Telling the Hollywood Neighborhood Story:

Hollywood Community Studio
Community Research & Engagement Report
2009-2011

WE are the Hollywood Community Studio.

About the Author: The Hollywood Community Studio (HCS), a project of the Los Angeles Community Studio, is a three-year community-based research and engagement project that tracks the physical and social changes taking place in Hollywood. Our mission is to help coordinate investments in place and investments in people by linking local residents and small businesses with the opportunities that arise from redevelopment. HCS shares research findings with local residents, the small business community, neighborhood councils, elected officials, and other nonprofits, encouraging them to use this information to guide their social and physical investments in the community. During our three-year project, HCS partnered with the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA), the Thai Community Development Center, the Environmental Simulation Center of NYC, the Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, LA Voice, USC Metamorphosis Project, and LA City Council District 13 to carry out its work in the Hollywood community. The Los Angeles Community Studio is a project of Community Partners©, and received funding from the CRA/LA, the Ford Foundation, LISC, and LA City Council District 13.

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Project Introduction

The Hollywood Community Studio (HCS) is a community-based research and engagement project that tracks the physical and social changes taking place in Hollywood.

Our mission is to:
- **Link** residents and small businesses to opportunities that arise out of redevelopment.
- **Facilitate** the creation of a shared vision through research and engagement.
- **Measure** the change that redevelopment projects bring, and share the results with policy-makers and the community.

The Hollywood Community Studio's *collaborative and engagement* model drives home the benefits of government initiatives that utilize a community-based effort or studio to optimize community development, revitalization, and economic development efforts.

HCS partners with local organizations to accomplish its mission, including the Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, the Thai Community Development Center, LA VOICE, Council District 13, and the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA).

The HCS Toolbox:

- **Resident surveys**
- **Focus groups**
- **Case studies**
- **GIS mapping**
- **Small business surveys**
- **Open-ended participation methods**
- **Old-fashioned paper, stickers, and string!**

All HCS reports can be found online at:
www.hollywoodcommunitystudio.wordpress.com/publications

The study area

is located within the Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area of the CRA/LA. HCS initially divided the large 1,100-acre study area into three manageable areas (Central Hollywood South, Central Hollywood North, and Central Hollywood East), and focused on surveying one section each during the summers from 2009 to 2011. Overall we administered more than 1,000 resident and 220 small business surveys in Central Hollywood.

Fig. 1: Map of Central Hollywood Study Area

Hollywood today is a vibrant and ethnically diverse neighborhood, tourist destination, and hub for local culture and nightlife. This is a far cry from its seedy and disinvested reality during the 1980's. Some of Hollywood's turnaround can be attributed to the 1986 designation of the Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area by the CRA. The physical developments and improvements in the neighborhood are hard to miss and can be discerned from the sample of development projects in the timeline below. At the same time, Hollywood as a neighborhood also owes its revitalization to the civic contributions of non-profits such as the Thai Community Development Center, LA Gay and Lesbian Center, Hollywood Community Housing Corporation, and the many grassroots efforts by residents who have taken the lead to form local neighborhood councils, associations, business improvement districts, and community gardens. The combination of large-scale catalytic projects by the CRA, local community development projects by non-profits and residents, immigrant entrepreneurship, and attention from the city council and the mayor's office has created a Hollywood neighborhood based on the value of diversity, economic growth, social responsibility, and fun.

The Hollywood Community Studio recognizes this Hollywood story, but wanted to invest its time and resources toward researching and engaging the residents and small businesses of the neighborhood in order to have them tell us how they see their neighborhood changing and what kind of priorities they desire for their neighborhood's future.

Table 1: Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area Total Population

Year	1990	2000	2009
Total Population	53,274	50,808	48,516

* Based on US Census tracts that encompass the Hollywood Redevelopment Project Area

"Despite its nebulous geographical status, however, Hollywood does exist as a community, but a community that must be defined in industrial rather than geographical terms."

-from Carey McWilliams' 1946 book, "Southern California: An Island on the Land"

For many years, Hollywood has been defined as an industry. However, we should also define it in geographic terms, as a neighborhood and community.

CENTRAL HOLLYWOOD DEVELOPMENT CHANGE

1986
CRA/LA Hollywood Redevelopment Project adopted

1992
Civil Unrest

1994
Hollywood Farmer's Market

1999-2000
Metro Red Line stations at Hollywood/Western, Hollywood/Vine, and Hollywood/Highland opened

2002
Selma Park

2008
Helen Bernstein High School

1991
Economic Recession

1992
Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center

1995
Rehabilitation of Hollywood YMCA

2001
Hollywood and Highland complex

2004
Sunset and Vine adaptive reuse project

2009
Hollywood & Vine / "W" Hotel mixed use project

Central Hollywood North

Central Hollywood South
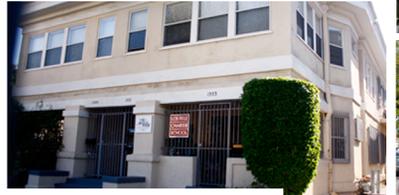
Central Hollywood East

Central Hollywood North is the most touristy area, defined by Hollywood Boulevard and it's Walk of Fame, historic theaters, the Hollywood and Highland shopping center, the new W Hotel and Trader Joe's, and a huge number of small and eclectic retail establishments, restaurants, and bars. To the north the area has many high-density, multi-family apartment buildings.

Fig. 2: Visual Orientation to Central Hollywood Areas

Central Hollywood South is a diverse and primarily mixed use area defined by historic single and multi family residences, small post production businesses, newer high-rises along Sunset Boulevard, and quiet tree-lined streets south of Sunset.

Central Hollywood East lies close to the 101 Freeway. It is marked by resident-serving local businesses, Armenian, Latino, and Thai immigrant populations, and mostly multi-family housing.

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Meet Jose and Lisseth, a couple who have been living in Hollywood for 3 years with their 2 year old son, Alex. They are generally happy with the amenities and benefits of living in Hollywood. Like many Hollywood residents, Jose and Lisseth enjoy easy accessibility to shops, markets, and transit. Jose lives only a block away from the café in which he works and chooses to bike or walk to work every day, while Lisseth, a stay-at-home mom, often walks to grocery stores and shops.

Although they are generally able to make ends meet, they are faced with basic needs that can be hard to manage, including lack of health insurance and the high cost of food and produce. Their rent, which takes up about 60% of their monthly income, is almost double the amount that is generally considered affordable.

Like many recent immigrants in the area, they both have career aspirations and a desire to better their economic situation. Jose is a computer enthusiast and enjoys learning about computer repair and computer programming. Lisseth is interested in going back to school once her son is old enough to attend pre-school and intends to continue her technical career that she began in El Salvador.

Jose and Lisseth participated in our series of individual case studies held at HCS, and Lisseth's "My Hollywood Mio" hand-drawn mental map is shown below. Note the landmarks she chose to highlight, which are all important to taking care of her family: home, a laundromat, a market, a pharmacy, and a clinic.

Meet the Neighbors:
Jose & Lisseth
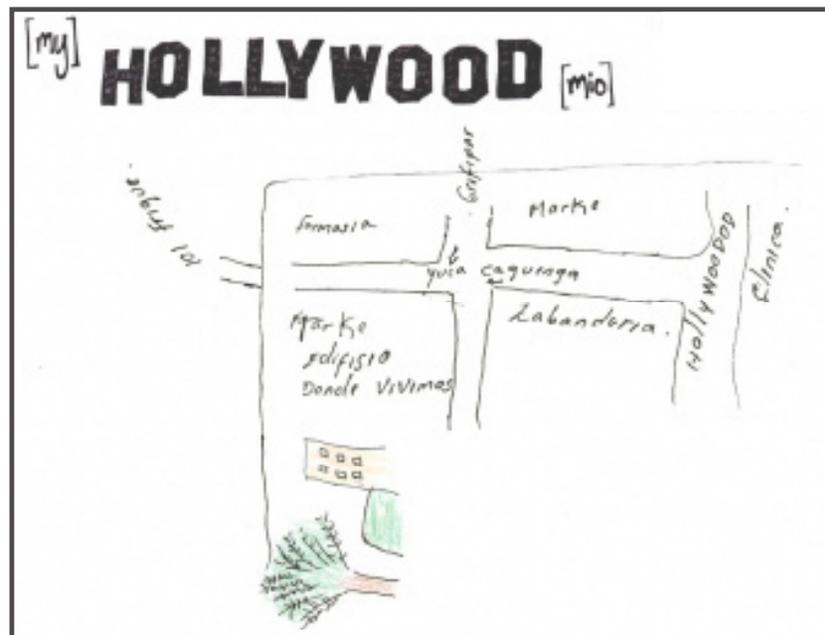
Fig. 3: Lisseth's Mental Map of her Neighborhood

Resident Survey

Between 2009 and 2011, HCS surveyed over 1,000 people who live or work in the Central Hollywood study area to assess how they feel about their neighborhood. This report discusses some of the key findings from the three-year survey effort and hopefully serves as a starting point for more discussions between residents, workers, businesses, and city employees about what the future of Hollywood could look like.

