds trees, slows cars for walkability, and adds parking that new residents can rent, and shoppers and visitors can use.

Space can also be used for Farmers Markets and night markets.



Case Study: Upper Larchmont

In 6 months of outreach, we got 100% neighbourhood support:
BID, Larchmont Business Association,
Neighborhood Council, and all the residents associations.

Upper Larchmont has
61 underutilized parcels
RHNA target: **9** developed
LCI target: **50-54**
5X as much housing
Includes family units

PARCEL BUILDABILITY ALONG NORTH LARCHMONT BOULEVARD

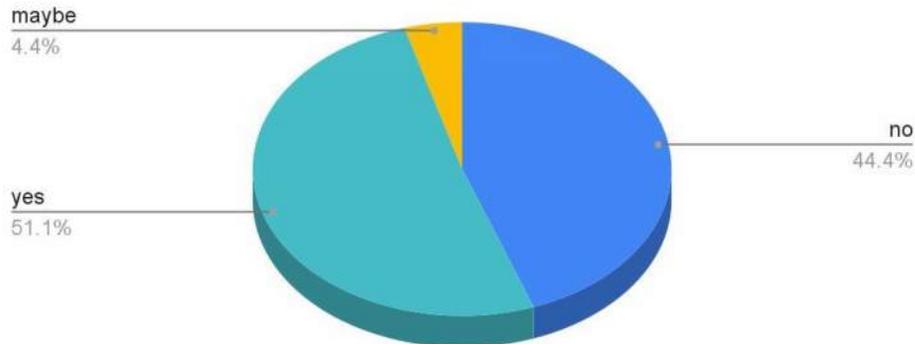


A big question is: who would you want to live here?

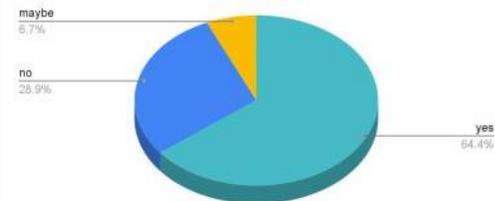
We surveyed every store on Larchmont over 3 days and found that:

- **50% of retail employees want to live in an LCI**
- **64% would ditch cars**
- **75% want to walk or bike to work**

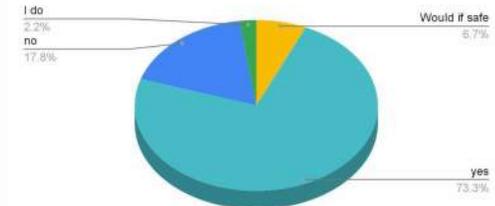
Would you want to live in an apartment above Larchmont?



Would you be willing to ditch your car?



Would you walk or bike to work?



Which style of housing do you prefer?

1. Bright and Airy Studios-3BRs, Courtyard, Retail on ground floor, off-site parking (paid), Rent or Own. Located on a walkable street.



44%

2. Complex with a pool, gym, and parking, near Metro. Rentals.



13%

3. Current plan 507/531: no parking, Studios/1BRs, rentals.



0%

4. Same as #1 - only Modern.



24%

5. SFH - Single Family Home



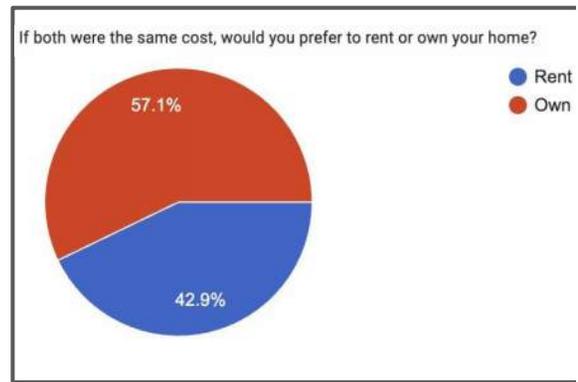
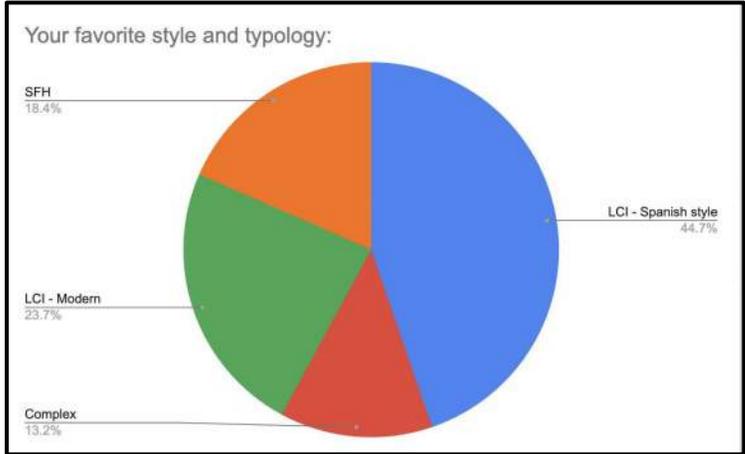
18%

We also found that Employees prefer to own their home.

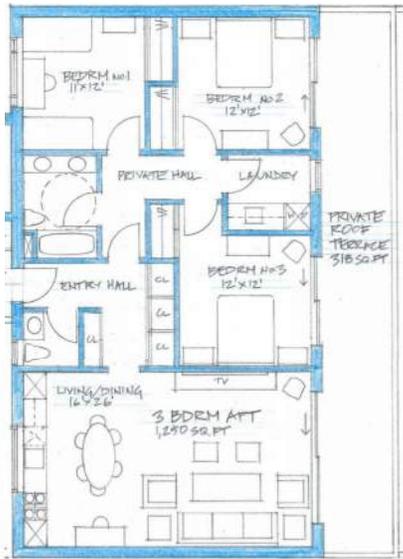
Some wanted SFHs (orange). Some wanted parking/pool/gym (red).

0% wanted the buildings we are building.

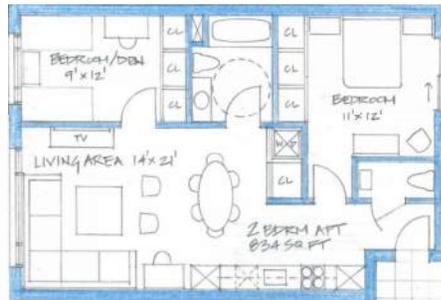
We think the most important stakeholders are buyers/renters – what kind of housing do they want? 70% preferred LCI-style (green-modern; blue-Spanish).



