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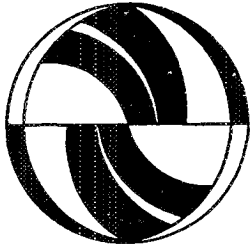
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**Inner-City Commercial Strips: Evolution,
Decay—Retrofit?**

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Inner-city commercial strips

Evolution, decay—retrofit?

The focus of this research is the commercial strip of the American inner city which, due to disinvestment, high crime rates, arbitrary and haphazard development, and poor connections to surrounding residential neighbourhoods, has become a problematic environment. Physical retrofit and economic policies are urgently needed in order to reclaim these decaying urban environments. This paper concentrates on the subject of physical retrofit, using three inner-city commercial strips in Los Angeles as case studies to document residents' needs and utilisation of these strips, and proposes design and policy changes for their physical improvement.

Commercial strips can be defined as major city streets lined with commercial activities. They usually host a mixture of retail establishments, office buildings, automobile dealerships, car parks, some occasional residential buildings, and often vacant space. These strips represent typical landscapes in American cities (Clay, 1973). They cut across different urban sections, serving as access routes and travel corridors. Prior to the construction of freeways they were the principal traffic arteries of the city, and they still carry a significant share of vehicular traffic. Inner-city commercial strips can be characterised as the 'in-between' spaces of the city. They connect centres with sub-centres, and the latter with one another, in the multi-centred urban expanse that is typical of the post-industrial American city¹ (Sawyers and Tabb, 1984).

Despite their omnipresence and functional significance, very little effort has gone into studying and understanding how these strips function, change, develop, or decay over time. Architects have concentrated on the appearance and changing architecture of the strip (Venturi et al., 1977; Ford, 1994). Their debate has focused

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¹ This pattern of multi-centred development, where employment centres are dispersed through an urban region loosely connected by freeways and arterial roads, is most typical of west coast cities.

solely on aesthetics—is the strip environment suffering from ‘visual pollution’ as some have charged (Blake, 1964) or is it a valid reflection of everyday values as Robert Venturi et al. (1977) have insisted? Some geographers have examined the distribution of land uses along urban arterial roads at specific points in time (Foster and Nelson, 1958; Berry, 1959; Boal and Johnson, 1971). Very few have analysed the dynamic aspects of strip development through time (Jakle and Mattson, 1981) or the social ecology of the strip—the various types of users and uses—in relation to its design and management (Southworth and Lynch, 1974).

From a policy standpoint commercial corridors have received only cursory attention, relegated to a role simply as connectors of the centres. In the last two decades city planning policy in most major North American cities has concentrated attention on revamping downtown areas, reclaiming waterfronts, promoting systems of movement—freeways and metrorails—but has basically ignored the streets of the inner city. As a result, more often than not, commercial strips in these areas represent fragmented pieces within the metropolitan region, with poor connections to their surrounding context. Uncoordinated, haphazard, unsightly, and unsafe development patterns often characterise these commercial roadway stretches.

In order to understand why inner-city strips have become problematic environments consideration is first given to an overview of their historic evolution. Then attention is focused on three case studies in order to analyse their socio-physical environment, problems and prospects as reported in a survey of Los Angeles inner-city residents, and as documented in structured field observations. Recommendations and conclusions are mainly derived from these sources.

Genesis and evolution of urban commercial strips

The evolution of commercial strips in North America goes back to at least the early 1800s when the first ‘Main Streets’ appeared in cities. By the 1830s the city markets, which had been a vibrant feature of colonial towns, were giving way to individual business establishments and merchants’ showrooms (Goldfield and Brownell, 1990). Retailers found it beneficial to locate along the Main Street, where they could display their goods and attract customers. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century these commercial streets were found only at the heart of central business districts. But by the middle of the nineteenth century, when most American cities started to expand rapidly, commercial uses started developing in a linear fashion on streets radiating from the downtown area. Many years before the appearance of the automobile as a dominant mode of transportation, alert speculators were erecting commercial buildings along tramcar lines. These commercial establishments served the households that settled along the lines, sparing the residents from having to go all the way to downtown to shop (Warner, 1962). Initially a few stores, churches, and sometimes schools were built to serve the residents. These first establishments outside downtown were modest, consisting of a single row of shop fronts. They were seen as interim improvements, designed to produce enough revenue to pay the taxes and hold the property for more intense development in the future. Landowners along the strip believed that with downtown expansion, over time their properties

would acquire more value. They dreamed of high-rise commercial buildings occupying their lots in the future. Hence, they built flimsy, cheap one-storey structures, which were referred to as 'taxpayers'; the commercial streets they fronted were called 'taxpayer strips' (Liebs, 1985).

A linear, centreless shopping district—the commercial strip—was evolving. For businesses, taxpayer strips offered an ideal solution. Rents were lower than downtown, yet many people lived close by. Customers could walk, or even take the electric car to the shops. Strips were less congested than downtown. As the primary access routes that connected downtown to the outlying residential districts, the strips quickly became important and vibrant places for commercial, recreational, and residential activities.

The automobile initially gave a further boost to businesses located along commercial strips. By the 1920s, motor vehicles were not only more numerous but also faster and larger. Motorists wishing to shop grew impatient with the crowded streets and the lack of parking downtown. The cost of land was considerably cheaper along the outlying commercial corridors. Soon banks and department stores opened branch outlets along the strips, vying for choice plots on major intersections.

Taxpayer strips could be found all over the country. They were loosely lined with single-storey retail stores and occasional supermarkets, movie houses, and two-storey commercial buildings. They combined both car- and pedestrian-oriented functions: pharmacies, grocery stores and small shops. By the mid-1930s parts of these strips were widened and extended, and these improvements set the stage for eventual strip commercialisation, and the complete dominance of the automobile. Soon commercial corridors became lined with petrol stations, hot dog stands, motels, shopping centres and drive-in theatres. As competition increased, merchants looked for new ways to lure their prospective clients. Each sign and building had to visually shout 'slow down, pull in and buy'. Thus, the architecture of the strip became the direct product of its commercial function (Liebs, 1985). Rules along the strip were usually less strict than those downtown or in older, denser, commercial zones. Keenly aware that trade would be lost if they could not capture the attention of motorists, merchants tried to blend building and sign, architecture and advertising.

Immediately following the Second World War, the scene began to change rapidly. Increased suburbanisation contributed to the decay and demise of many inner-city commercial strips. Downtowns never expanded horizontally to encompass the land fronting the strips as the original land owners had hoped. Instead, property along the strips was devalued as highways bypassed the inner city. The automobile opened the way to new, low-density suburbs; federal policies subsidised the move of the middle class to remote and outlying areas. Housing along and behind the corridors filtered down to low-income families. As the economic crisis of the inner city deepened, demand for commercial space along inner-city strips fell dramatically. High-class shops, banks and department stores migrated into suburban malls. Starting in the 1960s many small retail shops were boarded up. Some were replaced by long warehouse-type buildings with blank, windowless facades; others were simply demolished: fenced, empty lots appeared in their place. Without adequate public funds the public realm deteriorated. Pavement trees and street furniture

disappeared, parking lots multiplied, and corridors became collections of unrelated buildings and incompatible uses. Proliferating mini-malls at corner sites during the 1980s did nothing to enhance the economic vitality of commercial corridors.² Thus, in the 1990s many inner-city commercial streets are but skeletons of their formerly prosperous selves. The overabundance of commercially zoned property in combination with economic recession and disinvestment has contributed to high rates of vacancy. This physical and economic deterioration has converted these once vibrant streets to seedy environments.

Los Angeles mid- and south-central city corridors

Commercial strips are integral parts of the Los Angeles urban fabric. Many such strips can be found in the Mid- and South-Central City areas at the fringes of downtown (Fig. 1). They pass through a variety of residential neighbourhoods, connecting the Mid- and South-Central areas to downtown and the outlying employment centres. As in many American cities, inner-city corridors in Los Angeles pass through low-income neighbourhoods. Densities in the residential areas abutting the corridors are much higher than those of the city as a whole. South-Central has a population density of 15 669 persons per square mile, which is over twice the city average. Population densities are extremely high in the Mid-City area, where specific census tracts accommodate over 70 000 people per square mile, making this area the most densely populated in the City and in the whole of the United States (Meyerson, 1993). With a very large percentage of low-income, minority residents and growing overcrowding both areas have an acute need for affordable housing (Los Angeles Housing Department, 1993).

