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CSUN Urban Planning  
Graduate Program



# CSUN Reseda

One Great Street

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[Re]-Imagining Reseda as the Matador Mile brings a new light to Northridge as a vibrant, creative, and unique neighborhood. This project provides an in-depth analysis on several specific urban elements, and has produced design guidelines that will improve the mobility, connectivity, and the overall community identity in the areas west of California State University Northridge. The goal is to ultimately improve the quality of life by maximizing the usage of the streets and improve neighborhood character.

Reseda Boulevard is a major public asset that reflects the identity of the neighborhood and the people. Through the framework set forth by the Northridge Vision Plan, as well as Mayor Eric Garcetti's Great Streets Initiative the City of Los Angeles seeks to take advantage of Northridge's underutilized assets to create and support a thriving neighborhood and enhance economic development. Using expert interviews, observational research, archival data, public meetings, and stakeholder feedback to design the "Matador Mile" which will achieve the goals set forth by the Northridge Vision and the Great Streets Initiative.

-----The Masters of Urban Planning Matadors of 2017



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# PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

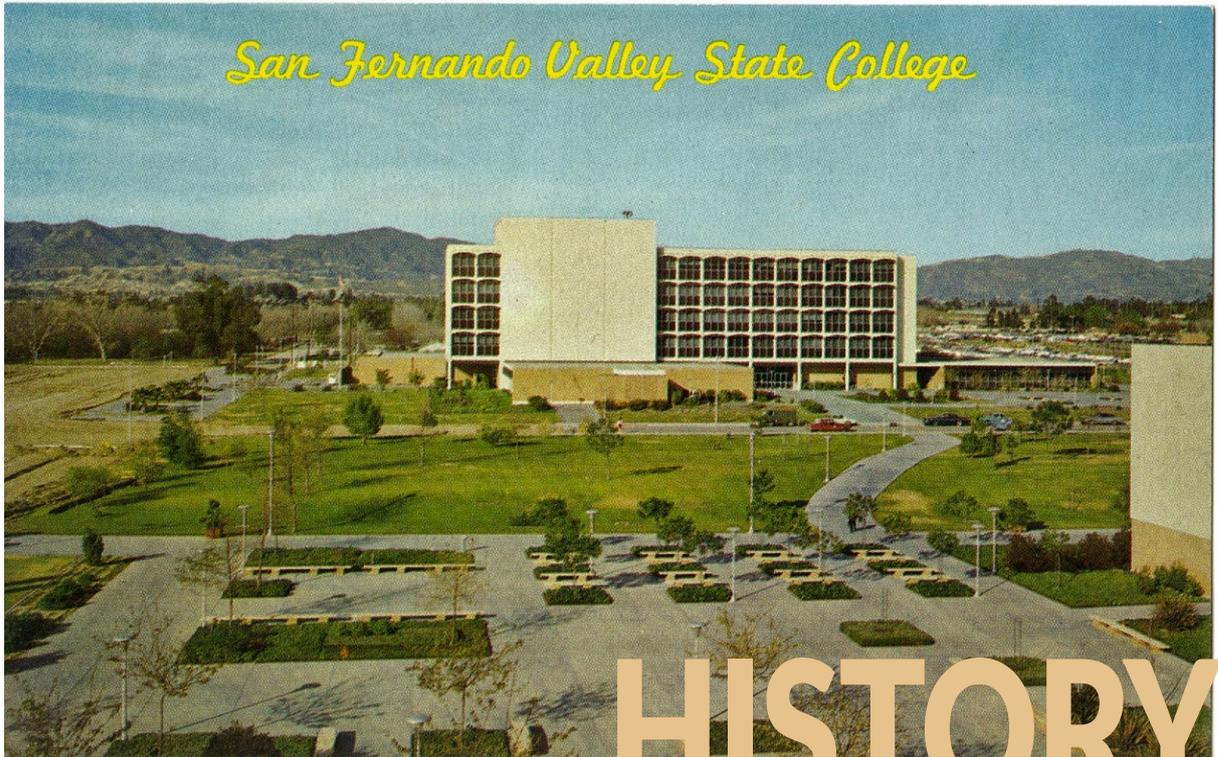
## NORTHRIDGE VISION PLAN

The Northridge Vision Plan provides guidelines to upgrade Reseda Boulevard between Roscoe Boulevard and Devonshire Boulevard. The plan was developed over several years with significant input from the Councilmember Englander's office (CD-12), the Northridge East, Northridge South, and Northridge West Neighborhood Councils, the North Valley Chamber of Commerce, and California State University, Northridge. The Northridge Vision was led by the Mulholland Institute and finished in 2012.

The plan provides many design guidelines that have been adapted and promoted by the neighborhood partners. It was adopted as part of the City of Los Angeles' General Plan in October 2013.

The plan has led to a long-standing committee called Northridge Vision which maintains the strong partnership between the Northridge representatives. As projects are proposed, they reference the Northridge Vision to make sure that the projects will continue to lead to a better Northridge.





# NORTHRIDGE

**BY SAMINA ALAM**

Present day Northridge was inhabited by the Native American Gabrielino (Tongva people) around 2,000 years ago. They developed a community around an oasis, near the intersection of Parthenia and Reseda.

Father Juan Crespi wrote the first descriptive report of the San Fernando Valley, and Northridge, during the 1769 exploration by Spaniards. While not its original name, the San Fernando Valley was named after the Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana, which was founded in 1797. Originally, the valley was cattle ranching and later developed into agricultural lands with wheat fields, citrus orchards, and olive groves. A severe drought during the 1860s caused wheat farming to replace cattle ranching. The arrival of railroads and global wheat glut then caused redevelopment of the large ranches into small farms and the beginning of the development of the San Fernando Valley.



*Railway Depot, Zelzah, 1900: Present Day Northridge*



# NORTHRIDGE

While Van Nuys and San Fernando started experiencing population growth in the beginning of twentieth century, Northridge was the center of agricultural production. A small community developed around a railroad depot established in 1919, named as Zelzah, understood to be a Biblical reference to an oasis. The railway transported the locally grown wheat and other crops to the Port of Los Angeles and connected the community to the country.

It was in the post war era that Northridge began to experience population growth, as actors and entertainers started noticing this geographically diverse corner of the valley. The vast farmlands were transformed into estates and housing. This started a new suburban era for Zelzah. Zelzah's name change to North Los Angeles after the 1915 annexation by the City of Los Angeles. As the new name created confusion, another name was adapted: Northridge Village, which was finally shortened to Northridge. Northridge experienced significant residential development during the post-World War II suburban housing boom. Most of these buildings, built between 1940 and 1960 are still standing. 2.4% of the present housing established in Northridge were built 76 years ago. The development of arterial streets leading to freeways created easy commutes that turned this scenic area into an ideal suburban area to live the American Dream. Currently, around 75,000 people live in Northridge.