LCI requires a range of affordable sizes and incentivizes attainable homeownership



3 BR - 1250 sqft



2BR - 834 sqft



1BR - 610 sqft

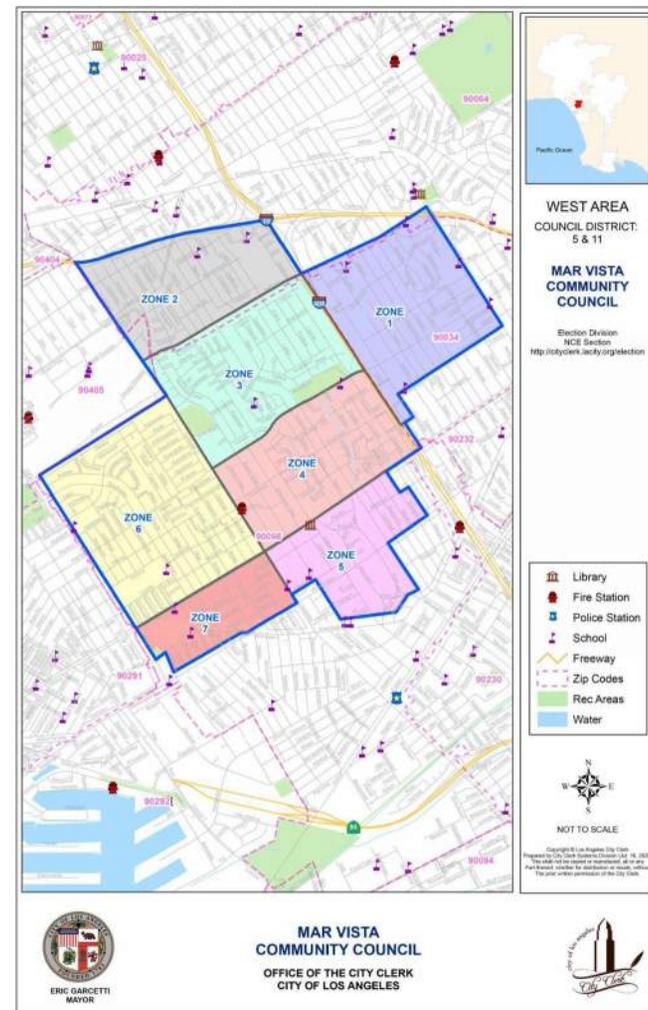


Studio - 460 sqft

**If you are interested in LCI
within your NC boundaries,
we would love to help!**

**We are a nonprofit and our volunteers can help you
create a plan. While we have ideas on the next
slide – Hollywood and Vermont, we believe urban
planning should be fine-grain and
neighborhood-based.**

**We would appreciate your
support for Larchmont 2030!**



These are ideas for your consideration

LCI is community driven, not top down

200-300 miles of LCI = 500k homes, our deficit
It is 2% of LA's 7000 miles of streets

Phase 1

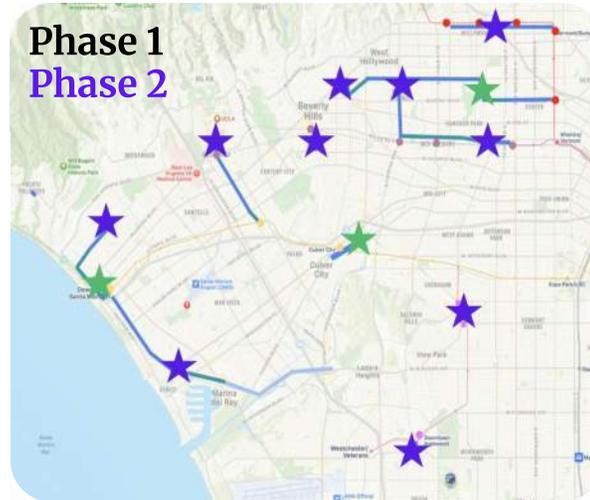
- 3 Communities
- ~3k units

Phase 2

- 9 communities
- ~9k units

Phase 3

- Corridor Network
- ~250k units
- *Expandable to 500k units*





Thank you!

**More info at livablecommunitiesinitiative.org
Contact us at livablecommunitiesla@gmail.com**

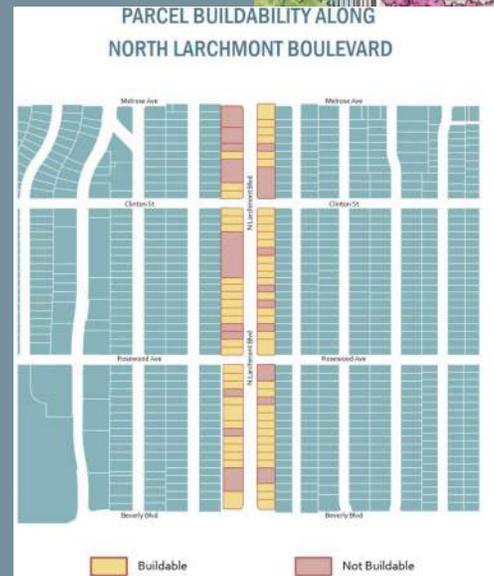
Addendum

What is Larchmont 2030?

It is a plan to unlock gentle density on Upper Larchmont from Beverly to Melrose. The plan has support from every group in the community – BID, LBA, HOAs/residents groups - LUNA, HPHOA, St Andrews Sq.

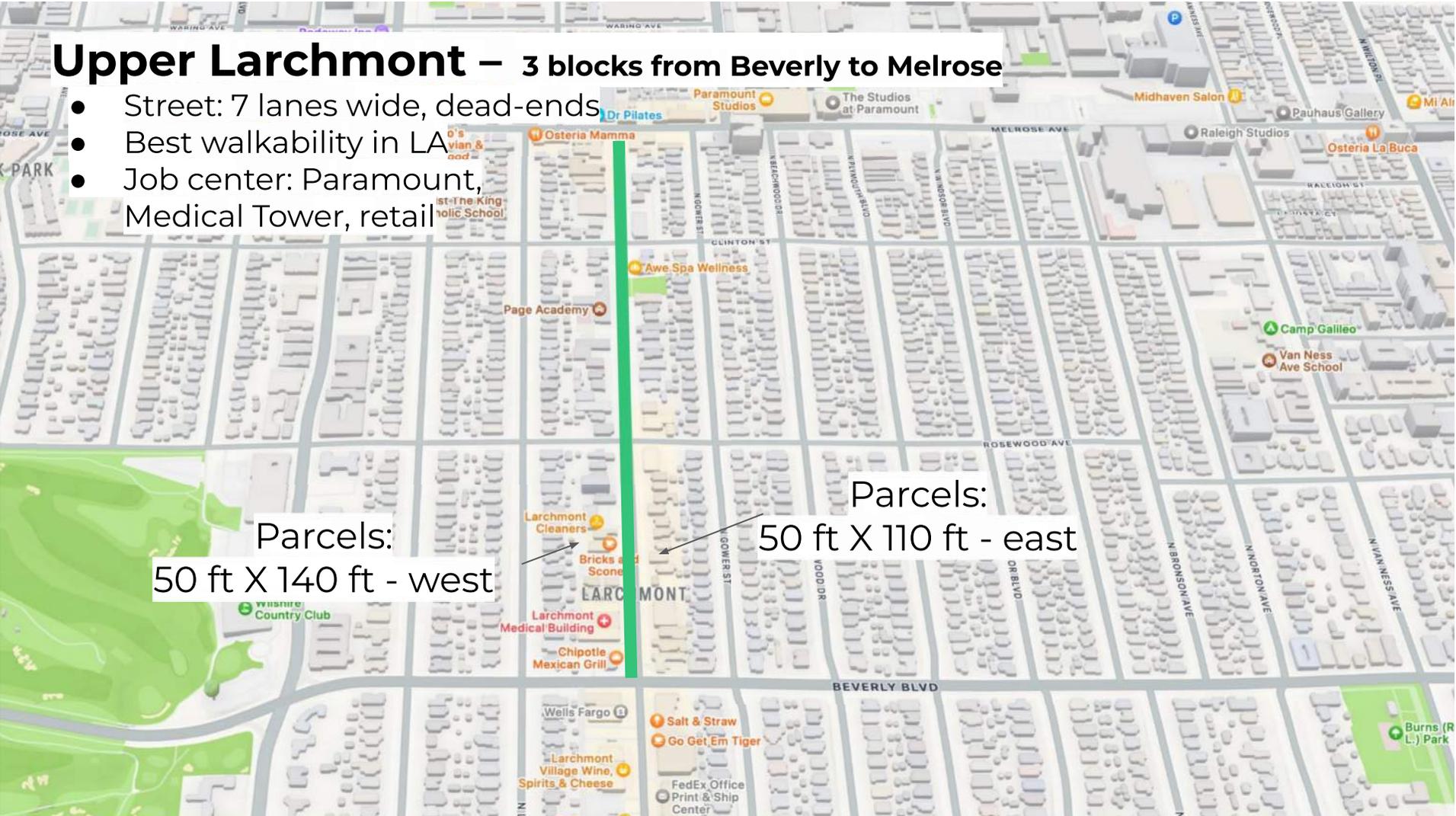
We want to create a Standard Plan that is pre-entitled for the entire block. There are 61 underutilized parcels. We want to facilitate every parcel owner to develop to create a vibrant streetwall like lower Larchmont, adding over 1000 new homes, over 100 new shops, a Parking Ramblas and trees.