Los Angeles commercial strips are particularly important for the accommodation of retail and transportation needs of inner city households. Many residents have no access to a private car or have only one car (Table 1). Instead of venturing to outlying shopping malls and commercial centres they patronise, by necessity, establishments and services found along nearby commercial strips. These streets are also major bus transit routes in the city. Along Vermont Avenue (one of the case studies), bus line No. 204 carries 61 000 passengers daily, which makes it the second busiest bus line in the city (Diaz and Ohland, 1994). The 1990 census showed that the percentage of people using public transport as the primary mode of transportation for work trips ranged from 19 per cent to 29 per cent in the three corridors studied, as compared to 11 per cent for the city as a whole.

Travelling by bus or on foot requires considerable exposure to the public environment of the street and bus stop. Yet these once prosperous city streets are today in a state of decay and deterioration. In the last three decades many businesses have migrated to the suburbs. As a result, inner-city strips are presently characterised by low densities even though they are abutting very high-density areas and their

² In Los Angeles vacancies in mini-malls have increased dramatically since the late 1980s. Developers and property managers have a difficult time keeping tenants and often renegotiate leases and offer rent adjustments (O'Neal, 1994).

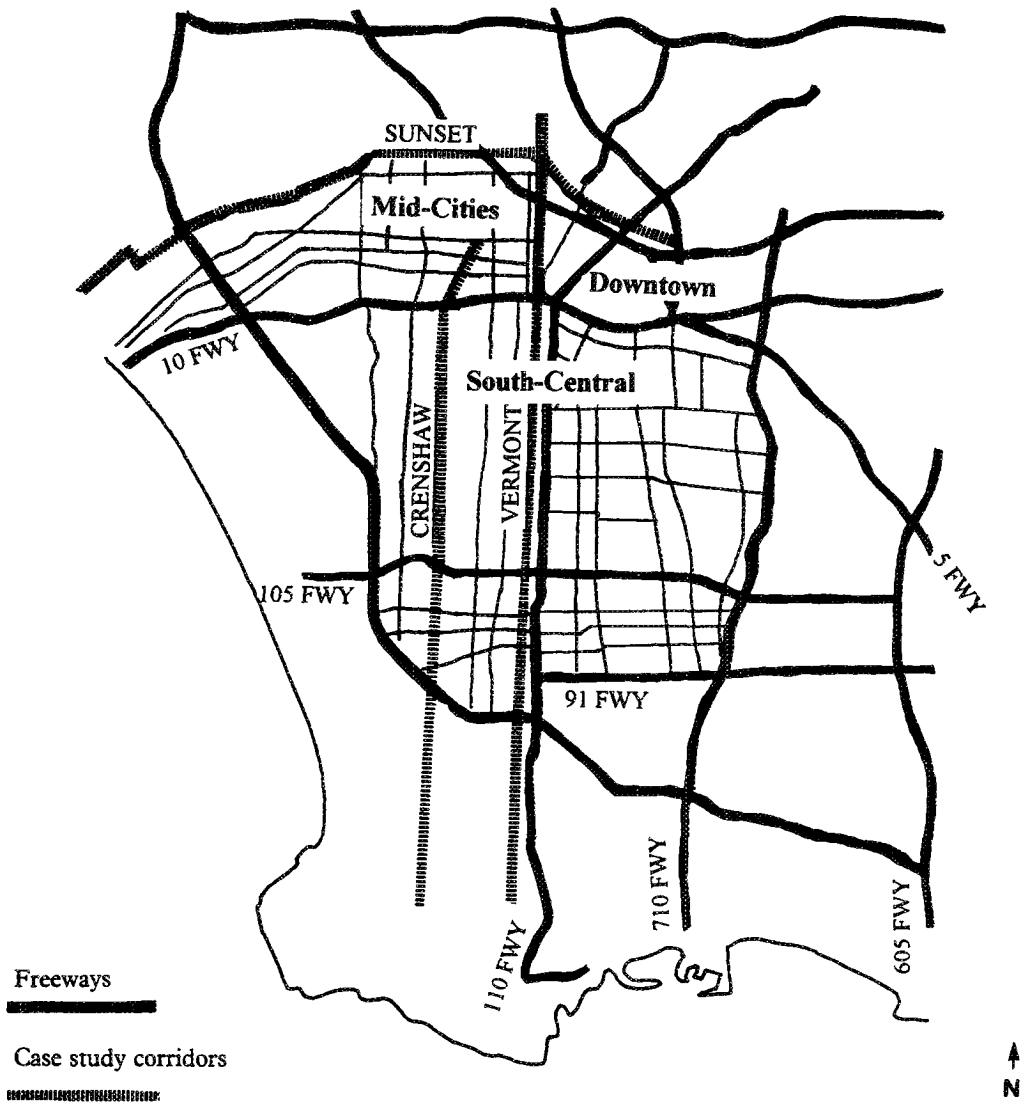


Fig. 1 Los Angeles area freeway system and case study corridors

zoning allows for higher densities (Community Redevelopment Agency, 1991). They display a large share of underutilised and vacant land, empty structures, boarded-up store fronts, and a disproportionate concentration of automobile-oriented uses: fast-food stores, car lots, body shops, used-car dealerships, junk yards. Part of their commercial building stock was damaged during the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Aesthetically, strips in the area leave a lot to be desired. Even though one can

Table 1 *Car ownership*

<i>Number of cars</i>	<i>Crenshaw (% of responses)</i>	<i>Sunset (% of responses)</i>	<i>Vermont (% of responses)</i>
None	4.9	10.0	31.7
One	31.7	35.0	31.7
Two	29.3	45.0	26.8
Three	9.7	7.5	4.9
More than three	24.4	2.5	4.9

encounter some unique and appealing buildings, most commercial streets are plagued by poorly maintained facades, chaotic signage, intermittent lighting, absence of open spaces, and lack of greenery. The pavements are narrow; there is a dramatic lack of pedestrian amenities, street furniture and open space; debris clutters the streets; traffic patterns are often confusing. More importantly, corridors are perceived as unsafe environments. The survey of residents carried out showed that crime is characterised as the most prominent problem of commercial corridors. A great deal of criminal activity occurs at the bus stop.³ Thus, with no exception, Mid- and South-Central city streets are unfriendly to pedestrians and bus travellers, even though hundreds of thousands of people depend everyday on their bleak, often hostile environment for the fulfillment of vital needs.

Three case studies

Commercial strips such as these in Los Angeles can be found in almost all major American cities. However, it should be stressed that not all strips are alike. They vary in the mixture and type of their land uses, densities, architectural character, traffic volumes and street right-of-way. Also, socio-economic and ethnic differences can influence the intensity and distribution of uses and activities. During the 1960s geographers attempting to classify commercial strips identified four categories of strip environments (Boal and Johnson, 1971):

- (1) hierarchical strips, where nodes of neighbourhood retail activities are spaced regularly—on the basis of population density and access routes—along the strip so as to serve hinterland populations;
- (2) highway-oriented strips, which include primarily automobile-oriented activities (for example, gas stations, drive-in restaurants, motels) geared toward the passing motorists and not the immediate neighbourhoods;
- (3) urban arterials, which include space-extensive activities (junkyards, car dealerships, lumberyards) that are not particularly geared towards the surrounding neighbourhoods; and
- (4) specialised strips, which offer a series of establishments that sell the same

³ In a 1986 telephone survey of residents of West Central Los Angeles it was found that Vermont Avenue, one of the case studies, was the most dangerous street in terms of bus stop crime (Levine et al., 1986).

product (for example, furniture stores, toy stores, car dealerships) and hope to attract shoppers from a wider region.