Devonshire Downs: Present day Corner of Devonshire and Zelzah

## RECREATION

The Devonshire Downs, once located on what is now CSUNs North Campus, had been used in the 1950s and 1960s for horse harness racing and hosted many festivals, carnivals and concerts and entertained the community people and beyond. One of the biggest events ever hosted was the Newport Pop Festival in June 1969, which had famous performers including Jethro Tull, Jimi Hendrix and Joe Cocker and attendance estimated at 200,000.

## EDUCATION

The need of an education system by the residents of Northridge resulted in establishing California State University, Northridge, locally referred to as CSUN. It was originally founded as a satellite campus to California State University, Los Angeles and in 1958 became an independent college known as the San Fernando Valley State College. In 1972, the name California State University, Northridge was adapted. The campus and student population has continuously grown, from 12,000 students in the mid-1960s, to around 30,000 in the 1980s to around 40,000 now. It is located in the center of Northridge and the largest employer in the San Fernando Valley.

Famous landmarks on the CSUN campus include the Oviatt Library, originally built in 1973 and expanded in 1991, the Orange Grove Garden, a remnant of the San Fernando Valley's citrus groves, the Botanic Garden, displaying native plants that thrive in Southern California; the Valley Performing Arts Center, built in 2011, and the CSUN noodle sculpture, installed in 1975 at the corner of Zelzah and Nordhoff.



**A BILLBOARD PROMOTES SAN FERNANDO VALLEY STATE COLLEGE, "THE HOME OF THE MATADORS."**



# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

BY K. DELANEY MORRIS

**P**lanning is the next step after organizing an idea. Community planning is a great example of this process. Great ideas in planning can improve community-wide quality of life. Equally, it also offers an open and unbiased stage for voicing concern.

Extensive surveying was central to the methodology and discovery of public participation and planning in the community of Northridge. Surveys were distributed in the prospective project area of Reseda Boulevard. Survey participants represent an array of residents, CSUN students, visitors and local business owners. In total, 438 people were asked how often they attend a Northridge community meeting. The answers were astounding. Only 52 of the 438 people had previously attended a community meeting. Specifically, about 87% of the 52 attendees declared that they had only ever attended one meeting. Public participation is a clear indicator of the success and failure of a community meeting. As meetings are held during weekday business hours, survey participants expressed the inability to attend community meetings. Consequently, interested parties cannot participate. This constraint empowers a small number of people to disproportionately decide for the larger community.



Research interview with expert and former neighborhood council President Chris Sales, asserted that many projects within the community find delay due to lack of community-wide participation. He also explained that most projects are reviewed by repeating community members and stakeholders. These findings reiterate the research hypothesis that states improved civic engagement would improve the overall transparency and success of a prospective project.

Community meetings and hearings should be live-streamed via the internet. They should also be interactive. Technology has already revolutionized the way that people interact with politics and social media in real time. This offers the viewer an immediate experience and creates the opportunity to voice their opinion on any topic. Technology would make meetings more accessible for those who are interested in participating, but unable to be physically present at the meeting. Through innovative technology, the public participation process can undergo constant revision.

With this information, a community meeting was organized and facilitated at Emle's, a popular restaurant on Reseda Boulevard, near CSUN campus. The greater community was invited to attend the meeting. Calls through the community council network, email invitations, flyers, and interested parties and stakeholders were sent an invitation to openly contribute at the meeting. Additionally, the Northridge Sparkle campaign helped distribute the invitation through their extensive contact list. Generously, Council District 12 advertised an invitation to the event via their weekly newsletter. No restricted community attendance, everyone was encouraged to bring interested parties along to the meeting.

During the meeting students presented a historical perspective of the project area and provided guidelines for the proposed changes. Attending guest were asked to give their opinions about the proposed changes. Participants were given the opportunity to vote on the name of the project area. The meeting was highly interactive, using a participatory research approach that gave participants full project transparency. Lastly, the application 'Facebook Live' was used to reach community members who were unable to physically attend the meeting.



# ZONING & HOUSING

BY JORDAN BARBAKOW

This section will introduce you to present zoning and land use, as well as existing housing demographics in Northridge. The predominant residential zone for Northridge is R1 or single-family residential (green). The area bordering CSUN is progressively denser residential R3 zoning (orange). Lastly, Reseda Boulevard is a combination of R3 and commercial C1-type zoning (blue). Homeownership falls within the Los Angeles County average at 46% ownership and median rent (\$2,600) is well above the burdensome threshold of 30% median household income. Generally, low land use variation occupies the length of Reseda Boulevard, while a homogenous residential R1-type zone defines greater Northridge.

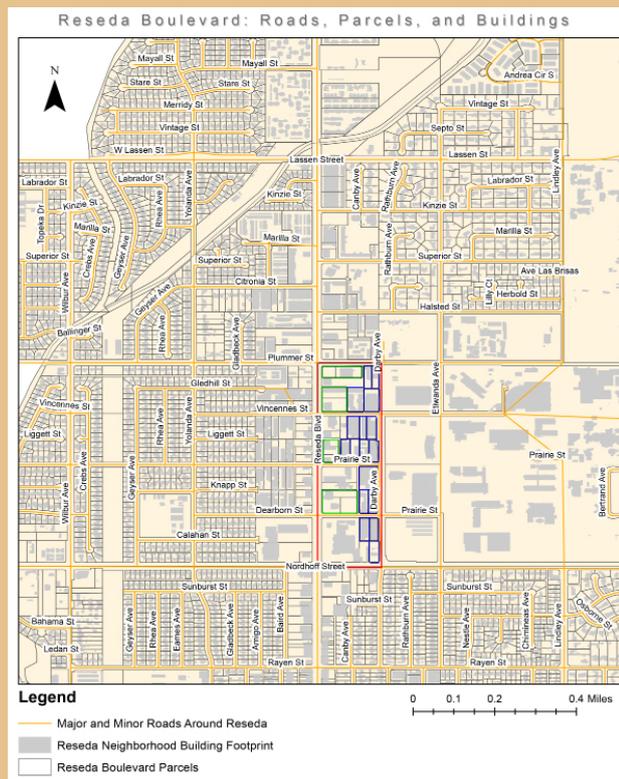
Through the lens of land use and zoning, a SWOT analysis revealed two prevailing influences. Of benefit, the predominant R1-type zone creates a strong and well-maintained community of homes. Conversely, the recognized neighborhood disadvantage is a product of its advantage: low-density zoning. The SWOT analysis established a follow-up survey question, which then helped lead the outcome for a recommended guideline

Recognizing inherent limitations and priorities, the survey question ascertained the desirability for mixed-use development. Of the respondents who replied desirably, about 79% represented a favorable stance on the adoption of a new, mixed-use zone. Conversely, those who responded unfavorably represented 21%, and did not approve of the development of a new, mixed-use zone. Therefore, it reasonably concluded that the representation of those who favored mixed-use development to those who did not, were very different people with very different sets of needs and concerns.