Knocking on doors and stopping walkers on the sidewalk, HCS staff and interns administered 1,007 surveys, each taking approximately twenty minutes to complete. At that rate, that's a total of over 335 hours of one-on-one community engagement! We mostly spoke with Hollywood residents, but we also surveyed people who work within the study area but live elsewhere. It was an immense and collective effort, and we are proud to have connected with so many people in Hollywood.

Our Neighborhood Opinionnaire asks questions like, "How safe is Hollywood? Is rent getting more expensive? Why do you like living here?" We then analyze the answers to these questions and share the results with the community and with local government officials. Here, we highlight some of the responses that were given.

Figure 4: Resident Opinionnaire Surveys

North (2010): **359**

South (2009): **299**

East (2011): **349**

1,007
Total Neighborhood Surveys
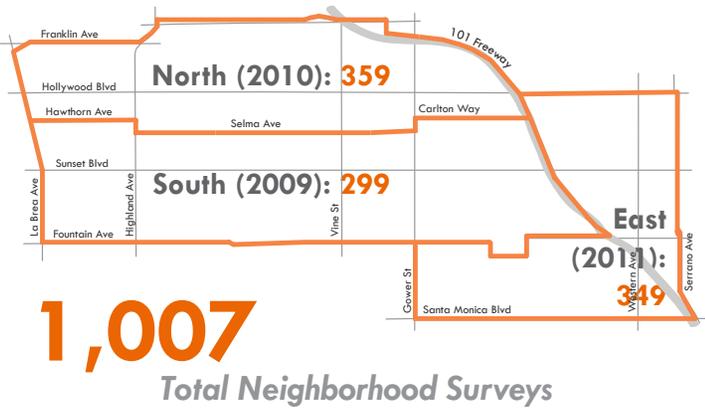
Photo: Intern Jay surveying a residen in Central Hollywood North, 2010.

Is Hollywood improving, deteriorating, or staying the same?

1984

Staying the Same **25%**

Improving **20%**

Deteriorating **51%**

Today

Staying the Same **36%**

Improving **48%**

Deteriorating **16%**

Fig. 7: How long have you lived in Central Hollywood?

0-1 Years, **23%**

1-3 Years, **15%**

3-5 Years, **9%**

5-10 Years, **12%**

10 Years or More, **41%**
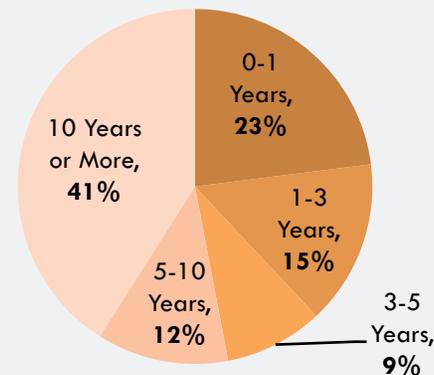
Fig. 8: Ethnicity of survey respondents

Filipino, **2%**

Asian American, **4%**

Other, **5%**

African American, **7%**

Armenian, **7%**

Caucasian, **34%**

Hispanic / Latino, **41%**

Figures 5-6: Things are looking up: In 1984, only 20% of respondents said Hollywood was getting better; today nearly half say it's improving.
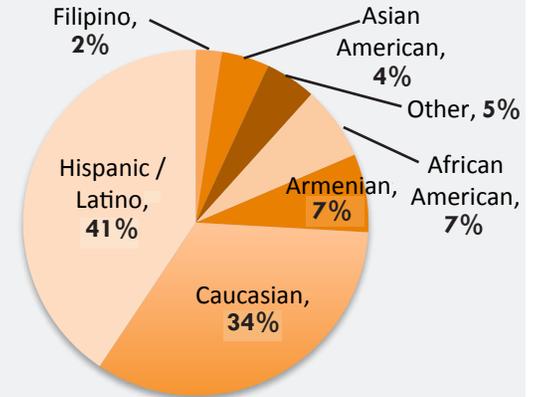
How do Residents See their Neighborhood Changing?

The HCS Neighborhood Opinionnaire asks respondents to indicate whether certain aspects of their neighborhood are changing for the better, for the worse, or not at all. Below is a list of all 29 neighborhood characteristics we ask about. While access to parking, employment opportunities, and cost of living seem to be changing for the worse, respondents think that cafes, diverse shopping, and banking services are getting better. Interestingly, more people said that there was a negative change in Parking compared with Traffic. What do YOU think?

The new Township Saloon on Sunset

Afternoon traffic, Sunset & Cherokee

Cafes
Diverse Shopping
Food Access/ Quality
Neighborhood Walkability
Public Transportation
Ethnic Diversity
Banking Services
Safety
City Sponsored Revitalization
Cultural Activities
Neighborhood Pride
Crime
Landscaping and Trees
Recreational Activities
Quality of Schools
High-Rise Development
Church Activity
Cleanliness
Community Activities
Healthcare Facilities
Social Services
Government Responsiveness
Open Space
Day Care Access/ Quality
Affordable Rent
Employment Opportunities
Cost of Living
Access to Parking
Traffic

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

Fig. 9: Neighborhood Change Scale

■ Positive Change   ■ No Change   ■ Negative Change

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Fig.10: How Do Residents Find Out About Their Community?

This chart measures how residents use various modes of communication and media to find out about their community. Even though Internet dominates media use, there remains a convergence of old and new media use as residents still use local television and radio. Residents still also rely on neighbors for community information. Perhaps as an indication of progress that can be made by local government, neighborhood councils, and community organizations is that these important neighborhood institutions can improve their outreach and engagement to their residents in order to increase the use by residents when they need to find out more information about their community.

Internet
Local Television Broadcast
Radio
Neighborly Talk
LA Times
LA Weekly
Church
Ethnic Media
Local Neighborhood Newsletter
Community Organization/ Events
Local Government
Neighborhood Council

0%   50%   100%

■ Often ■ Farily Often □ Sometimes □ Rarely ■ Never
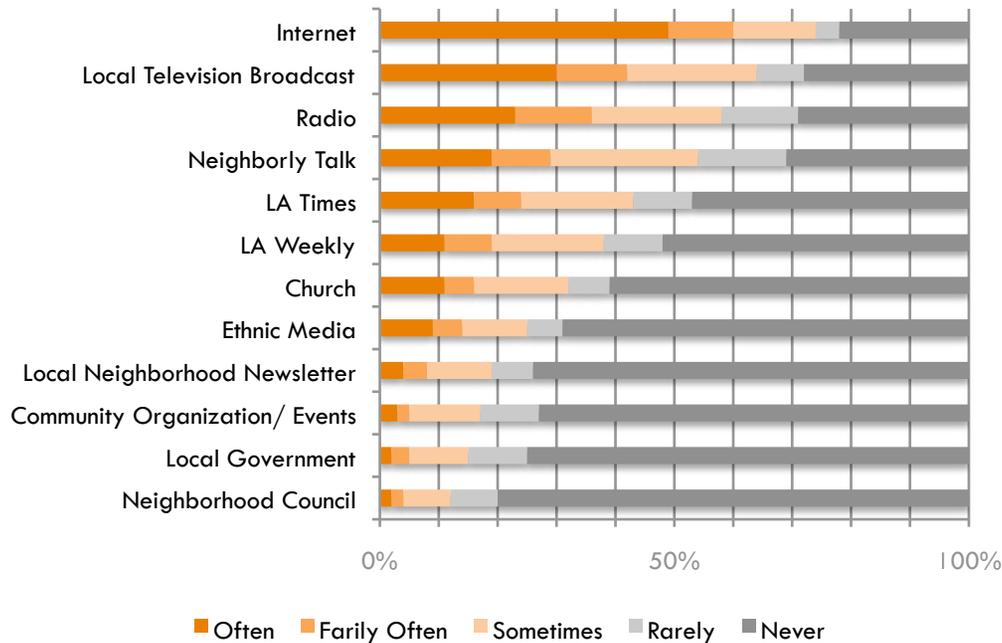
Fig. 11: What are Residents' Priorities for Improvement?