Commercial strips can also differ in terms of their economic health. A few strips have been able to turn around the economic decay that has characterised them for decades; they were gentrified and almost always developed into specialised strips. Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles, and its 'hip' boutiques and trendy restaurants, is such an example. Usually, geographic location (proximity to affluent and stable neighbourhoods), existence of an architecturally interesting building stock, and strong private initiatives—from merchants' associations, or an initial developer whose project acts as a catalyst—are the assets which lie behind a turnaround from decline to prosperity. However, inner-city strips usually lack such assets. These environments in inner-city Los Angeles suffer from economic, physical and functional blight.⁴ The decay, disinvestment and abandonment experienced by these streets are quite typical of many inner-city areas throughout the United States.

To better understand the problems and prospects of inner-city corridors it was decided to examine in depth three case studies. The study focused on one-mile segments of streets that are major bus transit routes, display a mixture of land uses—which is quite typical of inner-city streets—and are in different states of economic decay. Thus, Vermont Avenue suffers from major economic disinvestment reflected in its high commercial vacancy rates and 'for sale' signs. Crenshaw Boulevard is a street in rapid transition with some obvious signs of physical decay. Finally, Sunset Boulevard seems to have capitalised on its proximity to Hollywood and displays a more stable economic environment; still its public environment and physical image leave enough to be desired.

The analysis of the visual environment of each strip segment was achieved through photographic documentation and structured field observations. Information was gathered on the land use characteristics (land use type and mix, grain, zoning); type of services; block characteristics (size, typology, density, coverage, existence of alleys, mid-block connections or internal public ways); parcel characteristics (size, parcelation); pavement characteristics (width, pavement type, pavement edge, pavement furniture, maintenance, signs and billboards, type of pedestrian activity, such as dynamic or static, continuous or temporal, concentrated or scattered); building characteristics (building size, architectural style, aesthetic appearance, materials, setback from street, scale, orientation, maintenance); street characteristics (zones, type of traffic, width, number of bus lines, noise); and landscaping (frequency of trees and other vegetation, spacing, size, shade).⁵ The next

4 Berry (1963) identifies four types of blight found in commercial areas:

- (1) economic blight, caused by decreasing levels of affluence of the surrounding neighbourhood;
- (2) frictional blight, which results from the difficulty of moving potential customers in an area;
- (3) physical blight, which refers to the deterioration of the physical environment; and
- (4) functional blight, which occurs when a commercial area is lacking the appropriate spaces to serve contemporary commercial needs.

5 Graduate students were trained to gather this information; they were given specific tables to fill out for each block. Later data were transferred onto maps.

section draws the profile of each corridor reporting on the findings of the visual surveys.

VERMONT AVENUE: A BLIGHTED COMMERCIAL STRIP

Vermont Avenue (Fig. 2) is characterised by low-density, strip commercial development with an excessive concentration of automobile-oriented businesses that usually occupy a number of continuous parcels. Within the one-mile segment of the study 20 different auto-related businesses were counted. Because of their need to store automobiles and equipment such businesses are set back from the street and are surrounded by parking and storage. Auto-oriented uses are not geared to the surrounding neighbourhood. In fact, in the surveys many residents described them as contributing to the sense of decay and deterioration of this street, because of the noise, fumes, and overall aesthetic appearance of their establishments.

Most of the building stock along Vermont is old, in poor shape, interspersed with vacant lots—19 per cent of the total lots along this corridor segment are vacant—and empty structures. The undifferentiated commercial zoning of the corridor has resulted in a concentration of incompatible and sometimes undesirable uses for residents. A survey conducted by the Vermont Slauson Economic Development Corporation found that residents felt that the corridor features an excessive amount of liquor stores, junk yards, pawn shops, bars, 'hot sheet' motels, and low-quality retail stores (Los Angeles Housing Department, 1993). The few mixed-use and multi-family residential buildings are side-by-side with junk yards, body shops and used car lots. Residential buildings are surrounded by fences and resemble fortresses rather than homes. Services include a day-care facility, a community centre and medical clinics. Some of these services are provided by the many churches located on the corridor (Fig. 3). Because of a characteristic lack of new and appropriate spaces most of the facilities that provide important services for residents (churches, day-care centres) are housed within deteriorating commercial structures.

The blight of the built environment is combined with very poor levels of street maintenance. Many street lights are broken, empty lots are filled with rubbish, litter clutters the pavements, and street furniture is almost non-existent. There is no usable open space and hardly any landscaping at all. Out of the 43 blocks surveyed only six featured a limited number of street trees. Visually, this commercial strip is plagued by boarded-up storefronts that reflect the high vacancy rates. Chain-link fences and graffiti-filled walls add to the harshness of the urban landscape. An Urban Land Institute report (1992,13) on Vermont Avenue found a 'general visual disorder and chaos', the street being 'plagued with deteriorated commercial structures, poorly maintained façades, eclectic signage, and intermittent lighting—a visual clutter that conveys a seedy, disordered impression.'

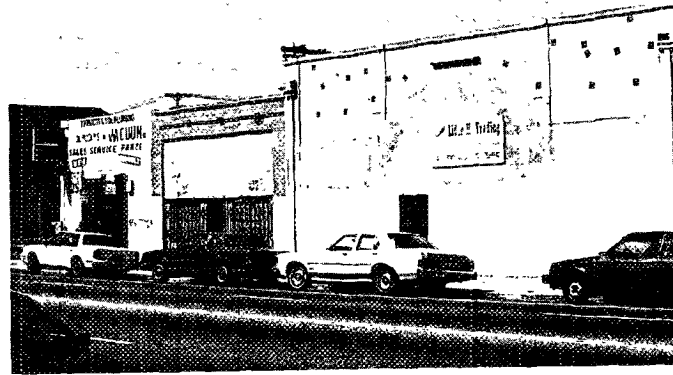
CRENSHAW BOULEVARD: A STREET IN TRANSITION

Crenshaw Boulevard (Fig. 4) is a mixed-use, low-density urban corridor. This was initially a quaint residential street, as the many single-family bungalows can attest. Progressively, with cars and buses increasingly present, petrol stations and other automobile oriented businesses started colonising the street. Today, all street intersections are occupied by commercial buildings—mostly petrol stations. There

INNER-CITY COMMERCIAL STRIPS



a

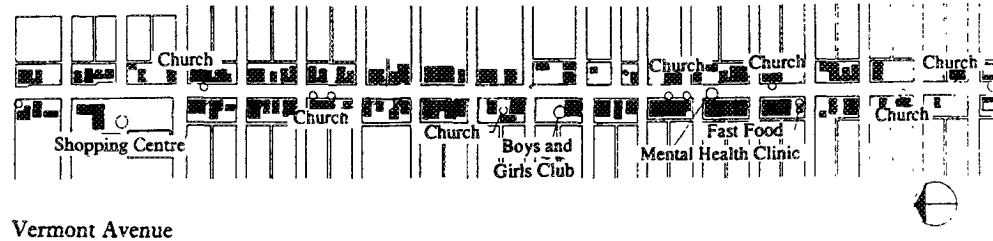


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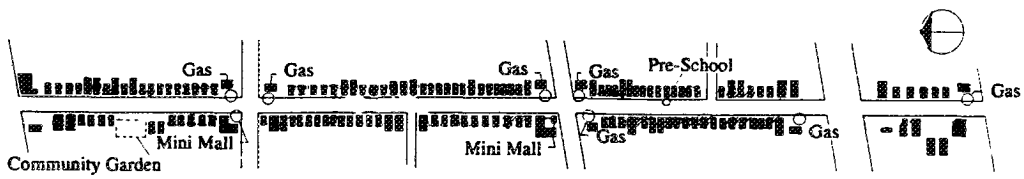


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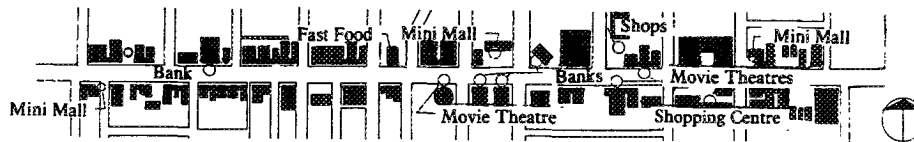
Fig. 2 Vermont Avenue



Vermont Avenue



Crenshaw Boulevard



Sunset Boulevard

0 500 ft

Pedestrians present ○

Fig. 3 Ground plans of the three strips



a



b



c

Fig. 4 Crenshaw Boulevard

are still some old, large, single-family homes that line the street. They feature spacious front yards which offer some buffer against noise and traffic, but enjoy little actual use. In some lots the entire front yard has been paved and is used for parking.