We created a step-by-step plan and we are Program #131 in the Housing Element – and now we need the city council to implement it. We welcome your support!



Upper Larchmont – 3 blocks from Beverly to Melrose

- Street: 7 lanes wide, dead-ends
- Best walkability in LA
- Job center: Paramount, Medical Tower, retail



Parcels:
50 ft X 140 ft - west

Parcels:
50 ft X 110 ft - east

FAQs

Are Standard Plans a real thing?







Singapore





Are Standard Plans a one type of architecture?



Design examples

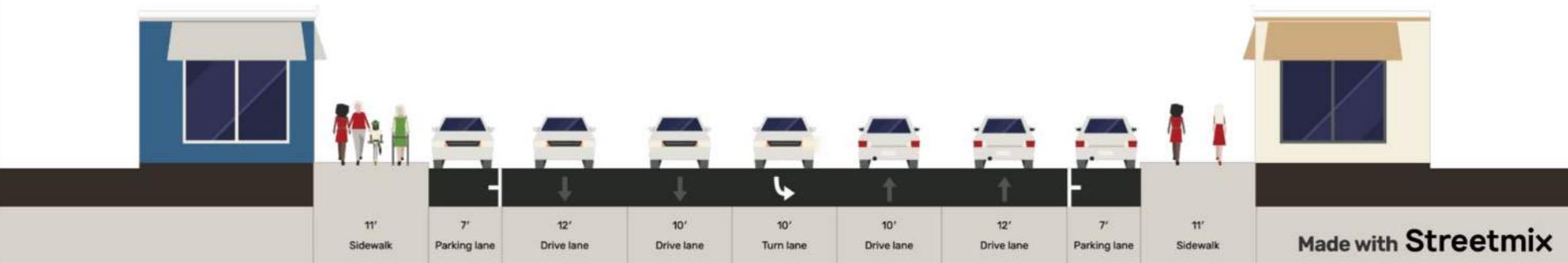




How does the street work?