Parking	32%
Reducing Homelessness	27%
Reducing Crime	26%
Improving Traffic Flow	24%
Improving Street Conditions	23%
Increasing Employment Opportunities	22%
Improve Sidewalks, Gutters, & Curbs	13%
Open Space / Parks	11%
Adding Bike Lanes	9%
Increasing Public Transportation	8%
Street Lighting	8%
Increasing Housing	7%
Landscaping	7%
Better Food Access	6%
More Social Services	5%
Adding Bus Shelters	3%

Part of the HCS mission is to relay residents' concerns to local government in order to encourage development and policy that reflect community needs. So, what do residents care about? We asked respondents to identify their top two priorities for improvement, and the results are summarized in the chart above. Improved parking and reducing homelessness topped the chart, followed by reducing crime, improving traffic flow, improving street conditions, and increasing employment opportunities.

Fig. 12: How Does Hollywood Get Around?

The majority of respondents marked walking as their most frequent mode of transportation versus driving, the perceived dominant mode of Los Angeles. This indicates that Hollywood is a 'walkable' neighborhood and that continued investment in pedestrian-friendly walking spaces in Hollywood would be smart investments that can connect residents to the public and alternative transportation in Hollywood.

Walk
Drive
Metro
Subway
Bike
Dash

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

■ Often ■ Farily Often □ Sometimes □ Rarely ■ Never
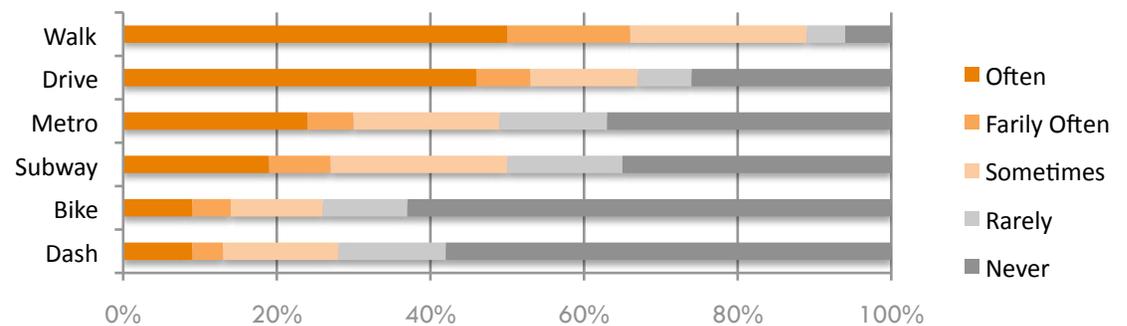
Fig. 13: Would you like to see additional *Housing?*

38%

37%

43%
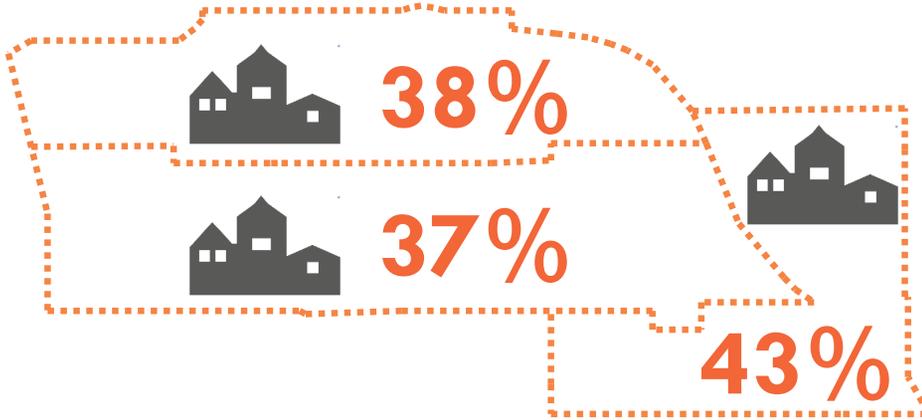
When asked if they'd like to see more housing in their area, more respondents in Central Hollywood East said that their neighborhood needs more housing. Of those that said they'd like to see more housing, "**affordable housing**" was the top pick in all three areas, followed by "1-2 story apartments" and "single family housing" in the South and "transitional housing for the homeless" in the North.

Fig. 14: Would you like to see additional *Businesses?*

47%

32%

53%
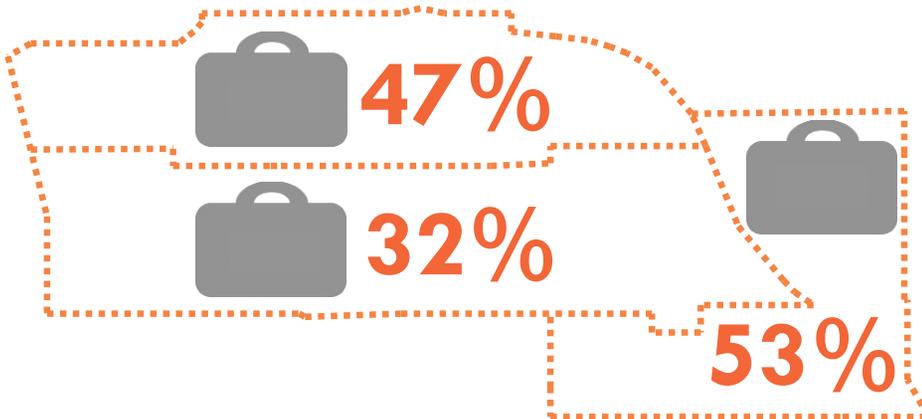
The desire for additional business uses in the area varied markedly between the three survey areas, with only 32% of residents in the South saying they'd like more businesses compared with 53% in the East. In all three areas, the top option was more "**markets and grocery stores**," followed in the South by "small retail," in the North by "restaurants," and in the East by "restaurants" and "large retail."

Resident Survey: Area Comparisons

We asked respondents whether or not they would like to see more community resources, businesses or housing in Hollywood and, if so, what kind. On this page we present more information on what respondents told us. Because responses to these questions varied notably by subarea, we present the data by area (North, South, and East) rather than combine it together.

Accross the board, respondents generally wanted to see more affordable housing options, more markets and grocery stores, and more education and training institutions.

Fig. 15:
Would you like to see additional *Community Resources?*

68%

67%

78%

In all three areas a definite majority of people would like to see additional community resources, particularly more "**education and training institutions**" and "**museums**," both picked as the top two responses in all three areas. In addition, more "social services" ranked high on the list in Central Hollywood North and "child care facilities" was a close third pick in Central Hollywood East.

Small Business in Hollywood

Small Business Bio: RoRo's Chicken

Location:
6660 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90028

RoRo's is a bustling restaurant specializing in roasted chicken and Middle Eastern cuisine, located between a Pizza Hut and a Headshots photographer in a strip mall on Sunset Boulevard.

RoRo's is not immune from the challenges of the Recession, and has been forced to raise some of their prices in response to rising food supply costs. Yet RoRo's continues to thrive with its still reasonable prices, flavorful recipes, and good location--including available customer parking in the strip mall lot. The immigrant-owned business is considering expanding to accomodate its large customer base. RoRo's is a good example of Small businesses in Hollywood.

Local Business Profile:
RoRo's Chicken

Photos: RoRo's chicken kebab, vegetarian, and whole chicken dinner plates

Small Business Survey

Fig. 16: Small Business Surveys

North (2010): **79**

South (2009): **88**

East (2011): **55**

222
Total Small Business Surveys
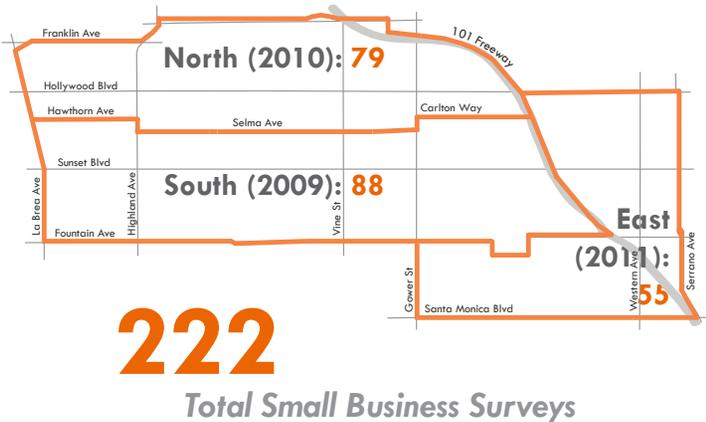
Between 2009 and 2011, HCS surveyed **222 businesses** with **20 or fewer employees** in Central Hollywood in an attempt to learn about their economic stability and to better understand how they feel about being located in Hollywood. Additional survey objectives included the following:

- Gather demographic, economic, and social data;
- Evaluate the impact of redevelopment projects on small businesses;
- Assess how geography, proximity to amenities, and neighborhood characteristics influence opinions about neighborhoods; and
- Track change over time.