The street has witnessed extensive transition in the last three decades. Most single-family structures have been subdivided into two or more units, with renters replacing long-term home owners.⁶ Some structures have been converted from residential to other uses: church, pre-school, social club. A couple of mini-malls also made their appearance on the street in the 1980s. Apartment buildings have progressively replaced many single-family bungalows. Buildings jut in and out of lot lines, as the newer buildings are larger—occupying two or three consolidated lots—and built closer to the street, while the older homes display spacious front yards. Homes vary greatly in the degree to which they are maintained. Some are freshly painted, with well-manicured lawns. Others have broken windows, flaking paint, even structural damage; a few look unoccupied. Even though residential uses are still dominant, there is a short supply of neighbourhood retail and housing support services. The only open space along this strip is the community gardens, a small lot where area residents can plant vegetables and flowers. But this lot is fenced off from the pavement and can only accommodate a very small minority of residents who rent small plots of land.

Even though Crenshaw Boulevard (like the two other case studies) is a major bus route, its public realm is unfriendly to pedestrians and bus travellers. No attempt is made to provide for their comfort or convenience. Pavements are narrow, trees are small and sporadically planted. There are no outdoor seating areas along this corridor, no benches or bus shelters. This apparent lack of street furniture was emphasised by many survey respondents who use the bus as their main form of transport.

SUNSET BOULEVARD: A 'HODGEPODGE' OF URBAN ARTEFACTS

The segment of Sunset Boulevard under study (Fig. 5) can be classified as an office/commercial strip. It consists of medium- to high-rise office buildings interspersed with large pockets of retail and service developments. The presence of office buildings has encouraged a variety of office support services such as banks, restaurants, travel agencies, copying and printing services. The proximity of this corridor segment to Hollywood is reflected in its land use pattern. A considerable number of businesses are associated with the entertainment industry. There are no residential buildings with the exception of a small number of mixed-used developments, where the ground floor is occupied by retail or office uses and the upper floor(s) by residences.

Aesthetically the strip is a 'hodgepodge' of buildings from different periods, of various sizes and architecture. Different building styles intermix with one another. They range from the Mediterranean style of the 1930s with tile roofs and stucco, to the international style of the 1950s and 1960s of the curtain-wall office tower, to the postmodern mini-mall of the 1980s with eclectic themes and architecture. The scale

⁶ According to the 1990 US Census, residential units along this segment are 71.9 per cent renter-occupied and 28.1 per cent owner-occupied.

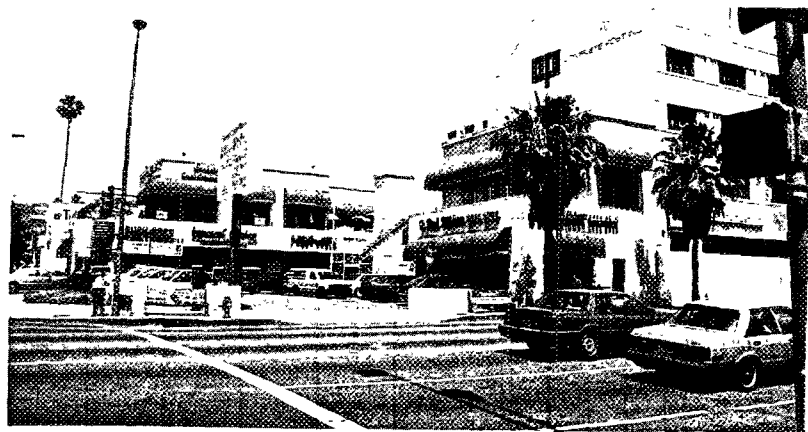


Fig. 5 Sunset Boulevard

and grain of these buildings vary tremendously, from small 'mom-and-pop' shops and medium-rise cinema studios that spread over an entire block, to strip malls at many intersections, and high-rise (15–25 storey) office buildings. While parts of the corridor benefit from the rich architecture and texture of some buildings, other parts feature monotonous blank and inward-oriented façades. Also, buildings differ in their level of maintenance.

Sunset Boulevard has more pedestrian amenities than the other two corridors, probably due to the presence of offices. However, the pedestrian realm leaves enough to be desired. For one, there is no public open space in which to sit and relax other than three private plazas that are not accessible from the street and cannot be used by the general public. Landscaping, even though more than in the other two corridors, is sparse, irregular, and inadequate for shade. Being a major east–west arterial route, the street is often plagued by heavy traffic and noise from passing automobiles. Improvements that could make this automobile-dominated environment safer for pedestrians (safe crossings, traffic islands, raised crosswalks) are missing.

Residents talk: survey findings from the three commercial strips

During May and June 1993 a survey of households was conducted along the three commercial strips and the immediately adjacent residential area (one block behind each street).⁷ The assumption was that these residents represented also the major users—shoppers and pedestrians—of the strips under study. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed in English and Spanish in each strip segment. All residential buildings along the three segments were included in the survey, while a systematic random sample was used, taking every fifth building, to cover the residential area immediately behind each strip (the two parallel streets immediately north and south or east and west of the strip under study). Some 244 completed survey forms were returned (a 20.3 per cent rate of response⁸). Response rates were similar for each corridor. We believe that the responses were representative of the surrounding communities because the analysis of the socio-demographic data given by the respondents (race, age, sex) was similar to those given by the 1990 census for these areas.⁹ Some non-response bias, however, is possible since we were not able to enter a few multi-family residences. Also, the survey missed non-Spanish and non-English speakers.

7 One block behind from either side was considered to be the 'hinterland' or major sphere of influence of the strip. Many studies have shown that one-quarter of a mile—one to two blocks—is the average walking distance that an individual is willing to walk to reach a destination in North American cities. For car-oriented cities like Los Angeles this distance may be even shorter.

8 While a response rate of 20.3 per cent is quite low it is not atypical of mail surveys, which usually have response rates ranging from 15 to 30 per cent.

9 At Crenshaw and Vermont there was an over-representation of female respondents. This can be attributed to the fact that the survey asked that the person of the household who was the 'most familiar with the corridor and its services' responds to the questionnaire. Studies have shown that in inner-city areas women are more transit-dependent than men; also one can hypothesise that women are more likely to do the household shopping than men.

The survey asked people about their purposes for visiting the strip, their level of utilisation and satisfaction with different elements of the street environment, and about changes they wished to see. Some questions addressed specific issues regarding transit service along the corridor. The following discussion summarises and evaluates the survey's major findings.

LEVEL OF AND REASON FOR STRIP UTILISATION

All three streets enjoy high levels of utilisation from residents. The majority of users visit them at least twice per week, with a significant number declaring themselves as everyday users: 25.6 per cent of Vermont, 34.2 per cent of Crenshaw, and 41.5 per cent of Sunset residents use the strip every day. As shown in Table 2, most residents visit corridors for their shopping and service needs. Being such pedestrian-unfriendly environments, it comes as no surprise that very few people choose to stroll along corridors. It is interesting to note that almost one-quarter of the respondents at Sunset and Crenshaw work on the corridor. We have no way of knowing if this trend is common in other commercial strips of the inner city. However, the potential of such environments to accommodate both business and housing should not be underestimated.