The natural conflict of low density, single-family residential zoning and mixed-use zoning, can offset the true opportunity that encourages mixed-use development. To this aim, the subsequent guideline will help control this outcome. The enrichment and supportive-preservation of single-family homes is critical to the success and future of Northridge. Therefore, a mixed-use zone cannot share a common connection to R1, RE, RA, or RS zones. Additionally, the future application of mixed-use zoning is to be solely at or near sub-street corners that intersect Reseda Boulevard and lead to CSUN campus.

A ‘spot zone’ approach for added density and mixed-use development will not proportionately support the neighborhood’s mixed-income housing and commercial needs. Thus, it is necessary to consider a regulatory blanket (red) to support density growth, yet remain within a practical range of targeted elements for future progress. Thus was born the idea for a smart growth overlay district.

## Design Guideline



Enhance Connection to CSUN with Mixed-Use Zoning. The Mator Mile Smart Growth Overlay District (MMOD) will help manage gradual development and improved connections in Northridge. Overlay regulations highlight the proposed introduction of mixed-use residential zones for greater range of affordable housing units along Reseda Boulevard, nearest to CSUN, and are in areas of concentrated economic activity (green). The MMOD will also foster density growth through streamlined approval of mixed-use development; encourage variety of land use; maintain attractive and distinct activity; reinforce surrounding single-family residential homeownership; help present and future economic development; and over time, through the successful achievement of progressive density benchmarks, deliver new and more centralized transit possibilities.

Preservation of Single-Family Homes. The MMOD is located between Reseda Boulevard and the CSUN campus to protect single-family homes on the west side of Reseda Boulevard from encroachment of high density development.



# ECONOMIC & MARKET SETTING

**BY ARTIN YAGHOBIAN**

**R**eseda Boulevard is the core commercial area of Northridge, and the “Matador Mile” is an essential part of the area, occupying many businesses that provide for the needs and wants of Northridge residents, visitors, and transients, the two largest being Vons and Big 5. The variety of restaurants, stores, office buildings, and auto related shops makes Reseda Boulevard vibrant and inviting. Most of the restaurants are either newly built or recently renovated, and offer wide variety of restaurants, including Chinese, Japanese, Mediterranean, Mexican, and American food establishments. A variety of tea and coffee shops also bring customers from the community, s well as from CSUN.

Nearly all the properties along Reseda Boulevard are exclusively zoned for commercial use. The Boulevard is a major North-South arterial in the San Fernando Valley, attracting many customers for the “Matador Mile” retailers. Enhancements along the Matador Mile, such as attractive stores and streetscapes will draw more CSUN students and local residents to the Boulevard. While there are currently several vacant stores, continued improvements will attract new businesses to occupy them, ultimately bringing in new shopping opportunities and jobs to the community. In addition, the large surface parking lots at many of the Reseda Boulevard shopping centers provide an opportunity to build subterranean parking, create street facing retail, or develop mixed use buildings.

Reseda Boulevard has tremendous potential for redevelopment by private investors and community partnerships. CSUN students use the Reseda Boulevard commercial corridor and increasing the identification with CSUN will increase student use. CSUN can help expand the branding of the area with CSUN related banners and promote projects by private builders to rejuvenate the East to West streets that connect the campus with Reseda Boulevard. By working with the neighborhood councils and aligning with the Northridge Vision, new projects can create economic and market vitality that work to increase jobs, tax revenues, and the overall prosperity of the community.

These images below are to help to envision what type of projects can be made to improve the community and its appearance while helping its economic and market setting to grow rather than decline.



## Design Guideline

Pedestrian Connection to Businesses. Businesses with large parking lots, more than 25 spaces, should place marked pedestrian crossings with either textured or painted paving to connect public sidewalks to the storefronts.



# UTILITIES

BY OLGA AYALA

The Matador Mile is part of the City of Los Angeles therefore, its main resource electricity and water is from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP), a city-owned utility. Internet, cable, and phone service has been deregulated since 1996, but the competition has significantly dwindled from 300 companies to 10 that currently provide service in California. The current Internet, TV and phone providers to Northridge include Spectrum, Frontier, Hughsnet. and AT&T.

With less competition, prices for internet services have been increasing. One alternative is to have the city provide internet services through a city-wide Wi-Fi program. After an initial study in 2009 identified that the cost of building a Wi-Fi



network would cost up to \$46 million, the city declined to implement this program. In 2013, Councilmember Blumenfield requested a review of the issue considering advances in telecommunication equipment, but there has been no further movement towards a free Wi-Fi service.

Free Wi-Fi would enhance the Matador Mile allowing guest and residents to connect to the Internet with their smart phones, tablets, and laptops. This convenience can attract consumers and create a lively street scene that benefits the local businesses. A pilot free Wi-Fi system would benefit the Matador Mile and allow the city to determine how well it will work.



## Design Guideline

Free Public WiFi along Reseda Boulevard. Free WiFi will increase the customer base for the businesses along Reseda Boulevard as both students and neighbors spend more time on the Matador Mile.



**BY JOSEPH PROVENZALE**

**R**eseda Boulevard and the San Fernando Valley lack green space. It is important that as connectivity between the Matador Mile and California State University Northridge (CSUN) is improved that green space is incorporated into the design. Landscaping and park space play a vital role in maintaining human connection to nature and the great outdoors. Exposure to green space provides immense benefits to those who are exposed to them, and provides ideal locations for the community to socialize.

Kaplan's Attention Restoration Theory, or ART dictates that there are four psychological components that support a restorative, and successful, environment: Fascination, which is an environment with stimuli that promotes exploration;

Being away, which is the feeling, either psychological or physical, of being extracted from daily routines and demands; Extent, which is space for exploration with a sense of coherence; and Compatibility, which is the match between a user's expectations and the ability of the space to accommodate that use

By reinventing Reseda Boulevard and its subsidiary connectors to CSUN in a way that induces feelings of Fascination, Being Away, Extent, and Compatibility, the area can be transformed into a creative, walkable space that patrons are motivated to explore.

### Design Guideline

Parklets and Architecture. Parklets and unique architecture can create opportunities for exploration of the area providing recreational activities that create fun opportunities.