The survey asks business owners questions about day-to-day operations, employees and clients, financial stability, and whether or not available neighborhood services meet the needs of the small business community. This report discusses some of the cumulative findings from the entire survey area.

Photo: Intern Philip surveys a salon owner, 2011

Fig. 17: Types of Businesses Surveyed

- Restaurant **14%**
- Beauty & Health; **16%**
- Clothes & Accessories; **14%**
- Other (retail); **17%**
- Other (services); **26%**
- Food (retail); **7%**
- Auto-Oriented; **7%**
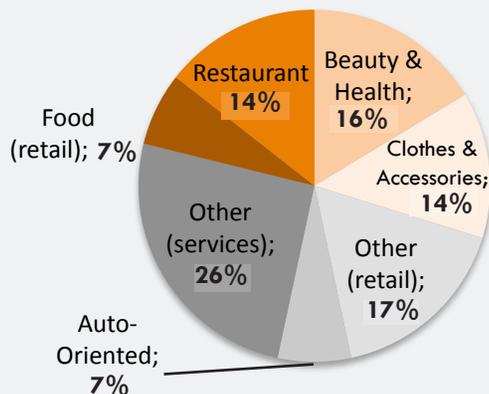
Fig. 18: How long have you been located in Hollywood?

- 1-3 years; **16%**
- 3-5 years; **11%**
- 5-10 years; **16%**
- less than 1 year; **11%**
- more than 10 years; **46%**
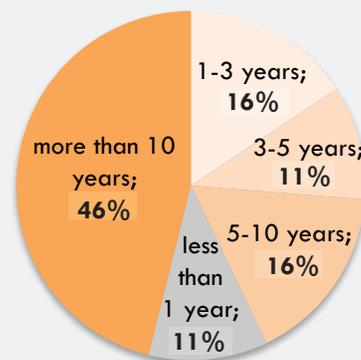
Fig. 19: Rent Per Square Foot

- $1.00 or less; **4%**
- $1.01-$2.00; **30%**
- $2.01-$3.00; **36%**
- $3.01-$4.00; **17%**
- more than $4.01; **13%**
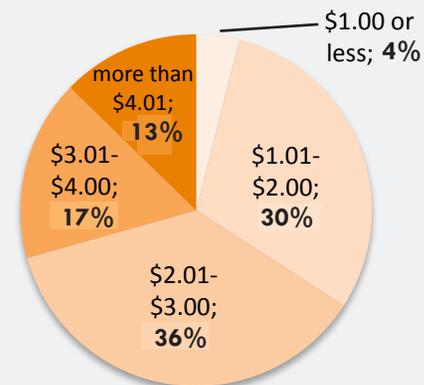
***Remember! ***
This report and reports for each individual subarea can be found online at: www.hollywoodcommunitystudio.wordpress.com/publications

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Figures 20-21: What languages do you speak with your customers?

Language	Count
English	114
Spanish	75
Other Languages	15
Armenian	10
Russian	9
French	7
Thai	3
Arabic	3
Turkish	2
Tagalog	2
Chinese	2

English only; 15%

English + 1 other language; 62%

English + 2 or more other languages; 23%
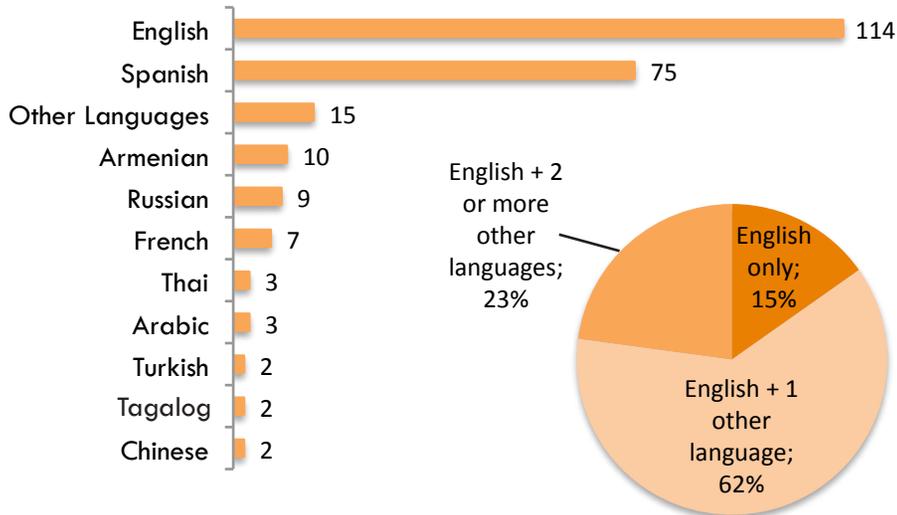
Small businesses in Hollywood reflect the ethnic diversity of the area. While nearly all businesses surveyed speak English with their customers, 85 percent of owners speak a language other than English, naming 22 seperate languages. Although English and Spanish are the primary languages spoken with customers, in most of these cases, owners speak an array of languages, including Armenian, Russian, French, and Thai.

Fig. 22: What are the top two problems facing your business?

Problem	Percent of Business Owners
Weak Sales	52%
Rising Rent	43%
High Taxes	35%
Competition from Other Small Businesses	27%
Labor Costs	19%
Credit Availability / Cash Flow	18%
Rules and Regulation	17%
Competition from Big Businesses	15%
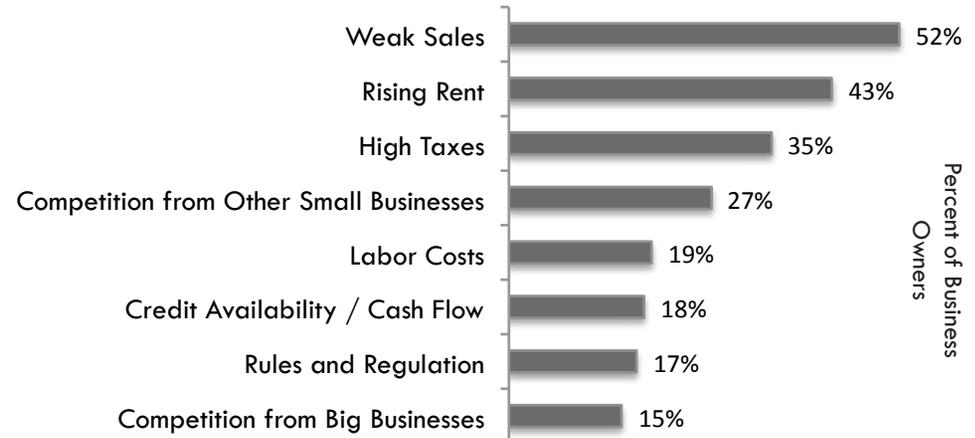
Small businesses in Hollywood have been significantly impacted by the recent recession. Given it's name and cultural significance, it comes as no surprise that tourism is an important source of local small business dollars, and with the economic downturn has come a drop in tourist visits to the area. Weak sales were cited as a top problem by small business owners throughout the area. Other top problems that owners mentioned included rising rent, high taxes, and competition from other small businesses.

Disadvantage	Percent of Business Owners
Parking	52%
Dirty Street	34%
Traffic	26%
Crime	21%
Not a Major Street	5%
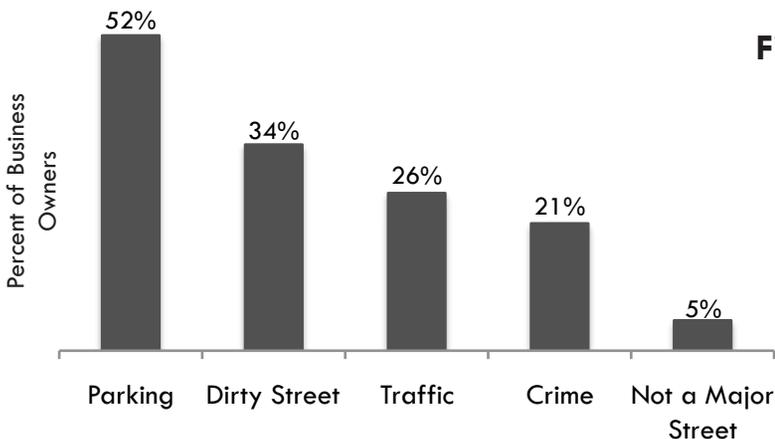
Fig. 23: What are the top two disadvantages of being located in this area?

When it comes to running a small business in Hollywood, owners repeatedly mention parking as a top disadvantage of being located in the area. Note that it's parking and not traffic that small businesses are most concerned with. Although people in Hollywood often complain about traffic being a problem, our survey results point to the idea that the real and more pressing need is parking. The second-most mentioned disadvantage was dirty streets. Increasing the frequency of cleaning streets and sidewalks in Hollywood wouldn't require a huge investment in infrastructure, yet would go far in fostering a local environment in which small business can thrive.