LEVEL OF DISSATISFACTION AND PERCEIVED PROBLEMS

It seems that people use the corridors by necessity rather than choice or satisfaction. People of different sex, race and age complained about the 'cheap looking buildings and ugly aesthetics that bring sadness to all of us', the 'drabness and litter of the streets and sidewalks', the 'congested buses that leave behind a tail of smoke', the 'gangs that menace people at bus stops', the 'disinvestment and urban decay', the 'lack of choice for shopping and entertainment', the 'asphalt desert of sidewalks', and the 'speeding traffic that makes it unsafe to walk'. Table 3 shows that crime ranked at the top of people's concerns. Respondents referred to the gangs, drug trafficking and prostitution that menace their streets. The dilapidated appearance of the streetscape also ranked quite highly among people's perceived problems. Many complained about the deteriorating buildings, the eyesore of billboards, the rubbish, dirt, graffiti, and the lack of greenery. The traffic conditions of the street (congestion during peak hours, cruising at weekends, speeding, crazy driving, air pollution, fumes) annoyed some residents, especially at Crenshaw Boulevard. Inconvenience (poor transit service, lack of parking, inadequacy of services) was

Table 2 *Reasons for corridor use*

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Crenshaw (% of responses)</i>	<i>Sunset (% of responses)</i>	<i>Vermont (% of responses)</i>
Shop/use services	28.8	42.4	38.2
Visit friends	9.1	0.0	3.7
Walk/stroll	7.6	13.6	10.9
Catch bus	9.1	13.6	21.8
Work	24.2	23.6	14.5
Live nearby	16.7	3.4	7.3
Other	4.5	3.4	3.6

Table 3 *Three biggest problems*

<i>Problem priority</i>	<i>Crenshaw (% of responses)</i>	<i>Sunset (% of responses)</i>	<i>Vermont (% of responses)</i>
#1	Crime 38.6	Crime 48.6	Crime 39.4
#2	Ugly appearance 24.6	Ugly appearance 27.1	Ugly appearance 30.3
#3	Traffic 21.0	Traffic 10.0	Traffic 16.7

listed by a few as the most important problem of each corridor. An analysis of the same survey data by gender showed no major differences between the sexes in the prioritising of problems. A similar analysis of the responses of different races showed that, with the exception of African-Americans who listed the negative physical appearance of the strip at the top of their concerns, all other races ranked crime as the most important problem, followed by poor aesthetics, traffic related problems and inconvenience. Yet, even this difference was not statistically significant. Figure 6 reveals that more than half of the respondents expressed their frustration with the quality and limited number of retail establishments, lack of open space, landscaping, and the inadequacy of security, cleanliness and community services.

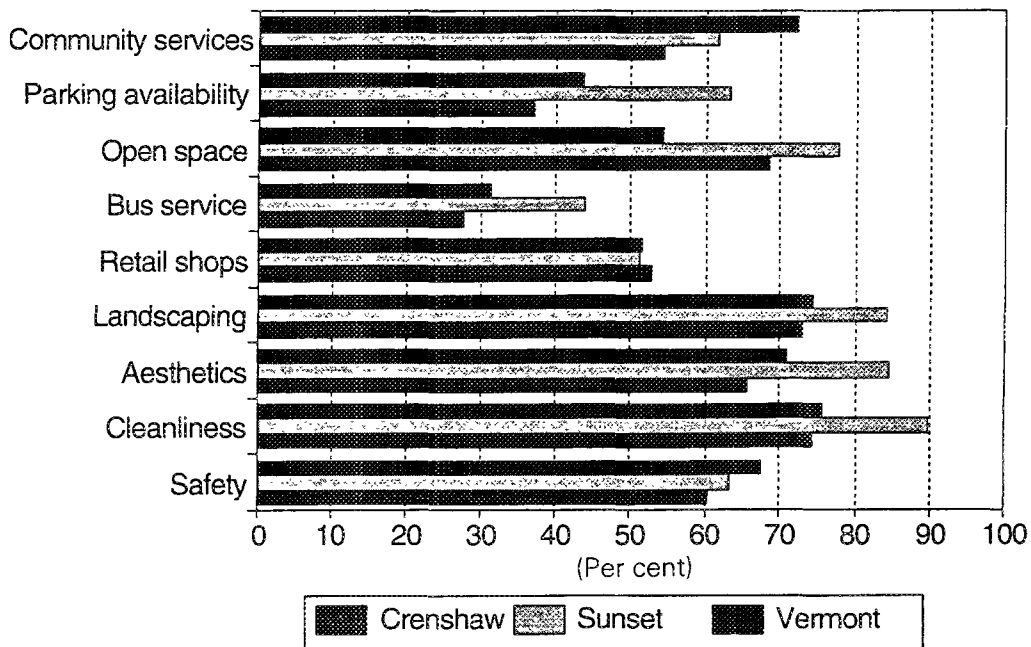


Fig. 6 Respondents dissatisfied or very dissatisfied

DESIRED CHANGES

People had some very common desires for change. 'Safer street environment', 'better aesthetics', 'cleanliness', 'better shops and services', ranked as the most common responses (Table 4). Specific suggestions included a facelift for existing buildings, addition of greenery and planting of street trees, and the elimination of large billboards. Some differences in the prioritising of desired changes among races was noted. Thus, whites ranked better aesthetics first (27.08 per cent), followed by safety (16.67 per cent), cleanliness (14.58 per cent), and less traffic (14.58 per cent); African-Americans ranked safety first (20.9 per cent), followed by more shops (20.9 per cent), better aesthetics (16.42 per cent), and cleanliness (10.45 per cent); Hispanics also ranked safety and better aesthetics (26.47 per cent) first, followed by cleanliness (14.71 per cent), and more shops (11.76 per cent); finally Asians also ranked safety (36.84 per cent) first, followed by cleanliness (26.32 per cent), and better aesthetics (21.05 per cent).

In a specific question about desired shops and services, food markets, cafés and family restaurants were the type of retail uses that gathered most people's preferences. In general, small neighbourhood shops—pharmacies, grocers, bakeries, video rentals, flower shops and so forth—were identified by respondents as the most appropriate and desirable for the commercial strip environment. Such retail establishments are also pedestrian friendly, since they are typically accessed from the pavement and often have window displays.

In a closed-ended question that asked respondents if they wished to see more housing, transit lines, parks/open spaces, retail shops, restaurants, community services, trees, benches, and bus stop shelters along the corridor, the last three items received almost unanimous approval (Fig. 7). Such street improvements require relatively little cost and effort. Almost every item of the list, with the notable exception of housing, scored highly. Housing was favoured by a significant minority in each corridor: 27.3 per cent for Crenshaw, 40 per cent for Sunset and 38.5 per cent for Vermont. There are three possible explanations why more housing was not considered desirable by the majority of respondents:

- (1) Because the vast majority of homeowners in our survey opposed housing, it is hypothesised that they may be afraid that multi-family projects in their immediate vicinity will bring an 'undesirable' population into the area and lower their property value.

Table 4 *Most desirable changes*

<i>Change priority</i>	<i>Crenshaw (% of responses)</i>	<i>Sunset (% of responses)</i>	<i>Vermont (% of responses)</i>
#1	Increased safety 25.9	Better aesthetics 21.6	Increased safety 24.6
#2	Better aesthetics 15.5	Increased safety 17.6	More/better shops 21.6
#3	Cleanliness 12.0 More/better shops 12.0	Cleanliness 16.2	Cleanliness 15.4

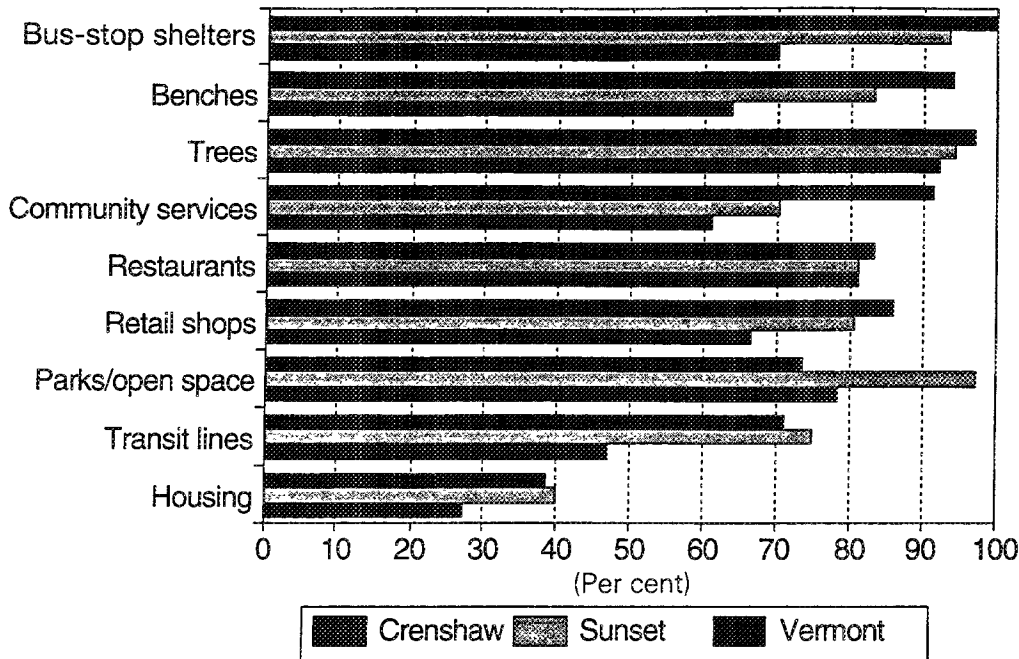


Fig. 7 'Yes' responses to corridor improvements

- (2) Strips have often been perceived as automobile-oriented, commercial environments, and thus incompatible with housing.
- (3) Currently most corridors lack any housing supporting services.