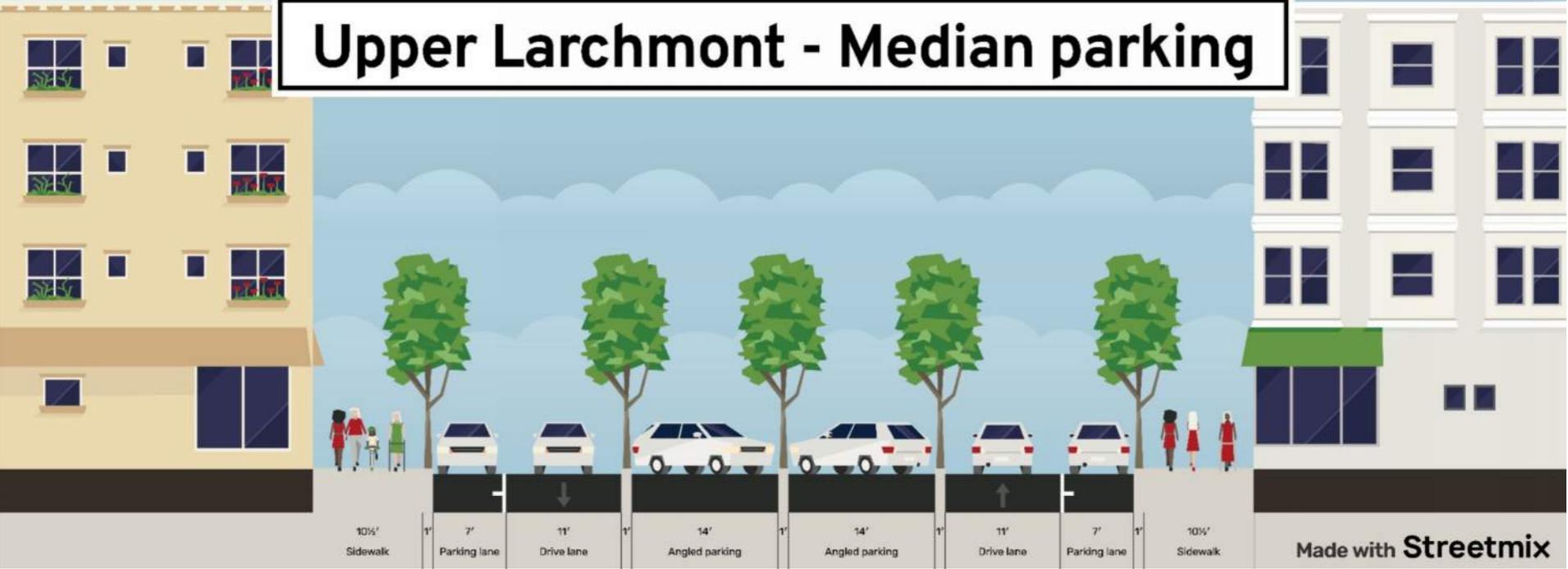
Upper Larchmont - now



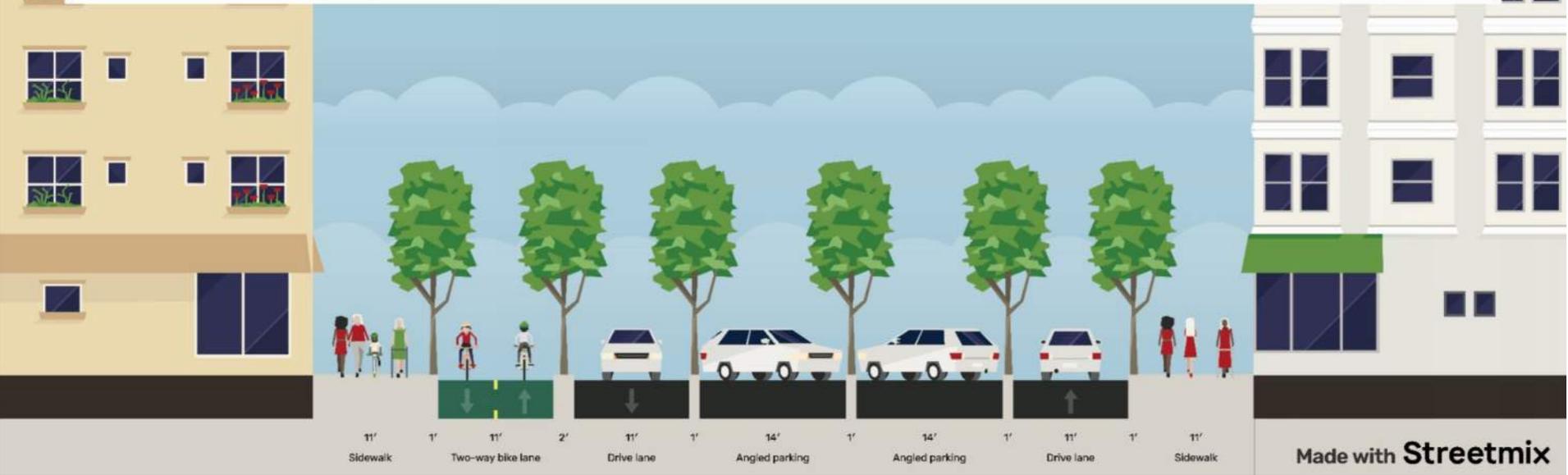
Adding Median Parking



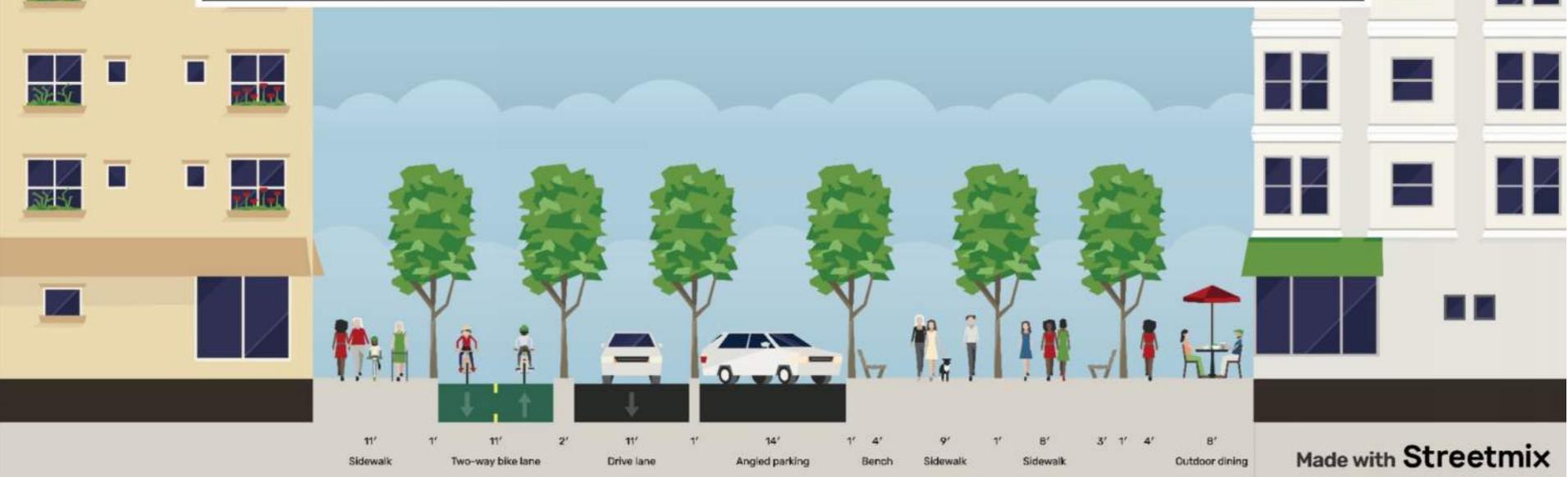
Upper Larchmont - Median parking



Upper Larchmont - Median parking with bike lanes



One Way + Median Parking + Promenade



Made with **Streetmix**

What about cars, groceries, jobs?



Neighborhood Serving Retail

Require ground floor NSR

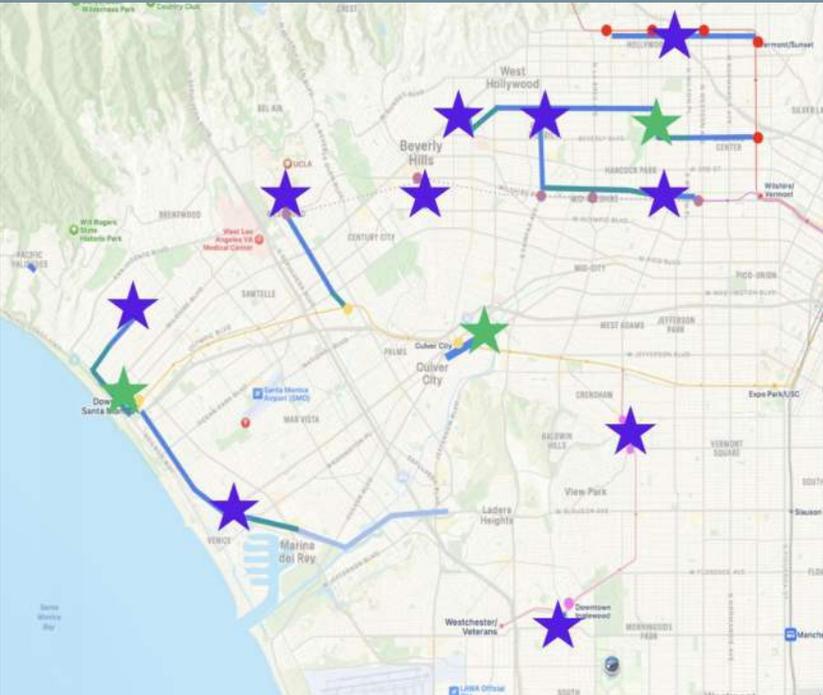


Research-based list of 'daily and weekly needs'