Central Hollywood Neighborhood Focus Groups

To further explore the community perceptions and attitudes of residents, small businesses, and professionals, HCS administered a series of neighborhood focus groups. The group discussion format of the focus groups allowed us to better understand the views of the particular social groups that interact in Hollywood.

The sample of focus groups was informed by our two main survey populations in Hollywood (residents and small businesses) and the community non-profit and public institutional infrastructures that we wanted to engage. With this tool we hoped to gain a sense of neighborhood change and needs of Hollywood from the professionals who serve the interests of resident populations. Altogether HCS conducted eleven (11) focus groups, listed at right.

Surveys play an important role in gathering information in a structured and quantifiable way, but engaging Hollywood residents and workers in focused group discussions enabled us to drill deeper into community perceptions, needs, and aspirations. For example, since the majority of survey respondents identified parking as a priority for improvement (p. 7), the resident focus group discussions allowed us to explore in more detail what aspects of parking they felt needed to be addressed. Residents from the focus groups mentioned that it was not parking for their own cars that they worried about, but parking for friends who came to visit.

As this discussion about parking demonstrates, the qualitative approach was intended primarily for planners to develop a "feel" for the issues as interpreted from the points of view of the respondent groups. The focus group responses are descriptive and exploratory, appropriate for understanding neighborhood change in Hollywood that is process-driven and consultative in character. The specific quotes presented here should be treated as guides, not conclusions.

Eleven (11) focus groups were conducted:

(3) residents

(2) small business owners

(1) local youth

(1) seniors

(1) teachers

(1) public servants

(1) social service administrators

(1) social service case mangers

"It's kind of fun seeing people get **excited** about coming to Hollywood again, rather than getting off the bus and going, 'Ew'." – Resident (Group #2)

"It's like having **Halloween** here everyday." – Senior resident

"Everything is local. Our **school** is a couple blocks away, **the Y** is within walking distance, and everything is close." – Youth resident

Immigrant groups accessing city-sponsored activities and cultural events: "You think, 'Of course they have access, they can take the metro, they can ride their bike or whatever, but **it's not access.** Even if it's right there, if they don't feel that it is FOR them, then there's that **disconnect**." – Local teacher

"**I don't own a car**, but I'm able to **walk** or go anywhere I need to go in town, ride the **bus** to the beach, everything, take the **subway**, or if I want to go to any grocery store of my choosing, I can just take the bus and do it and be right there. I like that convenience." – Resident (Group #2)

"There's **condos** that pop up in the neighborhood and our students are not living there, so when I see that it's improving – that **gentrification** that's **displacing our students** – I mean, where do they go? They get kicked out…There's no affordable housing." – Local teacher

"There's no **safe zone** [for homeless youth] just to hang out. If you don't have a place to live, that service is not out there." – Local case manager

Focus Groups

HCS did mapping activities with each of the focus groups, utilizing basic, tactile materials like paper maps and dot stickers to gather spatial perceptions from participants about how their feel about their neighborhood. The example below shows an aggregated version of the individual maps created by participants in the youth focus group. The blue dots represent places they hang out, the red dots are places they feel unsafe, and the yellow dots indicate places that they feel safe. Notice that many youth generally felt unsafe in the southeast part of the study area.
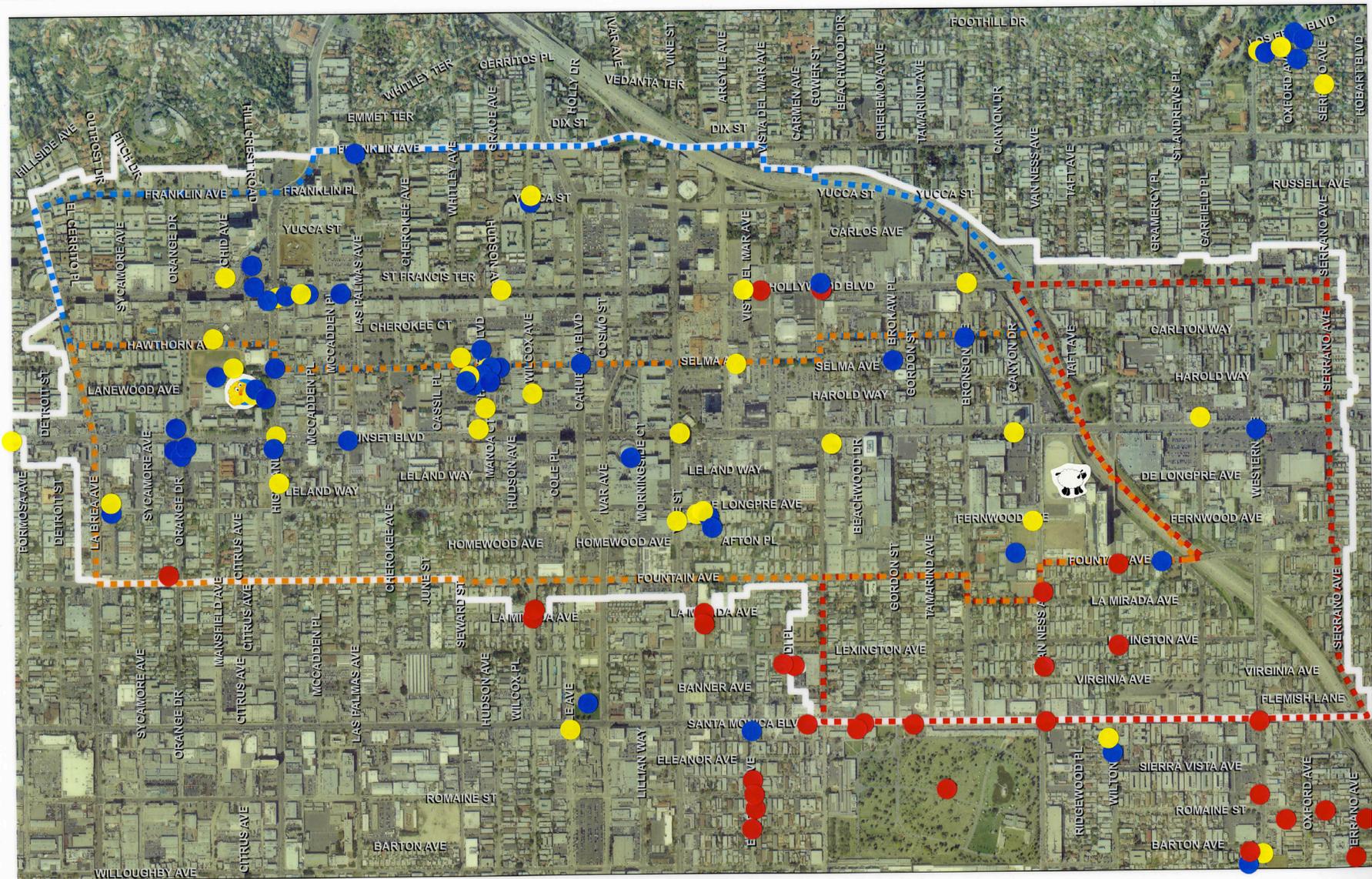

Fig. 24: Youth Focus Group Dot Map

HCS, in partnership with Thai CDC and the USC Metamorphosis Project, led a set of seven individual resident case studies to drill deeper into the experiences of Hollywood residents who are considered vulnerable populations because of their socio-economic and immigrant status. One of the goals of HCS was to investigate the social conditions of vulnerable populations and test out engagement activities that could be customized to similar residents in Hollywood who are marginalized from the traditional planning process--a process that is normally only accessible to residents with a certain amount of financial, social, communication, and cultural capital to partake in official planning processes. The case studies were administered over a 5 month period in 2011 and the sample included seven individuals considered vulnerable due to

their socio-economic conditions: (5) immigrants to the country, and (2) homeless individuals. The case study participants took part in four sessions (approximately 2 hours each) that assessed their personal circumstances, explored their communication practices, tested popular education urban planning engagement tools, and involved them in a participatory photography session to evaluate their neighborhood's condition. The sessions are described in more detail below with data examples that we learned from administering the case studies. Future goals include producing a separate case study report on all seven case studies and organizing a civic engagement workshop informed by what we learned. It will be designed for marginalized populations with the goal of involving them in the urban planning process of Hollywood.

Photo: A case study participant provides his opinions about area Metro stations during a TOD session activity.