It is quite interesting to note that even though housing was disfavoured by two-thirds of African-Americans and Whites, most Hispanic respondents (58.82 per cent) wished for more housing, while Asians were divided. Hispanics and Asians are the newcomers in these neighbourhoods, and they were typically renters/tenants in overcrowded housing units.

TRANSPORT AND TRANSIT CHARACTERISTICS

Even though the survey sample consisted of people who lived on or very near corridors, it was quite surprising to find that a significant percentage of them—34 per cent along Vermont, 43.1 per cent along Crenshaw, and 64.6 per cent along Sunset—used their car to reach various destinations (shopping, friends, work) along the strip. We are often quick to blame the 'LA culture' for such over-dependence on the automobile. It is quite probable, however, that people may hesitate to walk or cycle because of inconvenience—shops and services scattered in different areas, fear for their safety, lack of enjoyment for the walk or ride, or lack of comfort due to the absence of pedestrian amenities. People coming to the strip on foot were much more common in the Vermont Avenue sample, mainly because of the low car ownership rates—31.7 per cent of respondents did not own a car—encountered in this street (Table 1). In addition to these captive riders the survey revealed that the majority of car owners would use public transport if the bus system were more reliable, clean

and safe and if the public environment at bus stops, pavements and streets were more pleasant.

Revisiting inner-city strips: suggestions for physical retrofit

Talking about inner-city neighbourhoods in Great Britain, Badcock draws attention to the inequalities built into how most cities are structured:

People living in the 'inner ring' suffer very badly in that they have to put up with heavy flows of lorries, buses and cars through their locality, with all the associated pollution, noise and intrusion, whereas the general low level of car ownership means that most are all the more exposed to traffic-related danger, dirt, and discomfort. Hence there is a social argument for prioritising such areas for action to improve safety and amenities. (Badcock, 1984, in Ramsay, 1990, 168)

In addition to this moral argument, there are additional reasons why public policy should seek to enhance and retrofit inner-city commercial strips. These streets are at the heart of poverty-ridden inner cities that desperately need more housing, jobs and services. The extremely high densities of the neighbourhoods abutting these streets suggest that their successful rejuvenation will have positive impacts on whole communities. The high level of transit use along strips, the potential for even higher use because of their strategic locations in between employment centres, and their current underdevelopment that allows for infill and intensification, all provide good reasons for promoting their physical and economic improvement.

What follows outlines some suggestions that are directly drawn from the residents' responses.

NEIGHBOURHOOD-ORIENTED VERSUS AUTOMOBILE-ORIENTED STRIPS

City planning policy has viewed most inner-city commercial streets as traffic arterials. Consequently, no effort has gone into conceptualising their physical environment as an extension of the abutting residential communities. Currently, anything can go on the strip; but many of the existing uses do nothing to enhance the residential environment of adjacent neighbourhoods. Yet, as discovered in the surveys, residents perceive the strip as the important spine of their neighbourhoods. They ask for more neighbourhood-oriented retail and service facilities and for land uses that are compatible with residential areas. Retailers have often been hesitant to locate in inner-city environments associated with low buying potential. However, the extremely high residential densities of the immediate areas provide indications that strips can become very important shopping destinations for a lot of people. According to the survey respondents, 'appropriate' uses for retail and services include groceries bakeries, delicatessens, cafés, bookstores, sit-down restaurants, camera shops, video and music stores, pharmacies, florists, clothing stores, beauty salons, day care centres and professional offices. For such small businesses the strip can provide an ideal location, since rents are much lower than in suburban shopping malls. Zoning can be particularly important in encouraging a desirable pattern of land uses while at the same time screening out undesirable uses (Robertson, 1993).

Researchers advise concentration rather than sprawl of commercial uses—in the

form of activity centres—in close proximity to residential establishments (Untermann, 1984). Because many inner-city residents do not own a car, shops should be placed in patterns to allow fulfilment of one's shopping needs from one location. Such nodal development, with supermarkets, bank services, pharmacies and bus stop, may be particularly appropriate around major intersections, typically where bus stops are located. For strips with very long blocks, such as those at Crenshaw, secondary nodes, for example mini parks with bus stop and bus shelter at the centre of the blocks can provide a comforting stop for bus travellers. Mid-block connections can link these nodes to the residential areas behind this corridor. Areas for standing, sitting and relaxing need to be present in these strips so as to allow shoppers or bus travellers to step out of the flow and pace of street life for some moments' rest.

The articulation of ground-floor uses is particularly important for commercial strips. The distribution and character of activities along the street front can help create a rich pedestrian domain, where the pavement is extended into the buildings. As witnessed in the Los Angeles strips, however, it is often 'dead uses' that front the pavement, such as car parks and body shops as along Vermont Avenue; banks with no window openings, and inward-oriented office buildings as along Sunset Boulevard. Again, zoning ordinances can help protect against monotonous façades, for example, the establishment of zero setbacks for commercial buildings in certain strips can ensure a continuous shop front edge. Requirements for display windows can protect against the proliferation of blank walls.

STREETSCAPE AESTHETICS

Residents perceive commercial strips as mirrors of their communities. Consequently they are aggravated by their 'ugly appearance', the dirty pavements, the deteriorating buildings stock. Studying residential streets in San Francisco, Donald Appleyard found that:

the appearance of the street is a reflection of ourselves to the visitor. Living on littered streets reflects poorly on our own ability to take care of our home, or implies a lack of competence, efficiency, and social status. The concept of dirt and pollution is also bound up with its opposite, cleanliness and our vision of order. (Appleyard, 1981, 64)

Some aesthetic improvements suggested by residents that can enhance streetscape aesthetics include restoration of buildings with distinctive architecture, well designed street furniture and lighting, resurfacing of pavements, and planting rich foliage. Street trees seem to be highly desirable; more than 90 per cent of the survey respondents requested to see more trees on their commercial streets. Studies have shown that street trees are acknowledged to be the single most powerful device of defining and humanising streets (Greenberg, 1987). According to Alan Jacobs (1990, 84) 'If, in an American city, you wanted to make a major positive impact on an existing street and had a limited budget, you might well recommend planting trees as the way to get the most impact for your money'. But often even small amounts of money are not easily available in financially-strapped inner cities. Therefore in a recent study Shoup (1996) proposes requiring landowners to plant a street tree in front of a property before selling it.

The image of a streetscape depends upon its maintenance and cleanliness. The general upkeep of the pavement, its furniture and landscaping, the restoration and painting of building façades, walls, and street signs could mitigate the sense of abandonment and deterioration that plagues many inner-city commercial streets. Empirical studies (Appleyard, 1981) have found that cleanliness of the street is particularly important for residents, business owners, and passers-by.

Such physical improvements are not merely cosmetic. Aesthetic obsolescence is one major reason why merchants avoid locating in old commercial strips (Ford, 1994). Similarly, shoppers are more likely to be drawn to clean and physically appealing commercial areas than to dirty and seedy places.