# LANDSCAPE

BY SURESH RATNAM

Planting of Street trees and vegetation on sidewalks along Reseda Boulevard between Nordhoff Street and Plummer Street, (and side streets to Darby Avenue for landscaping and shade purposes is needed to improve livability in the Matador Mile. According to the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Los Angeles area has the highest urban heat island effect in California, with heat being absorbed in the concrete and pavement of buildings and streets. Climate models suggest that by 2050, the San Fernando Valley could see 92 days of extreme heat per year, compared with 54 in 1990.



Planting drought tolerant trees and vegetation in unshaded areas is the most effective cooling strategy to combat the urban heat island effect. Shade cast by trees cool sidewalks and buildings by preventing the built environment from absorbing heat from the sun during the day and retaining it at night. Also, water vapor released by trees lowers the air temperature around it, further cooling the environment. Shade trees along with cool pavements on sidewalks on Reseda Boulevard will decrease the temperature and mitigate the urban heat island effect.

Street trees contribute shapes, textures and color to the appearance of neighborhoods, adding beauty and maximizing property values. There is a total of 9,660 linear feet of sidewalk in the Matador Mile that could accommodate up to 276 street trees spaced 35 feet apart. An example would be to plant a mix of native California Fan Palms for background accent, the long lived and drought tolerant Peppermint tree for shade and the compact Chitalpa tree for shade and its showy white or pink flowers

Thus, a suitably landscaped Matador Mile will reduce the heat island effect, help clean the air, filter contamination from storm water and improve livability by giving character to the neighborhood around the University.



Concrete, asphalt and inadequate street trees on Reseda Blvd exacerbate the Heat Island Effect

## Design Guideline

Landscape Sidewalks and Parking Lots. Providing shade trees with a mix of native drought resistant trees will make an aesthetically pleasant area to attract customers and will help reduce the urban heat island effect.



Drought tolerant Pepper Mint Tree



Native California Fan Palm



# CONNECTIONS

BY SHELBY CRAMTON

This section will introduce you to existing connectivity conditions in Northridge. Reseda Boulevard is a major public asset to the California State University, Northridge (CSUN) campus, the greater Northridge community, and the surrounding San Fernando Valley. Currently, there is a significant disconnect between the boulevard and the campus. To understand why this disconnect exists, the issue was addressed through an urban analysis of existing street characteristics and connectivity within the Northridge area and how it relates to Reseda Boulevard.

Northridge has been developed with a similar street style throughout, characterized as a grid network of high speed arterials and curvilinear local streets disconnecting abruptly in the form of culs-de-sac. Street characteristics analyzed include classification and hierarchy, street patterns, and street structure. Connectivity measures employed include average block length, street density, intersection density, connected node ratio, and link-node ratio. Additionally, street networks and pedestrian networks were compared to understand if any differences exist between the two.



When analyzing connectivity, a balance should be maintained between access and mobility. As mobility increases, speeds increase as objects are transporting across the network. This is typically correlated with a decrease in access, which happens due to the increase in speed and movement. As mobility decreases, accessibility increases due to decreased speeds and movement. Achieving a balance between access and mobility ensures maximized connectivity. When connectivity increases, route options increase and distances decrease, which allows for direct travel between points and creates a more accessible system. The best opportunity to improve connectivity in Northridge exists within the pedestrian network – it has the potential to exhibit higher connectivity levels when compared to the street network. Expanding the pedestrian network will also help reach a greater balance between access and mobility.

The following design guideline will help local planners and advocacy groups in prioritizing connectivity in Northridge’s future.



## Design Guideline

Additional Outdoor Furniture. Street furniture and other streetscape enhancements such as landscaping, street trees and decorative pavement, can increase the walkability of the area by increasing the pedestrian experience with interesting interactions when traveling through the Matarador Mile and provides a place to rest and enjoy the area.



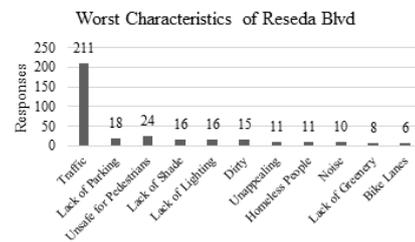
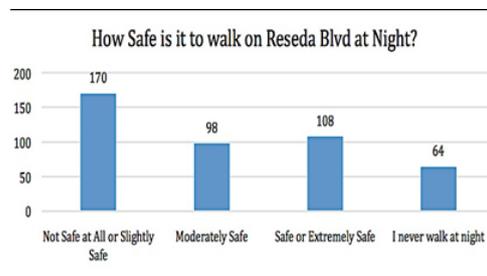
# NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

BY NARA GASPARIAN

Neighborhood character is a combination of different elements that give neighborhoods their unique identity and distinct personality. A well-defined and vibrant neighborhood includes well connected areas, such as areas connected to where community members go to work, school, eat, and play. This qualitative assessment analyzes the neighborhood character of Northridge, and how it contributes to the mobility and connectivity of CSUN and its surrounding street segments, primarily Reseda Blvd.

The questionnaire outcomes refer to one question: What is the worst characteristic of Reseda Boulevard? The issue of traffic is the most popular response amongst the students when asked about the worst characteristic of Reseda Blvd, followed by renters, the renters who are also students. The safety of pedestrians is the second most popular response, and it is most noted by students and homeowners.

Pedestrian safety, especially at night is of great concern to the neighborhood, mostly to students. Approximately 40% of the respondents claim that they do not feel safe walking on Reseda Blvd at night. It is evident that the lack of sense of safety is due to the little visibility of pedestrians. Road lights enhance the visibility of vehicles and those occupying the road; however, pedestrian-oriented lights can enhance the visibility of pedestrians.



## Design Guideline

**Pedestrian-Scale Lighting.** Pedestrian-scale lighting is an effective and functional addition to Reseda Boulevard, increasing pedestrian safety at night, illuminating pleasing travel paths, providing unique identity to the area, and identifying stores and restaurants..



# STREET CHARACTER

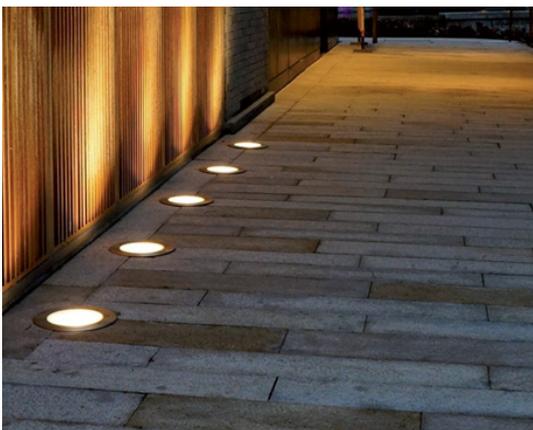
BY ALVIN ESTRADA

**E** The character of the street impacts our perception of an area and plays a role in influencing pedestrian and vehicular activity. This chapter focuses on the elements that make Reseda Boulevard unique and targets elements that can be improved. By understanding the street character, we are able to enhance the atmosphere that Reseda Boulevard provides for its residents and commuters in aspects of enjoyment and safety. With these views in mind, this chapter will present research-based analysis that will present possible enhancements that entice movement in this area, which would encourage a connective and accessible relationship with California State University, Northridge. Ultimately, this relationship would be fruitful to both parties in safety and economic development.