Introduction & Intake
This first face-to-face meeting with each case study participant involved a review of the case studies project, a review of the participant agreement, and signing of waiver release forms. An initial intake assessment collected demographic information, determined the participant's vulnerability, and evaluated how often they access social services. The participant was given a journal to document their impressions during the process and collect information about their neighborhood. **Table 2** below describes a selection of demographics about the participants and shows their vulnerable situation given their income, housing situation, employment status, and health insurance status.

ID	Gender	Immigrant	Place of Birth	Native Language	Year of Entry	Housing Situation	Live in Affordable Housing	Education Level	Employment Status	Annual Household Income	Health Insurance
1	M	Y	Suriname	Dutch	1971	Rent	Y	Some College	Part-Time	$20-30K	N
2	F	Y	Armenia	Armenian	2002	Rent	N	Some College	Unemployed	$30-40K	N
3	M	Y	El Salvador	Spanish	2005	Rent	Y	Some High School	Full-Time	$10-20K	N
4	M	N	Stubenville, Ohio	English	N/A	Housed Homeless	N	Some High School	Unemployed	< $10K	N
5	F	Y	Mexico	Spanish	1991	Rent	Y	Professional Degree	Unemployed	$20-30K	N
6	M	N	San Diego, CA	English	N/A	Housed Homeless	Y	Some College	Unemployed	< $10K	N
7	F	Y	Mexico	Spanish	N/A	Rent	N	Some High School	Unemployed	$10-20K	N

Table 2: Case Study Participant Profiles

Case Studies

Communication Ecologies

This session explored the participants' network of communication resource relations that they constructed in pursuit of their goals and in context of their communication environment. This session specifically investigated how each participant used communication and problem solving to engage community resources and relations to resolve neighborhood issues, health issues, and to experience leisure. The civic engagement communication ecology practice example below shows how different residents engage in how they solve neighborhood issues.
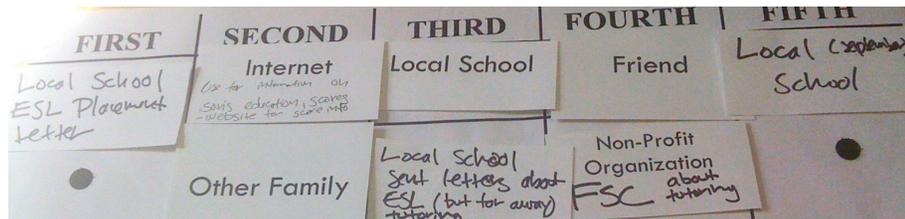

Fig. 25: A mother whose child is experiencing ESL (English as a second language) placement issues at the local school relied on the Internet and family before approaching the school, friends, and a local social service for suggestions to solve the problem.

The health communication ecology activity was administered through an online survey that captured participants' stories about how they deal with health problems. Each participant was asked to think about a specific health issue they experienced recently, and the online survey captured the sequence of communication resources that could be used to deal with the health problem (**Fig, 26**, right).
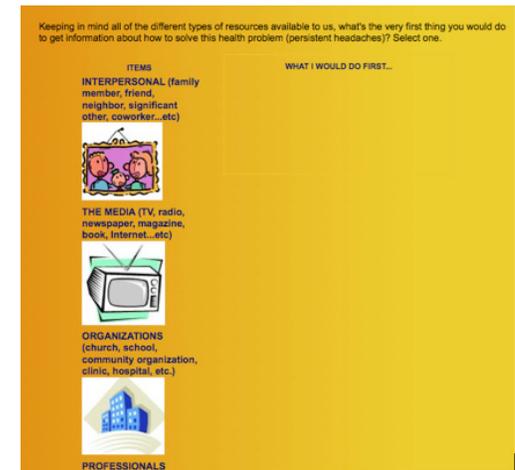
One participant described a detailed approach to dealing with her sick child's persistent vomiting and diarrhea. She would first talk with her mother in El Salvador to get advice about what to do. After trying a few home remedies, she would then go to a specific website about children's health (http://www.guiainfantil.com/) to learn about what might be causing the symptoms. If the child's condition did not improve after 24 hours, she would take him to a small clinic near her home because she knows the pediatrician there.

Participatory Photography & Observation

Through collaborative photography and a walk around the participant's neighborhood, this session evaluated the condition of the participant's neighborhood. The participant and researcher took part in a walk where they collaboratively assessed the assets and change priorities in their immediate neighborhood through participatory documentation and photography.

These are examples from the mapping form that one participant who lives in East Hollywood filled out with the HCS researcher along the neighborhood route led by the participant. This participant's photos highlight neighborhood assets such as a mobile fruit vendor truck (left) and change priorities such as illegal dumping on sidewalks (above).

Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs)

The third session was related to TODs, asking participants about familiar Metro stations in the Hollywood area. While most didn't enter the session with knowledge of TODs, they easilly provided their opinions on how to improve nearby stations (see photo, previous page). Most showed interest in attending TOD planning meetings, and all expressed interest in supporting policies that support higher density and fewer cars.

Fig. 27 (top): Case Study String Map

Fig. 28 (bottom): Case Study Dot Map

Urban Planning & Technology
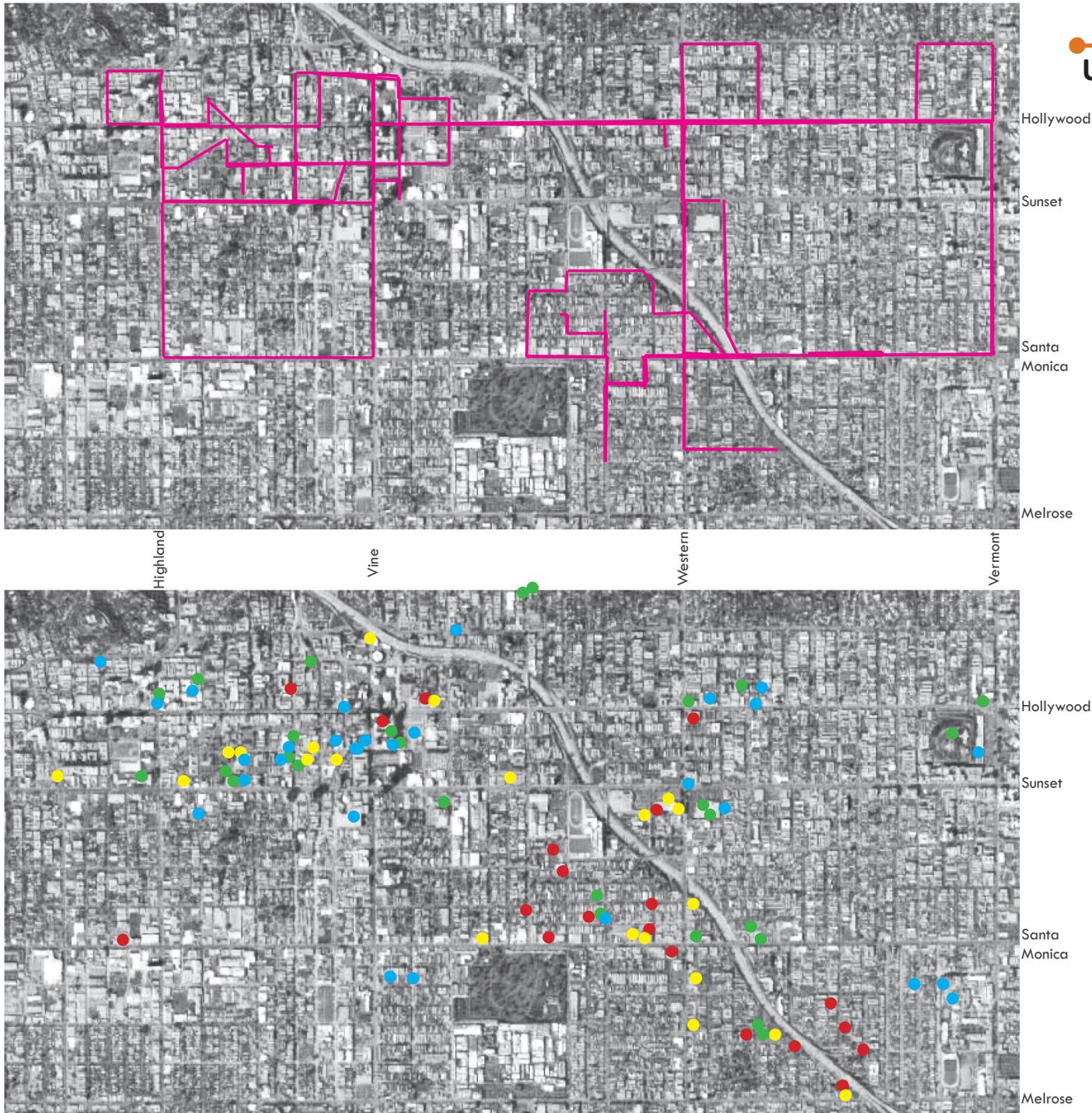
During the Urban Planning & Technology case study sessions, participants used various mapping exercises, pop ed activities, and technology tools to share their existing knowledge of physical development and to visually explain how they experience their neighborhood. HCS explained redevelopment activity while gathering data on what participants want in Hollywood and how physical development could address their needs. Participants were also engaged in discussions around TODs and community benefits agreements (CBAs).