Retail / Amenity	Typical Use Frequency	Population to Support
Grocery Store	Daily to 2-3x/week	5,000-10,000
Coffee Shop	Daily	1,000-2,000
Public Transit Stop	Daily	
Restaurant	2-4x/week	2,000-4,000
Mail Shop	1-2x/week	1,000-2,000
Bookstore	Weekly to Occasionally	3,000-5,000
Credit Union / Bank	Weekly	
Hardware Store	Monthly to Occasionally	5,000-7,500
Pharmacy	Weekly to Monthly	4,000-7,000
Hair Salon / Barber	Monthly to 6 weeks	
Urgent Care Clinic	Occasionally (as needed)	5,000-8,000
Pet Supply Store	Monthly to Weekly	
Clothing Store	Monthly to Quarterly	4,000-6,000
Corner Bar	Weekly	2,000-4,000
Medical Offices	Monthly to Quarterly	5,000
Dry Cleaner / Laundry	Weekly	
Gym	3-5x/week	
Daycare	Daily (for parents)	
Park and Playground	Daily to Weekly	1,000
Library	Weekly	5,000-10,000

Located near jobs and transit

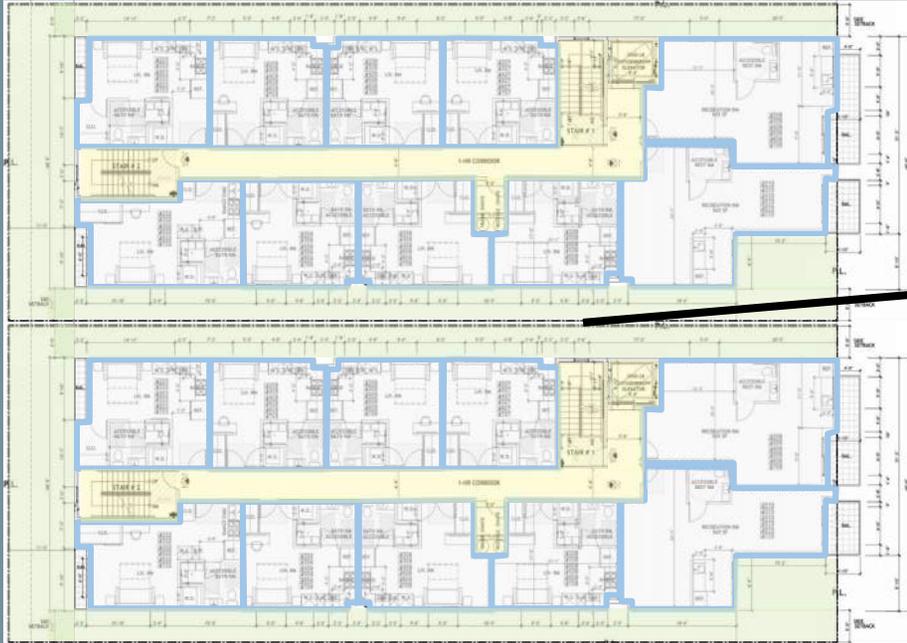
Along commercial corridors with existing small retail and that won't impact traffic



What code changes, and what about the single stair?



Units are low quality & lack air and light



The problem:
Two staircase & enclosed corridor requirement:



The enclosed corridor means units only have one source of air and light

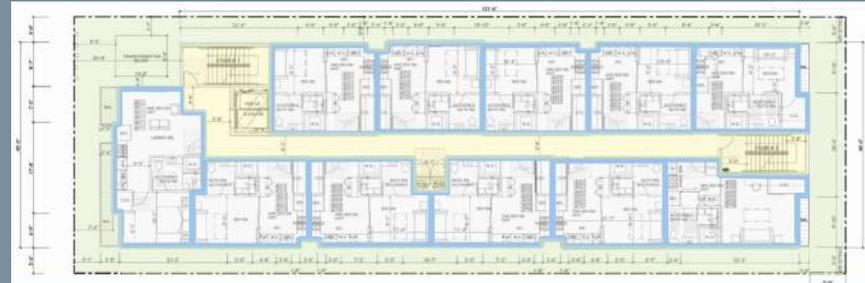


Value engineered

Imagine three of these next to each other – no air or light



Height and 72 small units = feasibility
(R3- 1 "ED1" Project)



- Double Loaded Corridor layout
- **72 units (no Commercial space)**
- Residential Density: **414 d/u per acre**
- **7 stories**
- Rentable space: **4,367 rentable sq. ft. per floor**
- Parcel Size: **7,558 sq. ft.**
- Building efficiency: **81%**

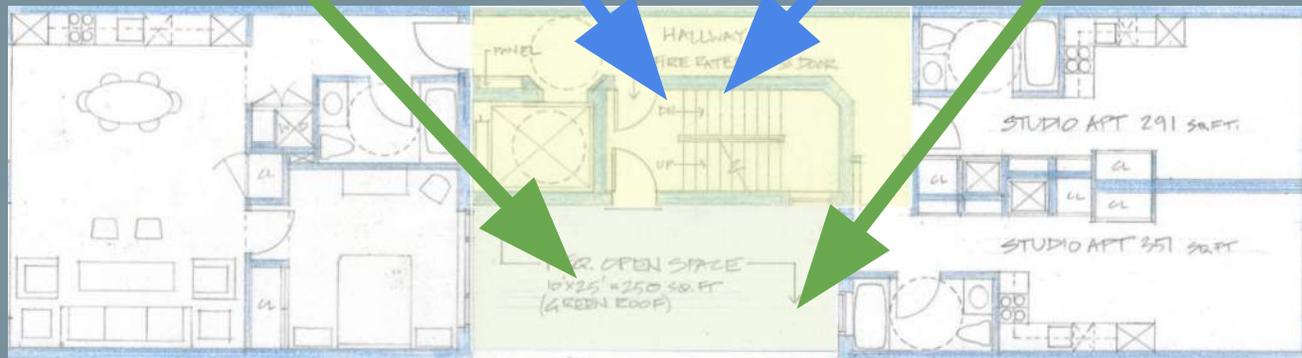


What if two staircases become one central staircase?

Single Loaded
Corridor
63% efficient



Single Staircase
70% efficient



50' x 100' Site - Floor Plan - Single Stair / Courtyard



Courtyards

Functional & inviting green space.

Safe and private shared backyard for families to gather and children to play.







PAB Buildings in Europe and Seattle/NYC Exceed Baseline Safety Standards

- ❑ European countries (which broadly permit single stair MF) have a better record on fire/life safety than the US
- ❑ Seattle has higher fire/life safety standards for single stair than double stair structures.
 - ❑ Max. 5 storeys for Residential Zones (R-2 [long term residential] occupancy) and 6-storeys for mixed use structures.
 - ❑ Maximum of 4 dwelling units per storey
 - ❑ Construction is minimum 60-minute fire rating
 - ❑ Equipped with an automatic sprinkler system.
 - ❑ The stairway and elevator must be pressurized or naturally ventilated.
 - ❑ Units must open on to a corridor if there is an internal stairway.
 - ❑ Maximum travel distance is limited to 124 feet.