In order to make Reseda Boulevard a more enjoyable place for pedestrians, we need to provide places that attracts people. Some elements that can be improved include, crosswalks or sidewalk lighting for added safety. Another element that can be improved is the crosswalk distance by adding curb extensions. Both these view were developed by receiving feedback from the public from questionnaires. Twelve percent of questionnaire respondents stated that there is an issue regarding distance with crosswalks on Reseda Boulevard, 19% stated that there is not enough time to cross a crosswalk, 7% stated that the crosswalks have maintenance issues, 11% stated that there is a dangerous hazard to the crosswalk, and traffic safety problems on Reseda Boulevard was the number one problem with 43% participates.

So why is this important? By creating a safer, inviting, and aesthetically pleasing area, the community will experience a positive economic boom. The university already brings a great deal of foot traffic to the community. If these recommendations are implemented, there could be an increase in captured foot traffic, which would then increase tax revenue in Northridge, minimizing costs for new projects and civil services, and ultimately increasing property value.



## Design Guideline

**Curb Extensions.** Curb extensions increase pedestrian safety by reducing pedestrian travel lengths and calming vehicular traffic. **In-Pavement Crosswalk Markers.** In-pavement crosswalk markers at major intersections would better identify the crosswalks for vehicular traffic. They can also create a unique neighborhood identifier.



# BLOCK CHARACTER

## BY BRITNEY GATEWOOD

Los Angeles is a city of culturally and physically diverse neighborhoods. These elements define its character. The physical design of these individual communities determines, to a rather considerable extent, residents' quality of life. The Valley is known to have a sense of uniformity with no real identifiers to let you know when you've left one neighborhood and entered another. Along with building connectivity between CSUN and the Northridge community, we want to make Reseda a unique destination spot. The purpose of this section is to understand how the built environment affects perceptions and the quality of life of the residents

This concept is outlined in the Northridge Vision Plan. It states that everyone should have the right to:

1. Walk and stroll in comfort
2. Sit down in nice, comfortable places
3. Meet and talk—by chance and by design
4. Enjoy pleasant places to go and comfortable places to stop
5. Look at attractive things along the way
6. See places that are interesting
7. Feel safe in a public environment
8. Enjoy other people around them



Don Larson, a valued stakeholder of the Matador Mile transformation has been instrumental in efforts to revitalize Northridge. One initiative that he has been actively engaged is the “Horses Across the Valley” project. Artistically distinctive horse statues are chosen by the Neighborhood Council and the San Fernando Valley Museum to represent the Valley and its historical importance.. These statues could be integrated into the Matador Mile project along Reseda Boulevard to reflect its equestrian past.



## Design Guideline



Street Art. Strategically placed murals and sculptures will make the Matador Mile a destination. Installing a “Horses Across the Valley” statue will continue the artwork in the Northridge Vision area and unique murals for the Matador Mile will differentiate the area from the other sections of Reseda Boulevard. The map indicates ideal mural locations that are on the blank-side of buildings but will not interfere with business signage.

# SAFETY

BY ALEN ESTRADA

There's a lot of pedestrian and road activity in Northridge, especially on Reseda Boulevard and there's an overall concern for safety.

The purpose of this section is to emphasize the importance of pedestrian safety and ultimately enhance the overall safety of Northridge. Utilizing the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), this section identifies methods in which the built environment could aid in the prevention of criminal activity in order to protect the residents, students and visitors of Northridge, with a systematic integration of design, technology, and operation for the defense of three critical assets: people, information and property.

According to the Los Angeles Times and the Los Angeles Police Department, the neighborhood of Northridge is the 27th most dangerous, out of 272 total neighborhoods in Los Angeles County. The area experiences 187 violent and property crimes per capita annually.. According to a six month summary of the department statistics, there have been a total of 160 violent crimes in Northridge between March and September, 2016, including 4 homicides, 18 rapes, 76 aggravated assaults, and 62 robberies. In the same 6-month period, the area experienced 1,159 property crimes, including 177 burglaries, 574 thefts, 130 Grand theft autos, and 278 thefts from vehicles.



The use of CPTED concepts, such as Natural Surveillance, can be seen in various areas throughout the streets from the large storefront windows that face the street, to wide open parking lots that help increase pedestrian visibility by allowing the general public to be more vigilant of their surroundings. Defensible spaces are areas in which crime targets are denied to intruders and criminals through the use of increased visibility in dark or shaded areas that are highly illuminated by street or storefront lighting, or protected by physical or symbolic barriers that define public and private space and property.

Nearly 39% of the respondents stated that they feel unsafe walking on Reseda Boulevard at night, and 15% claim that they prefer not to walk on Reseda Boulevard at night.

This may be due to the lack of abundant lighting throughout the boulevard, or it may be due to little visibility during dark hours. Twenty-two percent of the respondents stated that they felt moderately safe walking at night, indicating that there are aspects of the boulevard that provide a sense of security and comfort to the public. Twenty-five percent of the respondents feel completely safe walking on Reseda Boulevard, which may be due to the various CPTED attributes that can be seen along Reseda Boulevard. These include, the use of natural surveillance through large storefront windows and proper street side lighting from nearby businesses and apartment buildings, defensible spaces, and territorial reinforcement through the use of landscaping, walls and barriers do identify public and private spaces.



**Design Guideline**

Mechanical Surveillance. Closed-caption television cameras and motion detector activated lighting can be installed to decrease property crime in the area. The presence of the extra surveillance will deter crimes.



# NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT

BY JOSSIMAR FUENTES

**N**on-motorised transport is often a key element of successfully encouraging clean urban transport. It can be a very attractive mode of transport for relatively short distances, which make up the largest share of trips in cities. The key to reversing the trend towards more private vehicle use is making walking and cycling attractive, together with improving public transport.

The purpose of this section is to provide an in depth look at the current state of Reseda Boulevard, examining the changes made by the Great Streets Initiative, and provide information that may be useful in future design concepts. The Analysis focuses on Reseda Boulevard, between Nordhoff and Lassen, using observation, data of non-motorized transportation, use and an inventory of pedestrians and bicycle infrastructure.