THE HOUSING DILEMMA

As seen in the surveys, residents are divided on the issue of housing on commercial strips, with more opposing it rather than favouring it. There is no doubt that at their present state inner-city commercial strips are very problematic environments for housing. They are dirty, noisy, unsafe, and physically bleak urban landscapes. As already explained, some land uses presently found on the strip are totally incompatible with residential living. However, there are major reasons why planning policy should consider encouraging housing along some strips following their physical improvement. First, there is tremendous overcrowding in an already aged housing stock in the strips' hinterland, which makes provision of new, affordable housing in the inner city a major imperative. Second, presently, there is available and relatively cheap land along strips. Around the country a number of community non-profit organisations have been active in building affordable housing and services in inner cities. The strip environment can become for them an asset instead of a liability. Third, the geographic location of inner-city strips, in close proximity to employment centres, and the existence of a public transport network that passes through them, makes their retrofit a much more rational planning approach, from an energy and transportation service standpoint, than subsidising 'edge cities' (Garreau, 1991) at the urban periphery.

Housing was the most common land use encountered in the early tramcar suburbs. With the coming of the automobile, housing started decreasing but was by no means rare till the 1950s (Ford, 1994). It was only after the exodus of the middle classes to the suburbs and the consequent decline of inner-city strips that housing almost disappeared from commercial strips. Unlike European cities which managed to keep and promote very successful mixed-use environments, American cities separated through zoning housing from retail and services. It is only in the last decade that the mixed-use concept has re-entered planners' vocabulary.

Obviously, not all strips are appropriate for housing. For some, pollution from fumes and toxics may be such that it precludes the building of residential structures. Housing options, however, should be explored for many inner-city strips that carry moderate traffic and have available land. Depending on the particularities of the specific strip environment, housing can take different forms. For strips like Vermont Avenue, which have many empty lots in between existing commercial structures, infill housing and two- to four-storey mixed-use buildings may be a good option. Placing residential apartments set back on the top floors will alleviate the

noise from street traffic. Strips like Crenshaw Boulevard, which are lined with deep lots, can host additional small housing units in the form of granny flats at the back, while strips like Sunset Boulevard, where all the blocks are particularly deep, can accommodate multi-family housing immediately behind the existing commercial structures. If major commercial nodes are encouraged to develop at intersections, it is preferable that housing occupies mostly the centre of blocks.

Building housing along selected strips will also help to establish better links to the residential neighbourhoods behind. The backs of commercial strips were never given any particular architectural attention, and presently have become major eyesores and disamenities for the residential neighbourhoods behind the strip. Dilapidated walls, dirty service alleys, storage sheds and rubbish piles compose a derelict landscape.

LIVING WITH TRAFFIC

Many residents in the surveys complained about the level of traffic on commercial strips. They were mostly concerned about cars speeding through the street and about possible traffic accidents. Americans have not learned to live with traffic, and this is partly the fault of traffic engineers and planners who, designing mostly with the needs of motorists in mind, have not promoted a symbiotic relationship between cars and pedestrians. But successful European examples of commercial and mixed-use areas have shown that people can coexist with cars if they are protected from the dangers of traffic. Physical improvements for safer streets include painted crossings, raised crosswalks, safe crossings, traffic islands, narrow driveways, adequate street lighting, pavement widening,¹⁰ and the separation of the street from the pavement through planter strips and/or on-street parking. Transportation controls, such as the standardisation of signs and signals and the extension of the time pedestrians are allowed by traffic lights to cross an intersection, are beneficial for pedestrians. Finally, reduction of noise and traffic can be achieved by the use of small intersection radii, lowering of speed limits, fewer traffic lanes, and fine tuning of vehicular volumes (Untermann, 1990; Untermann and Vernez Moudon, 1990).

DESIGNING FOR COMFORT

Some residents indicated that they hesitate to walk along the streets and patronise some of their services because of 'inconvenience'—lack of amenities and comfort for the shopper or the bus passenger on the way to the bus stop. The level of comfort and convenience an environment can offer directly influences concentration of activity. Comfort involves protection from rain, wind and sun. This can be accomplished by design with the provision of arcades, awnings, covered walkways and bus shelters. Comfort is also achieved by facilitating pedestrian circulation through wide pavements, traffic signalisation that favours pedestrians, and provision of pavement amenities. Pedestrian service points (Ramsay, 1990) at selected

¹⁰ According to Levinson (1986) the desired minimum dimension for a pavement in a shopping street is 10–12 feet when there is no bus stop, and 14–16 feet when there is a bus stop present.

nodes, such as near the cinemas along Sunset, at the mini malls along Crenshaw, and at the taco stands along Vermont, can offer an array of amenities: benches, newsstands, rest rooms, public phones and food kiosks. Convenience depends on the directness and continuity of the walk, and easy pedestrian access to services and public transport. Reduction of a pedestrian's walking distance can be achieved through pedestrian shortcuts, mid-block connections, and concentration of activities along nodal points and near transit stops.

DEFENSIBLE COMMERCIAL STRIPS

The most important and all-too-common complaint of residents—the issue of safety—is also the most difficult to tackle. Fear of crime dictates life in the inner city. It holds the elderly hostage in their own homes, it prevents people from using public transport, it forces traders to close their shops early, it discourages investment, thereby increasing the cost of living, working, or operating a business. In a yet unpublished survey of traders in inner-city Los Angeles corridors, we found that crime was considered the most important disadvantage of operating a business. Along commercial strips a fair amount of crime occurs at bus stops or on the way to and from bus stops (Levine, 1983; Levine et al., 1986).

There are few things that design can do to ameliorate a social problem that requires concerted efforts at different levels by the community and various public agencies. The literature on defensible space (Newman 1972, 1976; Poyner, 1983; Coleman, 1985; Wekerle, 1994) provides some direction. Physical improvements, such as adequate lighting, building and landscaping configurations that enhance rather than obstruct observation by other pedestrians or traders are relevant for all commercial strips. The location of bus shelters at the safer, well-lit, and well-travelled areas of corridors can improve the perception of security of bus travellers.

Crime researchers have demonstrated how signs of derelictions and 'incivilities'—such as litter, graffiti, exterior dilapidation of a property and the like—contribute to a higher incidence of crime (Skogan, 1990; Perkins et al., 1993). This relationship is central to the 'broken window' thesis popularised by Wilson and Kelling (1982). A broken window left unrepaired sends a signal that social control is attenuated in an area, and sensing that no-one is in control, potential criminals are apt to prey on the locality. The environment of inner-city strips is full of broken windows, literally and metaphorically. However, if we agree with the argument of many criminologists, we can expect that physical improvements and upkeep of commercial strips may have some small but positive impact on crime.

The preceding discussion has prescribed a framework for physical changes along inner-city commercial strips. It is quite clear that unless development recurs and business, housing, and services return to fill the 'holes' in these streets, the environment will continue to deteriorate. Obviously, policies that target physical retrofit should be accompanied by measures for the economic rejuvenation of corridors. The specific examination of such economic improvements is, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

Inner-city revitalisation has been a goal of federal and local governments for decades, but the results of most antipoverty programmes did not bring tangible

benefits for inner-city residents. So is there any hope now for these streets that form the backbone of the American inner city and its public transport service? Who can plant the seeds for their revival? This paper will now address this question.

Agents for change

Even though critics (Lemann, 1994) are sceptical about the prospects of inner-city revitalisation, there are some signs of hope. First, the federal government has again decided to invest money in the inner cities, passing legislation for 'empowerment zones' and 'enterprise communities' in depressed urban and rural areas of the country. At the local level we have witnessed the proliferation of community development corporations (CDCs) in many inner-city neighbourhoods. These are non-profit, community-based groups of neighbourhood residents and local business owners who are dedicated to revitalising their neighbourhoods. They want to enter into partnerships with the federal government and philanthropic foundations to achieve neighbourhood-based physical and economic improvement. In the study area three CDCs—the Dunbar Association, the Vernon Slauson Community Development, and the Esperanza Community Housing Corporation—are very active in the pursuit of such goals.

Physical and economic development need the serious support of local governments and concerted efforts by local agencies. Since inner-city corridors, because of their strategic location, represent important transit routes in cities, it seems logical that metropolitan transport agencies—usually powerful economically and politically—play a larger role in retrofit efforts. Presently, most of these agencies are concerned exclusively with running their buses or trains. But current experience with ever-declining transport patronage suggests that this is no longer enough. Unlike travel by private automobile that does not require one to set foot on public grounds, transportation involves considerable exposure to the public realm. The condition of the environment and a person's perception of it—the quality of the street, the pavement, the bus stop—become important. People with the option to choose will not be lured by a transport system that exposes them to unacceptable levels of discomfort and risk. Today, hundreds of bus companies along these deteriorated corridors are typically running at a loss. Transit agencies' self-interest calls for them to help in the rejuvenation of the corridors. They can provide street furniture (benches, kiosks, bus shelters) and cooperate with municipal agencies in beautifying streets, replacing lost trees, resurfacing pavements, and encouraging pedestrian-oriented activities.