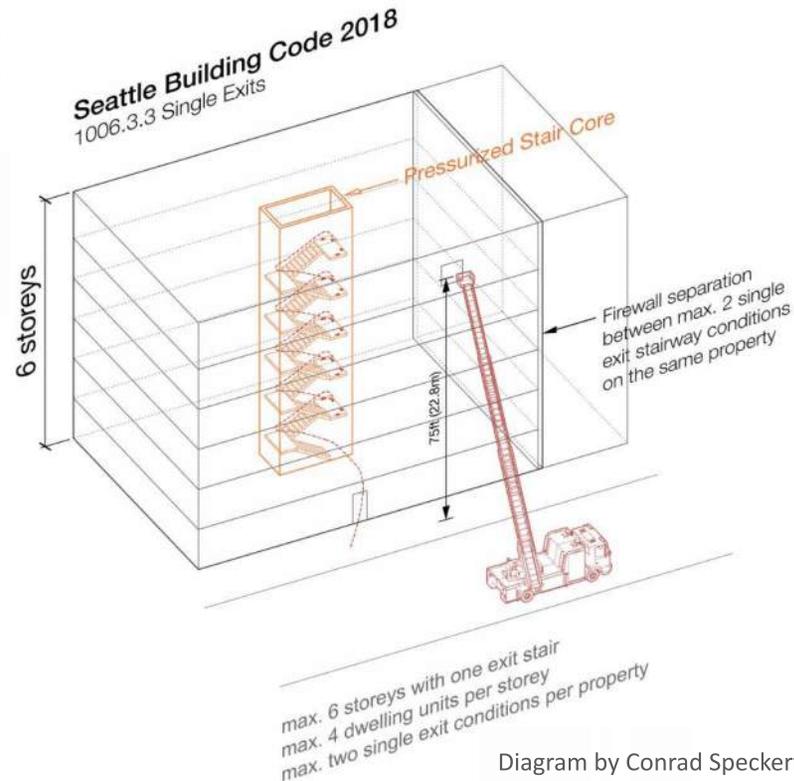
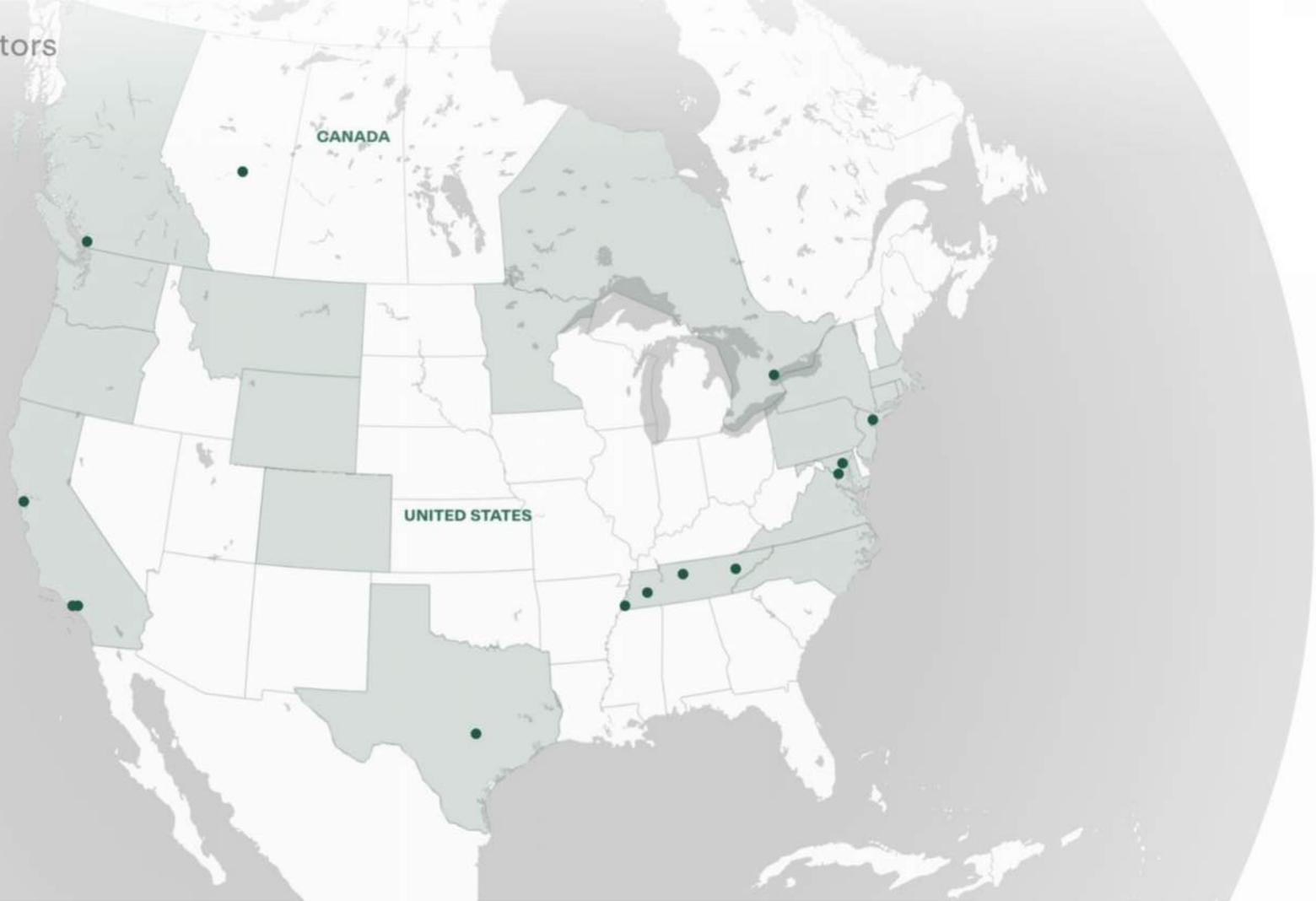


Diagram by Conrad Speckert, SecondEgress.ca

Single-stair Elevators

[Read more](#)



Safety

Along with sprinklers, pressurized stairwell & 60 minute fire rating, options for further mitigations include:

1. Fire escapes
2. Spiral staircase
3. Balconies



Who is the LCI?