Findings include, most pedestrian traffic is concentrated at the intersections on Reseda Boulevard. The intersections with the most activity rank in this order: Vincennes, Plummer, Nordhoff Street, and Prairie. Pedestrian activity at the intersections was primarily an east-west trend, going to or from the direction CSUN. A major opportunity for Reseda Boulevard is the fact that it is to utilize the high number of pedestrians and cyclists, as customers rather than transient pedestrians. A major concern, derived from the research is that only 29% of the cyclist's utilized the bike lane, while the other 61% were using the sidewalks or the parking lots.

Reseda Boulevard is a major arterial for both automobiles and non-motorized transport. The data demonstrates the heavy foot traffic, but time spend on the street is minimal. All of the modes of non-motorized transport rely on the connecting streets that run East and West, while by comparison, the movement North and South on Reseda is minimal. Currently, Reseda Boulevard does not appeal to pedestrians and cyclists, and therefore, the time spent on the street is short. Attracting people to congregate and be active on the Boulevard is crucial to the connection with the University.

## Design Guideline(s)

Enhance Bicycle Connectivity and Safety. Installing bike lanes on the east-west roads connecting Reseda Boulevard with CSUN would increase bicycle safety for the large amount of east-west non-motorized traffic. Similarly, bike boxes at the major intersections will increase bicycle rider safety.



Report produced by LADOT with Reseda Blouvard on front cover



# PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

BY KEVIN KAY

Improving the public transportation experience on the Matador Mile can increase mobility for students, residents and shoppers. Reseda Boulevard is served by several bus routes and CSUN has a transit center served by many additional bus routes. A long and uncomfortable wait for a bus reduces transit use. Enhancing the waiting experience could improve current user's perception of public transportation, and encourage new ridership.

A survey of Matador Mile bus stops and usage performed in Fall 2016 suggests there is adequate seating. However, there is room for improvement in areas other than seating. Surveys conducted with pedestrians along Reseda Boulevard indicate xx% of users do not find the bus stops to be adequately clean.

As the map indicates, x stops are missing trash receptacles and y were found to have trash problems. (include map) The bus stops also lack amenities identified in the City of Los Angeles bus stop design guidelines. The most important missing component is wayfinding signs for those arriving to the Matador Mile. With these areas in mind, some guidelines can be implemented around bus stops to improve mobility on Reseda Blvd and connectivity with the CSUN Campus:

## Design Guideline(s)

**Improve Cleanliness of Bus Stops.** Ensure all bus stops have at least one trash receptacle and that busier stops have two. Easy and convenient disposal of trash will help patrons maintain a clean street and stop.

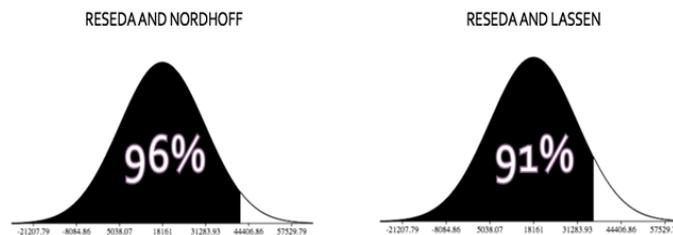
**Install Wayfinding Signage.** Wayfinding signage at bus stops will help transit users acclimate with the area with either maps or direction signposts (or both). These signs will highlight neighborhood locations of public interest including locations on the CSUN campus. Visually theming the signage will increase Matador Mile identity and the CSUN connection.



# TRAFFIC

BY DANG NGUYEN

Residents and visitors alike agree that Reseda Boulevard is overburdened with traffic congestion issues. In fact, statistics show that Reseda and Nordhoff traffic volumes are higher than 96%, and Reseda and Lassen traffic volumes are higher than 90% of intersections in the City of LA. CSUN is a major university that draws students and faculty members throughout the entire city who utilize nearby highways (the 118, 405, and the 101) to get there. Interestingly, our studies show that between 2005 - 2014, traffic has always been this bad. This suggests that Reseda Blvd has been, and is being used to maximum capacity.



Prior to creating our design guidelines, pedestrians on Reseda Boulevard (Between Lassen Street and Nordhoff Street) were asked two traffic related questions:

- (1) How often do you drive on Reseda boulevard?
- (2): As a driver, how frequently do you avoid Reseda Boulevard due to congestion?

We found that the highest response category originated from those who in-fact never drive on Reseda Boulevard (20%), and found that respondents drive “5 or more times per week” as the second highest response category. Moreover, we found that the highest response category for those who avoids using Reseda Boulevard originate from respondents who “sometimes” avoids using Reseda Boulevard due to congestion. Interestingly, the second highest response category for that question originates from those who never avoid taking Reseda Boulevard due to congestion.

## Design Guideline

Implement a Bike Share Program. A bike share system will provide an easy alternative to using a car and are effective with short distances. This can provide an easy connection for Reseda Boulevard businesses and CSUN students. Anti-Gridlock Policy. Restricting on-street parking during peak travel hours will increase traffic flow through the Matador Mile.



# ACCESS TO FOOD

By Rawan Al-Jamal

**N**orthridge and the San Fernando Valley are not considered food deserts as there are many grocery stores in reasonable driving distance, but multimodal access to food via walking, bicycling and transit is poor. Students living on California State University, Northridge campus have even fewer options. For the food options that do exist, such as farmers markets and events centered on food, there is a disconnect between the Northridge community along and surrounding Reseda Boulevard and the campus community.

My quantitative research involved collecting data through inventory and counts of food options including grocery stores, liquor stores, sit down restaurants, and fast food restaurants in Northridge. I conducted an inventory and count of food gardens and farmer’s markets in the San Fernando Valley.

There are no local food gardens in the Matador Mile study area; however, the CSUN Sustainability Institute has a student run demonstration composting garden.

The constraints developed from the research suggest that there is greater amount of unhealthy, fast food options along Reseda Boulevard and a larger inventory of liquor stores than grocery stores. Food options are grouped in certain areas on specific major corridors, such as Reseda Boulevard and Tampa Boulevards.

Overall, the majority of food options as reported by my inventory counts concluded a majority of the food options in Northridge are fast food and big box chain restaurants.

Two-thirds of the survey respondents indicated they believed there was a good or extremely good variety of food options in the Matador Mile. In fact, 39% of the respondents indicated that the food option along the Matador Mile was the best characteristic of the area.



## Design Guideline

Food-Oriented Community Events. Hosting food truck events and farmer’s markets on the streets that connect Reseda Boulevard with CSUN will provide access to more food options, connect pedestrians to Reseda Boulevard and the CSUN campus, and provide socialization opportunities.