These mapping activities visually illustrate the areas residents gravitate towards and those that they avoid. The top map shows walking routes that participants marked with string. Similarly, on the bottom map participants were asked to use colored dot stickers to indicate specific locations on the map where they feel safe (green) or unsafe (red), where they like to spend time (blue), and places they think could be improved (yellow).

Fig. 27 (top): Case Study String Map
Fig. 28 (bottom): Case Study Dot Map

Civic Engagement Tools

Portraits of Hollywood and Hollywood is / Hollywood needs are two more tools in the HCS toolbox, and both rely on open-ended prompts to draw out unique reponses about living in Hollywood.

HCS staff conducted both exercises at local community events frequented by neighborhood residents and wokers, and ensured that signed consent forms were collected from everyone who had their photo taken.

Hollywood is / Hollywood needs

People who live or work in the area were asked to complete the prompt on a large board, then have their photo taken holding the board. It is an effective way to distill what people view as Hollywood's main characteristic or most pressing need, and is a poignant visual tool to make the presentation of data more personal.

Portraits of Hollywood

Portraits asks residents and workers to fill out a short, one-page survey and consent to have their picture taken. It is a quick and easy way to engage people, and which then becomes a highly visual and interesting way for people to get to know a Hollywood local, and really puts a face on the neighborhood of Hollywood.

Portraits of Hollywood Questionnaire:

Name: Jillian Holloway

Age: 29

Cross streets (for geocoding): Sunset and Wilcox

Neighborhood where I live: in Hollywood near walk of fame

Neighborhood where I work: ¿?

Neighborhood where I play: By Sunset

Favorite Hollywood hangout: Chinese theatre on walk of fame

Favorite Hollywood memory:

Hollywood's best kept secret:

Favorite Hollywood street: walk of fame

Favorite Hollywood personality: Happy outgoing

Favorite Hollywood event: Xmass parade

Favorite Hollywood landmark: The Chinese Theodore

Best cheap eats: Pizza shop on congang walk of fame Popyes chicken

Hollywood's soundtrack: not shore

When I was a kid I wanted to... Be a musician

My job is... none at this time

My perfect day would be... Just Relax and fun

My biggest challenge is... Being homeless

Hollywood is... A good mix of different personalitys

I am... Just starting out here hoping to forfill my dream to become a muchan/actress

17

Portraits of Hollywood Questionnaire:

Name: elly belly
Age: 36
Cross streets (for geocoding): schrader + Hollywood Blvd.
Neighborhood where I live: Hollywood
Neighborhood where I work: Hollywood
Neighborhood where I play: Redneck Riviera Florida
Favorite Hollywood hangout:
Favorite Hollywood memory: Opening night of Connecting Dots Film -
Hollywood's best kept secret: viAbelly ARTs
Favorite Hollywood street: Highland
Favorite Hollywood personality: Kate Wisslet
Favorite Hollywood event:
Favorite Hollywood landmark: Rainbow Room
Best cheap eats: In and Out
Hollywood's soundtrack: Loti elly belly Time + Money in 10 Infinite worlds
When I was a kid I wanted to... be an astronaut
My job is... Artist, Videography
My perfect day would be...
My biggest challenge is... $
Hollywood is... Awesomely creative
I am... talented

Portraits of Hollywood Questionnaire:

Name: Jamie Barker
Age: 25
Cross streets (for geocoding): Ivar / Yucca
Neighborhood where I live: Ivar / Yucca
Neighborhood where I work: Hollywood / Gower
Neighborhood where I play: Hollywood
Favorite Hollywood hangout: Crane's Hollywood Tavern
Favorite Hollywood memory: Peeing on a tree, and using the justification "My dog does it"
Hollywood's best kept secret: The Secret Garden
Favorite Hollywood street: Franklin
Favorite Hollywood personality: Edward Matuzzi
Favorite Hollywood event: Beachwood Rocker Society on Wednesdays at cranes
Favorite Hollywood landmark: Both Michael Jackson Stars
Best cheap eats: Murakami Sushi
Hollywood's soundtrack: similar to dazed and confused.
When I was a kid I wanted to... train killer whales
My job is... bartender
My perfect day would be... listening to records and dancing
My biggest challenge is... following through
Hollywood is... fantastic.
I am... happy.

Portraits of Hollywood Questionnaire:

Name: Kathy
Age: 39 (again)
Cross streets (for geocoding): Ivar + Sunset
Neighborhood where I live: Vine + Hollywood
Neighborhood where I work: Same
Neighborhood where I play: Same
Favorite Hollywood hangout: Mann's Chinese theater
Favorite Hollywood memory: Meeting David Brenner
Hollywood's best kept secret: Parking Space
Favorite Hollywood street: Hollywood Blvd
Favorite Hollywood personality: Brangelina
Favorite Hollywood event: Openings + Previews
Favorite Hollywood landmark: Hollywood Sign
Best cheap eats: Fast food
Hollywood's soundtrack: "Holly-Weird"
When I was a kid I wanted to... act of course
My job is... taking care of hubby
My perfect day would be... too long to put here
My biggest challenge is... getting thru the day
Hollywood is... wonderful and awful
I am... happy

Policy Impact: Streets for Feet!

HCS didn't just want to gather research or information about the neighborhoods of Hollywood, but wanted to develop participatory activities that actively engaged residents in the planning process and in thinking about ways their neighborhood could be re-imagined. These engagement practices ranged from popular education planning games about urban planning processes, the development of the Layman's Guide to Redevelopment that was distributed by the CRA/LA (and is also available on the HCS website), the implementation of workshops and charrettes around planning issues in the neighborhood, and the coordination of demonstration projects on the streets of Hollywood to re-imagine the physical environment of Hollywood.

One such demonstration project we implemented on the streets of Hollywood is 'Streets for Feet,' where we closed down an underutilized street (the 1700 block of North Hudson Ave) off Hollywood Boulevard for a weekend in order to re-imagine the street as a park or open space. The effort also corresponded with national 'Parking Day' in which cities across the nation turn parking spots on the street into some notion of open space. We not only used Streets for Feet to re-imagine the streets in Hollywood, but also used the space to engage residents and people walking by in activities such as the deployment of some of our research instruments, mapping activities, planning pop education, and fun activities such as street chalk art, drumming, and hula hooping. The Streets for Feet project was such a success that it encouraged the city planning and transportation departments to initiate a year-long street closure program in Silver Lake called 'Streets for People' that closed an underutilized street for open space and play. They are currently researching other locations for possible long-term street closures, including our original Hudson Avenue 'Streets for Feet' location.

HCS had the opportunity to publicize community benefits and track local hire rates related to the CRA-sponsored catalytic project at the **Hollywood and Vine** transit-oriented development along the redline subway. The mixed-use project consisted of community serving retail, banks, restaurants, the W Hotel, luxury condos, and affordable housing units. Because it received over $500,000 in CRA funds, the project was subject to the CRA's **local construction and permanent hire jobs policy** for new development. The policy required developments to hire applicants based on two zip codes:

- **Tier 1**: Zip codes within a three-mile radius of the development
- **Tier 2**: Zip codes with high unemployment rates across the city

New developments were also required to have a **local jobs coordinator** on site who could assess the job readiness of potential applicants and refer the applicants to further training needed if the applicant wanted to continue pursuing jobs on site.