Who we are

Brain Trust & Advisors

Housing Policy

Prof Mike Manville, UCLA
Ed Mendoza
Matthew Thompson

Housing Typologies

Gerhard Mayer
John Clafin
Neal Payton

15 Minute Cities

Dan Luscher
Thomas Small
Patricia Bijvoet

Community & Equity

Dr. Tunette Powell

Community Organizing

Sam Uretsky, LUNA
Jen Levin, HODG
Culver City:

Martin Tomasz
Travis Morgan
Michael Ainslie
James Ingram

Transportation

Lindsay Sturman
Sullivan Israel, MA Cal Poly
Terenig Topjian

Inspiration & Research

Transportation

Chris Bruntlett & Dutch experts
Bike Talk
Donald Shoup

Public Spaces

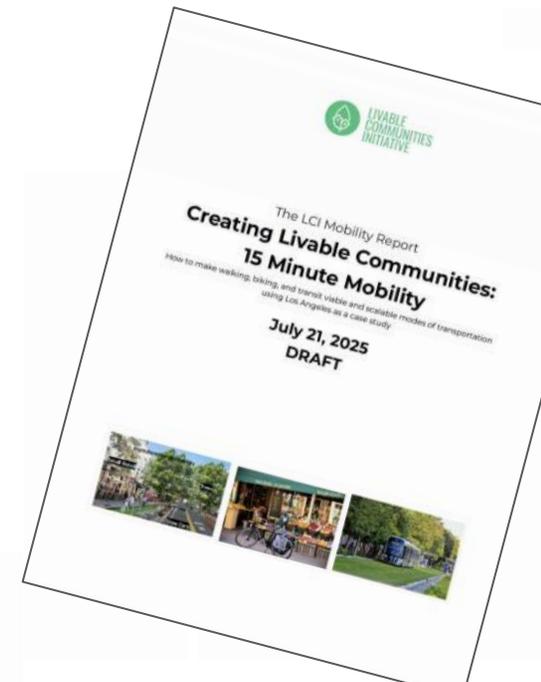
Jane Jacobs
Jan Gehl

15 Minute Cities

Carlos Moreno

Housing

Nolan Gray
Shane Phillips



What about neighbors' concerns?



NEIGHBOR'S CONCERNS

Based on engagement with 5,000 stakeholders

Height



Low Quality Architecture



Traffic/Parking



BROAD SUPPORT

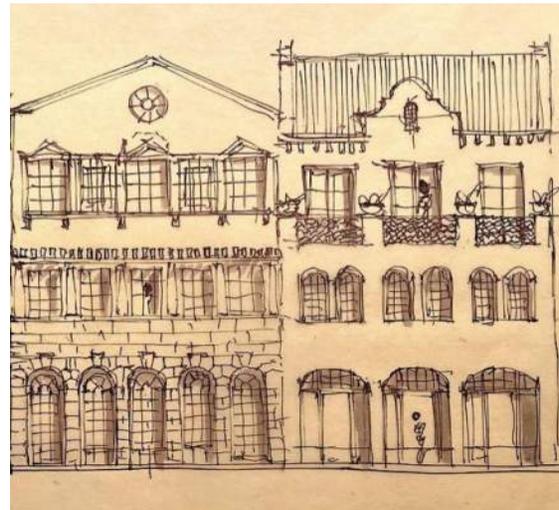
Based on engagement with 5,000 stakeholders

Gentle Density 3-5 stories

Residential Over Retail



Beautiful Architecture



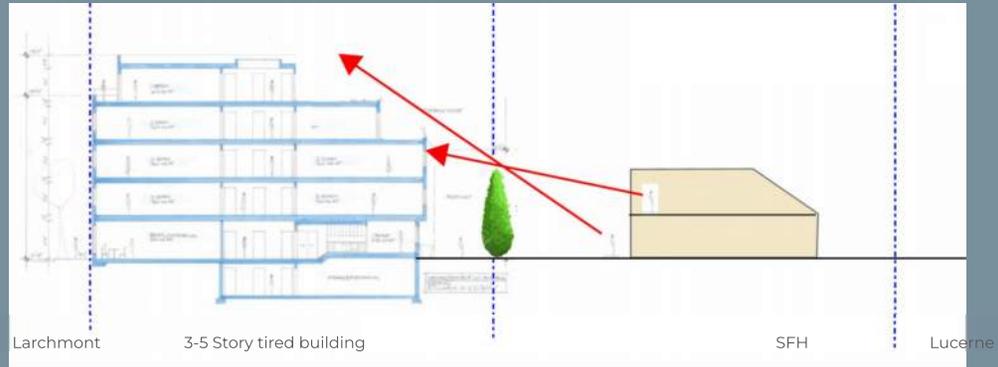
Walkable - Near Jobs & Transit



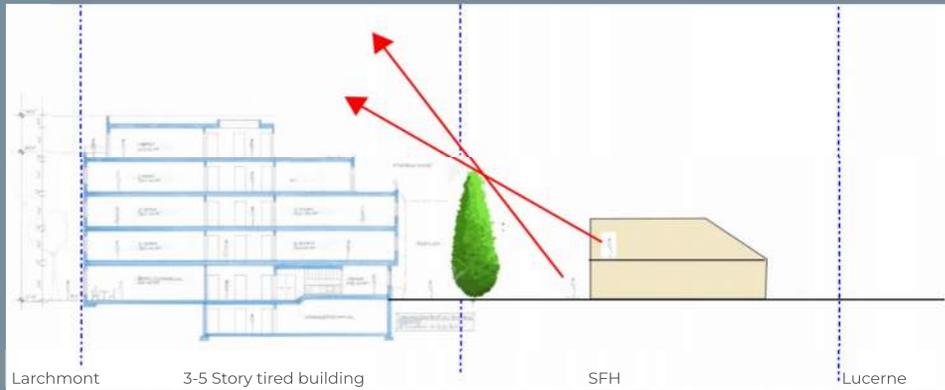
Step-backs

Tiering the back of the building and a hedge can conceal a 5 story building next door.

Year One: Developer plants 20 foot tall



Year Three: Hedge grows 40 ft tall (6-10 ft/year)



LA's 400 Historic Main Streets Historic Villages





Westwood Village



Crenshaw Blvd



Montana Ave

CASA CU

caffè luxe

The Wag Fair Boutique & Spa

SUGARED + BRONZED

929

the sweetest way to smooth

the healthiest way to glow

coffee!