# POSSIBLE SCENARIOS WITH ALL DESIGN GUIDELINES

**PAST PLANNING EFFORTS & PUBLIC PROCESS:**

**Internet-Streamed Community Meetings**

Live stream interactive public meetings on the Internet.

**ZONING & HOUSING**

**Preservation of Single-Family Homes**

**Mixed-use zone cannot share a common connection with R1, RE, RA, or RS zones**

Enhance connection to CSUN with mixed-use zoning  
Mixed-use zone is to be developed at or near sub-street corners that intersect and lead to CSUN campus

**ECONOMIC & MARKET SETTINGS:**

**Pedestrian Connection to Businesses**

Implement marked pedestrian paths through parking lots with twenty-five parking spaces or more

**UTILITIES**

**Free public Wi-Fi along Reseda Boulevard**

Increase accessibility to basic Wi-Fi service while attracting patrons to Reseda Boulevard.

**PARKS & OPEN SPACE:**

Use California native plants for landscaping along eastern side of Reseda Boulevard, as well as develop parklets.

**LANDSCAPE**

**Landscape Parking Lots and Sidewalks**

Plant drought tolerant and native plants that provide adequate shade and visual appeal.

**CONNECTIONS:**

**Streetscape Enhancements**

Implement streetscape enhancements such as trees, street furniture, landscaping, decorative paving, and improved sidewalks

**NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER:**

**Pedestrian-Scale Lighting**

Improve dynamic pedestrian activity at night with pedestrian-scale lighting.

**STREET CHARACTER:**

**Curb Extensions**

Reduce crosswalk distance by extending the curbs.

**In-pavement Crosswalk Markers**

Install blinking in-pavement lights to better highlight the crosswalk right-of-way.

**BLOCK CHARACTER:**

**Street Art**

Cultivate uniqueness through street art and the decoration of the sides of buildings and sidewalks, including the use of murals

**CRIME SAFETY:**

**Mechanical Surveillance**

Use CCTV cameras and motion detector lighting long Reseda Boulevard to help keep intruders away from people and property.

Increase the use of personnel, including security guards, parking lot attendants & police

**NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORT:**

**Enhance Bicycle Connectivity and Safety**

Implement more bike lanes on cross streets and include “bike boxes” at major intersections.

**Additional outdoor furniture**

Enhance pedestrian role on Reseda Blvd and provide visual connection to CSUN by adding more pedestrian furniture.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION :**

**Improve Cleanliness of Bus Stops**

**Install new trash receptacles at all bus stops**

**Install wayfinding signage**

Improve visual connection with CSUN and enhance transit user experience with directional signage and maps at major bus stops.

**TRAFFIC:**

**Implement Bike Share Program**

Provide a bike share program to reduce automobile dependency.

**Anti-Gridlock Policy.**

Restrict on-street parking during peak travel time to reduce arterial congestion on Reseda Boulevard.

**ACCESS TO FOOD:**

**Promote Education about Healthy Food Alternatives.**

Utilize an Urban Agriculture Zone as incentive to property owners that to provide vacant land for public gardens.

**COMMUNITY:**

**Organize Historically Themed Events**

Creating events with historic themes using the open space of CSUN campus will help to engage the community with Northridge’s expansive history.



# DESIGN CONCEPTS



The future of Reseda Blvd holds a potential for a mix of utility and art. We have designed solar embedded LED lights, crosswalk art, art murals, and extra greenery along with utility features including safety call boxes and pedestrian level lighting.



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# DESIGN CONCEPTS



Northridge's future looks at the streets with pedestrian in mind. This would be achieved by adding people oriented lighting on the sidewalk. The experience that their light would add the area would only be augmented by providing places to socialize like pocket parks and/or parklets.

This view shows a side street that connect Reseda Boulevard to California State University, Northridge. Here we see how this location could look like if we closed off a part of a street to do events. This can promote the area and proved.



This view displays what an archway would look like if place at the entrance of the Matador Mile. By adding an artful design, this monument would bring attention from outside communities to have a desire to visit this future land mark. This image also show high density with mix-use structures, curve extensions with ADA accessibility, pedestrian oriented lighting, cross-walk lighting, additional vegetation, and bike boxes where bicyclist can wait while the light is red.

# ACTION ITEMS

## Embed solar lighting in sidewalks

Chapter: Northridge Character; Neighborhood; Safety

Additional lighting will enhance pedestrian safety and Reseda Boulevard’s walkability. Originally, 13-foot pedestrian-oriented lighting was recommended along Reseda Boulevard and Darby Avenue. Solar bulbs were also proposed as a means of improving pedestrian safety. Additionally, stakeholders recommended in-sidewalk, embedded solar lighting. The feature is much cheaper as compared to a single, \$5,000 lamppost. Solar lighting means that there is no requirement to tap into the electrical grid which would lead to a lighting assessment to property owners. Solar LED lamps constitute an infinite, renewable energy, furthering cost effectiveness for pedestrian lighting. Lastly, LED bulbs can be programmed to display dynamic colors, which would improve the character of the community.

Short term: Establish pilot project on Prairie Street, find vendors and installation specialists.

Cost: \$400 per unit

Long term: Install the sidewalk-embedded solar lighting along Reseda Boulevard, sub-streets leading to CSUN, and Darby Avenue once a pilot project is proven successful.

Cost: \$400 per unit

## MataVIA (CicLAvia in Northridge)

Chapter: Mobility: Non-motorized Transport; Traffic

CicLAvia is a temporary open streets event that aims to connect active transportation, public health and urban land use. Introducing CicLAvia in Northridge along Reseda Blvd, between Lassen and Parthenia, would represent an extension of an already successful event. The MataVia can also incorporate the CSUN campus helping integrate the university with Reseda Boulevard.

Cost: \$300,000 to \$500,000

## Food truck events

Chapter: Accessibility to Food; Mobility: Non-motorized Transport; Northridge Character

Food trucks foster community, allowing neighbors and vendors to interact. They also provide an opportunity for unique food experiences for residents and students that are not currently available along the Matador Mile.

Chapter: Accessibility to Food; Mobility: Non-motorized Transport; Northridge Character

Short-Term: Host a demonstration food truck event

Long-Term: Add food to other events such as Matavia (Ciclavia), Art Walk/Night, concerts, and festivals.



# ACTION ITEMS

## Matador Mile Smart Growth Overlay District

Chapter: Zoning and Housing

The proposed overlay and its regulations will encourage the progressive application of mixed-use residential zones. Subsequently, development of low and moderate-income housing along Reseda Boulevard could occur. The MMOD will also maintain physical and environmental distinctness and retain property valuation for R1 homeowners. More rental units available for students will also help reduce traffic related to commuting students.