When HCS began, the Hollywood and Vine development had already finished their construction local hire jobs. Figure 29.1 shows the local hire rates (19%) broken down to Tier 1 and 2 zip code
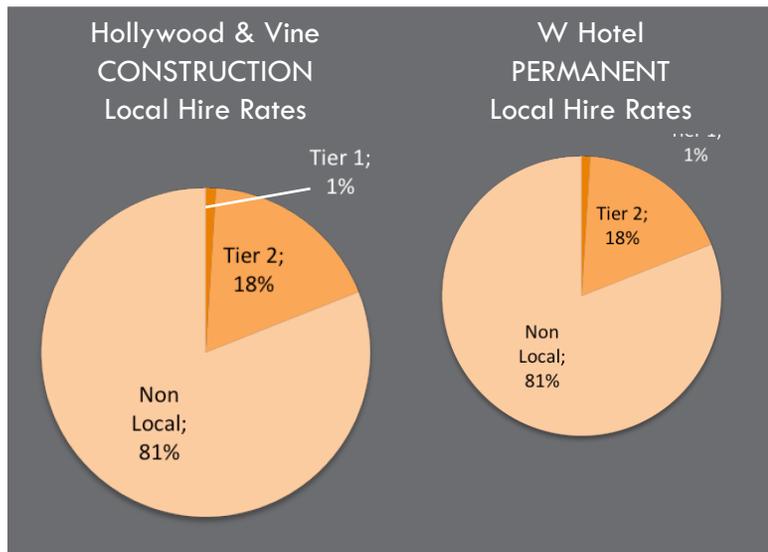
hires. To increase permanent job local hire rates compared to construction local hire jobs, HCS ensured that the permanent positions were advertised widely by enhancing the outreach process for W Hotel jobs and by working with local community-based organizations. At the start of the W Hotel hiring process, the flier for the jobs was quite racy--and not necessarily the most community friendly (see Fig. 30). HCS instead created a local jobs flier (see Fig. 31) that actually listed the jobs available and encouraged potential applicants to contact the jobs coordinator first. They were translated into Spanish and Armenian based on local demographics. About 200 applicants brought this flier to the jobs coordinator.

Success

Following HCS' outreach efforts, the local hire rates for permanent hire jobs increased to 47% (see Figure 29.2) compared to the 19% construction local hire rates. More importantly, there was an increase to 12% in the Tier 1 zip codes hires. Tracking local hire policy jobs for new development projects can become a beneficial tool to ensure that future development in the city truly benefits local communities and economically vulnerable populations, as policymakers intend.
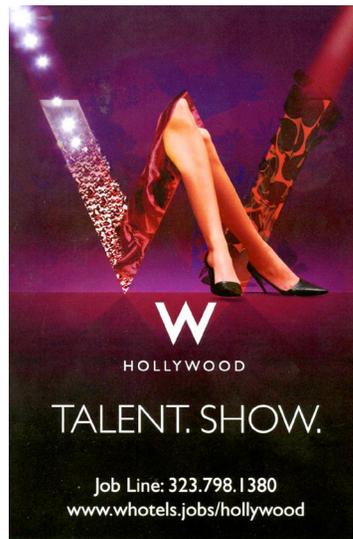
New projects in redevelopment areas should benefit the neighborhoods where they're located, as well as the most vulnerable communities in the city.

Fig. 29.1 and 29.2

Fig. 30

Fig. 31

Conclusion: Hollywood

We asked, Hollywood anwered.

HCS uncovered aspects of Hollywood that are rarely represented in mainstream accounts of Hollywood.

First and foremost, HCS's community-based research and engagement approach highlighted Hollywood's existence as an actual neighborhood of Los Angeles and not an 'industry' as typically portrayed in the media and economic policy reports.

The research also represented a first in the systematic exploration of how redevelopment and revitalization activities affect the people who live in the neighborhoods within the 1986 designated redevelopment project area in Hollywood.

Here's what we heard in Hollywood:

"We love living here!"
Residents and small businesses love living and working in Hollywood not because it's a tourist destination but because it's **central, walkable,** close to **public transportation,** and because of its **diversity** in shopping and people.

"Hollywood is getting better."
About 50% of current Hollywood residents say their neighborhood is getting better, versus in 1984 when over 50% felt their neighborhood was deteriorating.

"We're concerned about gentrification."
There remains a concern about gentrification due to negative perceptions from residents about **rising rent** and **cost of living** and small business concern with rising rents.

"Hollywood is ethnically and culturally diverse."
Many Hollywood residents and businesses are **Latino, Armenian,** and **Thai** in character, indicating that Hollywood--like much of Los Angeles--has been shaped by immigrants and ethnic minorities.

"Hollywood is home to vulnerable populations."
Hollywood has a middle class but is also socio-economically diverse with vulnerable populations such as **homeless, runaway youth,** and **newer immigrants** who access the extensive social service network in the area.

"We don't hear much from neighborhood councils or local government."
Important local institutions such as neighborhood councils, community organizations, and municipal government have room to improve when considering **outreach** about local community happenings and involvement.

"Traffic and parking are horrible."
Residents and businesses cite **parking** and **traffic** as major problems and top priorities for improvement.

"East Hollywood feels less safe and gets less attention from the City."
Individual mental maps of the neighborhood reveal **spatial perceptions** of unease in the eastern sections of study area and comfort in the central/western sections of the study area. This may indicate the need for more investment and attention to East Hollywood.

Key Takeaways:

Nothing beats **face-to-face contact** when engaging residents about neighborhood conditions and the future of their neighborhood. We initially thought Hollywood residents wouldn't want to talk to surveyors in the field (who likes talking to people on the sidewalk holding clipboards?), but we found the opposite to be true. Once they get started, people usually like talking about their neighborhoods.

HCS's **internship** program was a successful **experiential field practicum** in the engagement of diverse urban communities that enhanced the intern's education in the classroom. HCS recruited 48 interns from 8 local institutions and found that this program not only created a learning experience for the interns but also created a learning opportunity for HCS in building capacity, drawing from local higher-education resources, and creating training programs suitable for interns to work on local neighborhood engagement projects.

A **collaborative** and **multi-disciplinary** approach to community-based engagement projects is complicating to manage but can serve as a rewarding social innovation to civic engagement and urban planning projects. Often projects that are focused on physical infrastructure can create walls to collaboration beyond land-use professionals. HCS's work benefited extensively from incorporating perspectives from local social service providers, social science researchers, and popular education practitioners, creating a synergy of ideas that focused on 'place' and 'people' based investments in Hollywood.

The project spurred conversations about a **physical** and **mobile** community studio approach to local neighborhood engagement projects. For HCS, having a local office in Hollywood allowed the team to become embedded in the local community, create strong relationships, and hold events in a physical place leased by HCS. At the same time, HCS realized that much of their engagement activities, community-based research methods, networking, and collaborative orientation could be deployed in any neighborhood. HCS, which is now becoming the Los Angeles Community Studio, is exploring different ways of becoming a mobile community studio available to engagement efforts across the city.

We **didn't need** a fancy **web designer**. We found low-end, accessible technology such as Google websites, docs, and open source new media tools were more appropriate, affordable approaches when designing websites and database tools to track and communicate neighborhood change. We used these tools alongside traditional analytical programs such as GIS and SPSS to enhance our analytical capacity.

The lessons HCS learned about what makes civic engagement projects successful at the hyper-local neighborhood scale can potentially be replicated in local engagement practices in other urban neighborhoods, in Los Angeles and beyond.

In the wake of the dissolution of the Community Redevelopment Agency and amidst current conversations about creating a new economic development approach in the city, it would be wise to embed strong civic engagement approaches that involve the community more deliberately in the development and planning of neighborhoods.

WORDLES!

Figs. 32-33: HCS uses wordles to measure write-in questions that are generally difficult to quantify. The largest words are the ones most commonly written in response to survey questions. As you can see, people have a lot to say about their neighborhood!

Why do you like living in Hollywood?

Hollywood needs...

safety
cleaner
jobs
ial-services
improvements
nothing
parking
community-involvement
parks
businesses
schools
changes
opportunities
affordable-housing
cheaper-rent
revitalization
metro
tourism
community-center
reduce-homelessness
community-services
positive-changes
activities
neighborhood
landscaping
beautification
government
police
cultural-events
kids
residents
employment
attention
help
traffic
stores
good-schools
improve
money
nature
recycling
young

Hollywood is...

good
beautiful
nice
dirty
diverse
better
improving
unique
home
weird
crowded
getting
safe
much
stars
best
famous
everything
full
okay
pretty
fun
busy
ghetto
neighborhood
like
tourism
growing
changing
overrated
Hollywood
entertainment
different
convenient
Interesting
love
Good
greatest
glamorous
interesting
close
residents
clean
culture
social
bad
used
unsafe
movie
reputation
capital
paradise
awesome
cool
backgrounds
exciting
Diverse
great-place
friendly
shallow
spectacular
wonderful-place
expensive
work
really
think
big
potential
improve
experience
vary
community
wonderful
Armenians
local
bonito
activity
party
star
streets
good-city
world
many
Fun
LA
Crazy
history
Beautiful
needs
cultural
safe-place
great-area
unique
amazing
good-place
creative
tourists
violence
minorities
messy
nice-place
free
reliable
stupidity
something
new
hollyweird
limpiar
losing
cities
visit
diverse-it
meet
hour
24

Hollywood resident Adel with dog Mignon at DeLongpre Park

HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY S T U D I O