Leimert Park

Small retail



**San Fernando
Burbank**

Revitalizing LA's historic main streets

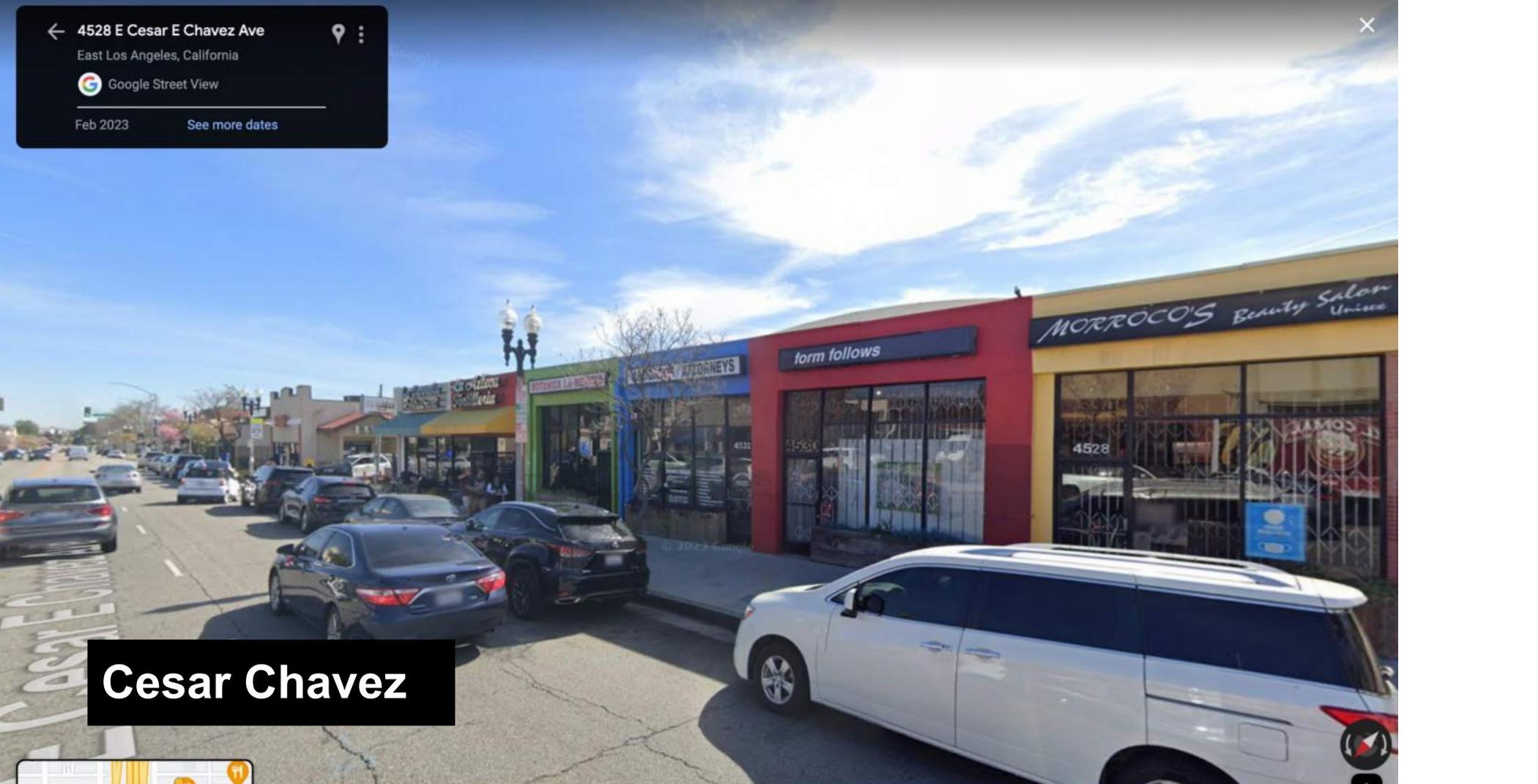
← 4528 E Cesar E Chavez Ave

East Los Angeles, California

Google Street View

Feb 2023

See more dates



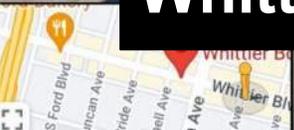
Cesar Chavez



← 4750 Whittier Blvd
East Los Angeles, California
Google Street View
Feb 2023 See more dates

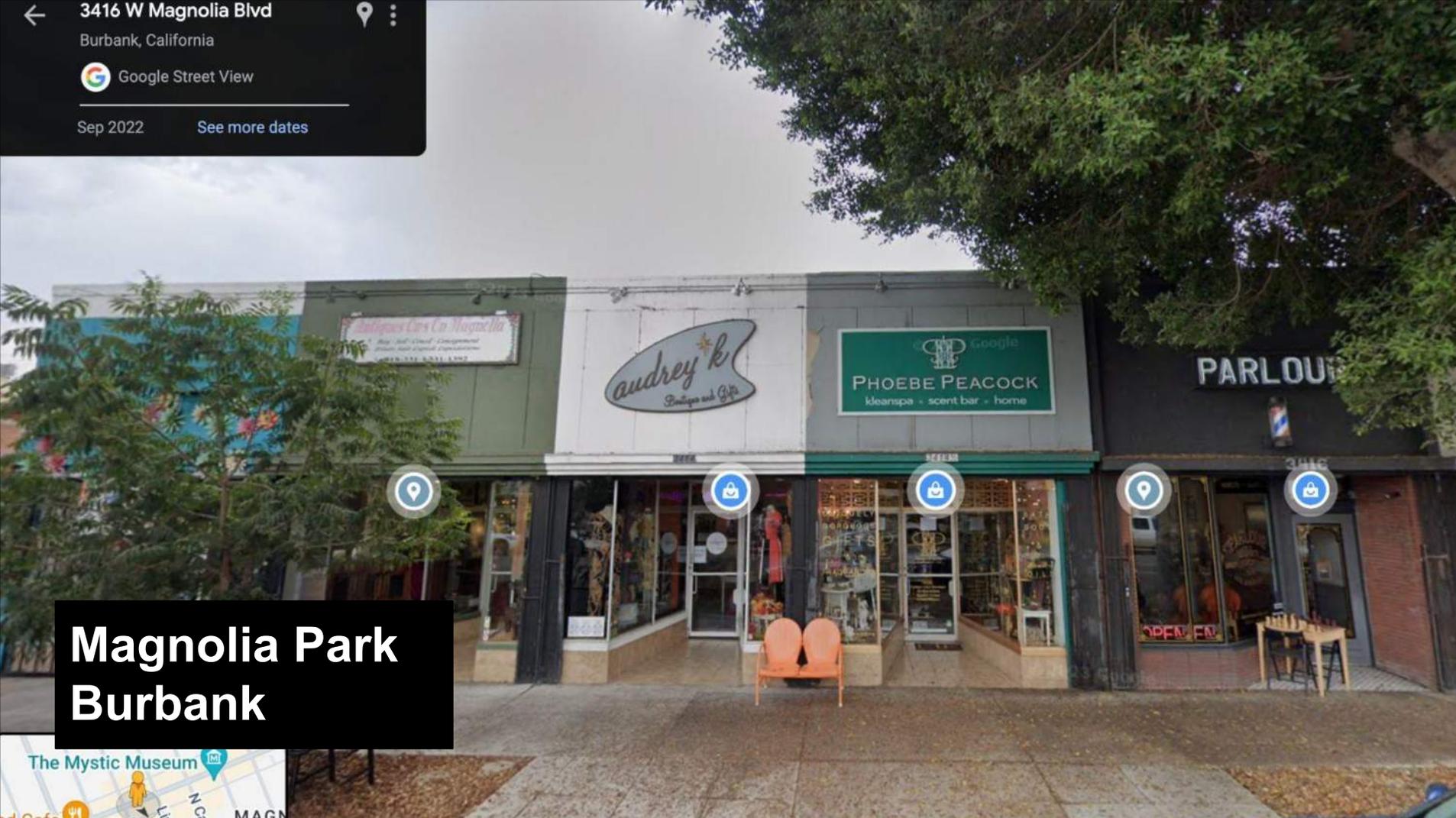


Whittier



Google

← 3416 W Magnolia Blvd
Burbank, California
Google Street View
Sep 2022 See more dates



Magnolia Park Burbank





Main St,
Santa Monica

423 Pier Ave

Hermosa Beach, California

Google Street View

Jul 2022 See more dates

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Pier Ave
Hermosa Beach



Google