A city's planning and housing departments and redevelopment agencies can also play an active role in encouraging and promoting physical and economic rejuvenation of inner-city corridors. Development incentives and tax breaks for investors, access to credit, low-interest loans and rent subsidies for small business owners, re-zoning to permit mixed land use with fewer restrictions, and reduced parking requirements can trigger economic and physical improvements. A commercial strip master plan can set a frame of reference and a vision that communities, agencies and planners can agree upon.

Conclusion

The present decay of inner-city strips has not happened overnight. It is a result and reflection of the problems that have been troubling American inner cities for the last three decades. Commercial strips such as these studied can be found in almost any major American city; the problems and prospects of Los Angeles' strips are shared by similar environments around the country. For this reason, some suggestions in this paper may be directly relevant for different contexts. Of course, careful assessment of community needs and values, as well as examination of the socio-physical and economic characteristics of the specific urban context should precede policy decisions. Physical improvements and land use changes along the commercial streets of the American inner city can offer a more humane environment for hundreds of thousands of residents. Economic improvements, the attraction of new businesses, and the development of housing, neighbourhood retail outlets and services along corridors require persistent and determined efforts on the part of municipal governments, local public agencies and neighbourhood-based groups, and serious federal support and investment. The obstacles of reclaiming inner-city commercial strips are many, but the stakes are high. If the efforts succeed, these currently bleak urban environments can be reconverted into vibrant and attractive places to live, walk, and shop.

APPENDIX

	C	S	V
1. How often do you come to the corridor?			
Every day	34.2	41.5	25.6
4-5 days/week	0.0	14.6	15.4
2-3 days/week	26.3	24.4	23.1
Once a week	18.4	2.4	23.1
<Once a week	7.9	14.6	10.2
Other	13.2	2.4	2.6
2. Why do you usually come to the corridor?			
Use shops/services	27.9	42.4	38.2
Visit friends	8.8	0.0	3.6
Walk/stroll	7.4	13.6	10.9
Catch the bus	8.8	13.6	21.8
Work	23.5	23.6	14.5
Live here	16.2	3.4	7.3
Other	4.4	3.4	3.6
3. How do you usually come to the corridor?			
On foot	12.4	37.9	44.0
Bicycle	4.2	8.6	2.0
Bus	14.6	8.6	20.0
Car	64.6	43.1	34.0
Other	4.2	1.8	0.0

4. Degree of satisfaction with the corridor

	Crenshaw				Sunset				Vermont			
	VS	S	D	VD	VS	S	D	VD	VS	S	D	VD
Safety	7.9	34.3	28.9	28.9	0.0	36.8	39.5	23.7	8.1	24.3	32.4	35.2
Cleanliness	0.0	28.2	38.5	33.3	0.0	10.3	53.8	35.9	10.8	13.5	35.1	40.6
Aesthetic appearance	0.0	31.4	28.6	40.0	0.0	15.4	59.0	25.6	9.7	19.3	45.2	25.8
Landscaping	0.0	30.6	25.0	44.4	0.0	15.8	60.5	23.7	11.4	14.3	42.9	31.4
Retail shops	5.7	42.9	31.4	20.0	2.7	45.9	35.1	16.2	9.1	39.4	39.4	12.1
Bus service	17.2	51.7	20.7	10.4	12.5	43.8	21.9	21.9	20.0	48.6	20.0	11.4
Open space	0.0	34.3	25.7	40.0	2.8	19.4	44.4	33.3	12.1	33.3	39.4	15.2
Parking availability	14.3	45.7	25.7	14.3	5.3	31.6	36.8	26.3	12.5	43.7	31.3	12.5
Community services	11.4	31.4	31.4	25.8	0.0	38.2	41.2	20.6	11.1	16.7	47.2	25.0

5. What are the biggest problems along the corridor?

	C	S	V
Traffic	21.0	10.0	4.5
Inconvenience (poor transit service, lack of parking or services)	5.3	7.2	16.7
Crime	38.6	48.6	39.4
Appearance (lack of landscaping, ugly aesthetics/buildings, rubbish)	24.6	27.1	30.3
Other	10.5	4.3	9.1
Don't know	0.0	2.9	0.0

6. What changes would you like to see on the corridor?

Safer	25.9	17.6	24.6
Better aesthetics	15.5	21.6	13.8
Cleaner	12.0	16.2	15.4
More shops or services	12.0	10.8	21.6
More community feeling	6.9	0.0	0.0
Less traffic	3.4	10.8	1.5
Better transit	3.4	4.1	3.1
More parks	6.9	0.0	0.0
Banning of street vendors	5.2	0.0	1.5
Different mix of land uses	3.4	0.0	0.0
Parks/playgrounds	0.0	2.7	1.5
Street furniture	0.0	2.7	4.6
Other	5.4	10.8	12.4
Don't know	0.0	2.7	0.0

7. What shops and services would you like to see on the corridor?

Neighbourhood retail	25.8	32.0	34.8
Food market	15.2	22.0	12.1
Restaurant/café	13.7	18.0	10.6
Theatres	1.5	4.0	0.0
Department store	3.0	4.0	3.0
Liquor store	0.0	4.0	0.0
Hardware store	4.5	0.0	4.6
Health clinic	3.0	0.0	12.1
Recreation	6.1	0.0	3.0
Community services	3.0	0.0	4.6
Utility company office (phone, gas)	0.0	0.0	3.0
Discount store	0.0	0.0	4.6
No more stores/fine as is	10.6	4.0	3.0
Other	13.6	12.0	4.6

INNER-CITY COMMERCIAL STRIPS

8. Would you like to see more of the following on the corridor?

	Crenshaw		Sunset		Vermont	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Housing	27.3	73.7	40.0	60.0	38.5	61.5
Transit lines	46.9	53.1	75.0	25.0	71.0	29.0
Parks/open space	78.4	21.6	97.3	2.7	73.5	26.5
Retail shops	66.7	43.3	80.5	19.5	86.1	13.9
Restaurants	81.1	18.9	81.1	18.9	83.3	16.7
Community services	61.1	38.9	70.4	29.6	91.4	8.6
Trees	92.1	7.9	94.4	5.6	97.2	2.8
Benches	63.9	36.1	83.3	16.7	94.1	5.9
Bus-stop shelters	70.1	29.9	93.7	6.3	100.0	0.0

9. Age

	C	S	V
<18	0.0	0.0	0.0
18-29	15.0	25.6	22.5
30-39	30.0	23.1	20.0
40-49	25.0	23.1	15.0
50-64	22.5	20.5	30.0
65+	7.5	7.7	12.5

10. Race

	C	S	V
White	2.6	8.9	7.5
African American	58.9	0.0	50.0
Hispanic	10.3	15.4	30.0
Asian American	15.4	12.8	5.0
Native American	7.7	2.6	2.5
Other	5.1	10.3	5.0

11. Sex

	C	S	V
Female	62.5	43.6	65.8
Male	37.5	56.4	34.2

12. Number of cars in household

	C	S	V
None	4.9	10.0	31.7
One	31.7	35.0	31.7
Two	29.3	45.0	26.8
Three	9.7	7.5	4.9
>Three	24.4	2.5	4.9

13a. Frequency of public transit use

	C	S	V
Every day	9.8	10.0	18.4
4-5 days/week	2.4	10.0	18.4
2-3 days/week	12.2	12.5	21.1
One day/week	0.0	7.5	5.3
<one day/week	17.1	15.0	18.4
Never	58.3	45.0	18.4

13b. Do you use public transit to:

	Crenshaw		Sunset		Vermont	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Go to work	18.6	81.4	19.5	80.5	40.0	60.0
Go shopping	18.6	81.4	34.1	65.9	57.5	42.5
Visit friends	16.3	83.7	9.8	90.2	23.7	76.3

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