Short term: During the first year, the community would decide on a boundary, assign regulatory criteria, and form development policies. During the second and third years, a budget would be created to guide future governance. In addition, implementation of the 'Overlay District' would be completed.

Long term: The community will continuously assess, revise, and manage the performance impacts (positive and negative) of the MMOD's regulations and policy outcomes.

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## Street trees throughout the Matador Mile

Chapter: Landscape; Connections

A proper mix of street trees and landscaping would serve to distinctly brand the Matador Mile in addition to casting shade and combating the urban heat island effect. Street trees would set the backdrop to an inviting and comfortable neighborhood environment that encourages walkability. This may prove to be the catalyst for events such as farmers markets, art walks, street festivals, and a general café culture in the Matador Mile because it could improve the experience of walking in the area.

Short-term: Create a Master Landscaping Plan to select suitable drought tolerant trees based on their water usage and shade potential. The objective would be to plant these selected street trees along the Matador Mile while paying attention to the landscaping and shade requirements at each location.

Cost: \$5,000

Long-term: The long-term objective would be to have a maintenance and upkeep plan to ensure survival after planting and longevity.

Cost: Approximately \$22,000 for 276 trees from nurseries in California



# ACTION ITEMS

## Curb extensions along Matador Mile

Improvements to the streetscape will promote pedestrian safety while also enhancing the aesthetics. This includes constructing curb extensions at the majority of intersections, which will make pedestrians more visible to cars and shorten the cross-walk distance.

Chapter: Mobility: Public Transport; Northridge Character; Safety

Short-term: Install a demonstration project of temporary recycled rubber curb extensions that can be bolted to the pavement while allowing storm water to pass under the extension. Implement improvements at the intersection of Dearborn Street and Reseda Boulevard.

Cost: Approximately \$50,000 for curb extensions.

Long-term: Install temporary recycled rubber curb extensions at all intersections (Nordhoff, Prairie and Plummer), but not Vincennes because of the bus traffic.

Cost: Approximately \$150,000 for the curb extensions.

## Street furniture & parklets

Chapter: Park and Open Space; Connections; Northridge Character

Streetscape design elements consist of street furniture, which would increase connectivity to CSUN campus and improve community aesthetics. Due to its high usage, pedestrian-oriented amenities would be implemented along Reseda Boulevard.

Short-term: Install flexible street furniture

Cost: \$500 to \$1,000 per furniture set

Long-term: Install parklets. Develop a team to apply for city parklet grants.

Cost: \$40,000 per parklet

## Matador Mile Art Walk & Street Festival

Chapter: Mobility; Non-motorized transport; Northridge Character; Economic and Market Setting

Art walks help define a community; they showcase local talent and provide people with a reason to explore their neighborhoods. Incorporating a festival element would allow for a creative and exciting way for Northridge residents and Cal State University Northridge students to engage in the community. It would also provide an opportunity for local artists, vendors, and musicians to showcase their wares and talents. By closing down a side street, namely Darby, Dearborn, or Prairie, between the University and Reseda, it would activate the space and create a fun event for the community.

Short-Term: Host an initial event. This would allow organizers to gage the community response to the event, as well as determine what sorts of attractions are desired. This would also help determine the best ways of reaching out to talent and participants.

Long-Term: Organize an event every other month, or perhaps quarterly, and incorporate new elements as well (e.g. petting zoos, farmers markets, Carnivals). Attracting potential sponsors and different attractions would also be desired.



# ACTION ITEMS

## Music festivals

Chapter: Northridge Character; Economic and Market Setting

Large scale music festivals have the potential to be an exciting community event hosted at the Matador Mile. These festivals reflect the 1960's history of Northridge and remind visitors and the community of a bygone era. In addition, the return of music festivals into the community would spark economic benefits and create a sense of place for the community.

Short term: A one-night event could be organized during the evening in a public space once a month. A potential location is the historic Orange Grove at CSUN. The themes can be selected with the help of the CSUN Arts and Music departments and performed by local musicians.

Costs: Approximately \$1000 including renting tents and booths (\$200), performance stage and music system (\$500), snacks and drinks and people management (\$300), and publications to advertise the event (\$200)

Long term: A two-day event could be organized every year for the City. The music festival would not only include music performances, but also would feature attractions such as pony rides, a craft and food fair, games, fireworks, and other events.

Costs: Approximately \$12,000 to \$20,000

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## Free Wi-Fi

Chapter: Utilities; Connections

Short-Term: Provide improved free Wi-Fi coverage throughout the Matador Mile and the area in between Reseda Boulevard and the CSUN campus. This would especially be useful for events hosted by community members or community organizations.

Cost: \$5,000 to 10,000 per extra unit depending on the specific infrastructure needed and the speed requested

Long-Term: Facilitate thorough coverage of free Wi-Fi throughout Los Angeles, and specifically Northridge.

Cost: \$38 million to \$46 million for the entire City of Los Angeles

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## Street art & banners along Matador Mile

Chapter: Northridge Character: Block, Neighborhood

Incorporate street art, street banners, murals and sculptures along Reseda Boulevard in order to create an identity for the Matador Mile that will connect with CSUN students and Northridge community members.

Short Term: Create streetlight banners to be hung on Reseda Boulevard and paint a mural on the CSUN Annex. CSUN banners along the Matador Mile for commencement and to welcome the students for the new academic year would be festive and create greater connection between the university and Reseda Boulevard.

Cost: Mural - \$10,000 to \$15,000

Long Term: Continue to expand murals across the area.

Cost: \$10,000 to \$15,000 per mural



# ACTION ITEMS

## Complimentary/reduced price parking for events

Chapter: Accessibility to Food; Mobility: Non-motorized traffic; Northridge Character

Parking for weekend events such as the Art Walk and music festivals can be difficult with parking outside of the university. CSUN currently charges \$8/day for parking.

Short Term: Work with the CSUN Parking Department for reduced price parking

Long Term: Identify a corporate sponsor to provide reduced price or complimentary parking for events.

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## Pedestrian crossings & storefront illumination

Chapter: Economic and Market Setting; Connections

The following recommendations will help community and business owners create an environment that will help increase the number of customers, retail stores, and housing units, which will improve the economic and market setting on the Matador Mile.

Mark pedestrian crossings inside major parking lots and illuminate storefront entrances and building façades. This is a low cost option to increase safety and provide aesthetic improvements.

Costs: Striped crosswalks - approximately \$100 to \$2,100 each (on average approximately \$7 per square foot); High visibility crosswalks - \$600 to \$5,700 each (\$2,500 on average)







May 2017