



# Our Future Neighborhoods

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Housing and Urban Villages  
in the San Fernando Valley

July 2003



## Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley

*Creating Community Prosperity through  
Economic Stewardship in the San Fernando Valley*

**T**oday, the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley operates as a 501(c)3 nonprofit economic development collaborative of public and private investors. It has become the driving force in business development in the region, an area with more than 70,000 businesses and home to over 1.8 million people.

Within this diverse and multi-cultural community—more than one-third of all residents are foreign-born—the Economic Alliance has become a major catalyst for the region. The importance of its work is underscored by the financial commitment of over 100 of the San Fernando Valley’s leading corporate, government and education entities, as well as the five cities that comprise the Valley.

The well-being of any community relies upon all aspects of economic development: business retention, attraction, and expansion; education improvement and workforce development; information gathering and dissemination; strategic marketing of the region; and measurement of quality-of-life issues. Each of these areas are addressed under the Economic Alliance’s five interconnected initiatives, which serve to

strengthen the region’s economic base:

- Economic Development & Business Assistance
- Workforce & Education Investment
- Livable & Sustainable Communities
- Information Management & Distribution
- Strategic Marketing of the Region

Through the commitment, boosterism and financial support of corporate leaders, the Economic Alliance strives to unify community resources toward the achievement of shared prosperity in the San Fernando Valley.





**Presents**

***“OUR FUTURE NEIGHBORHOODS:  
Housing and Urban Villages in the San Fernando Valley”***

**A Comprehensive Report Prepared by**

Pepperdine University – School of Public Policy  
Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley

**In Cooperation with**

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**Sponsored by**

Southland Regional Association of Realtors  
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# Our Future Neighborhoods: Housing and Urban Villages in the San Fernando Valley

## Executive Summary

**H**ow we house our people will tell much about the future of the San Fernando Valley. Housing should not be viewed simply as places of residence, but as places people live within the context of a broader community. When we talk about housing, we are also talking about the placement of future transportation and infrastructure, as well as retail, commercial and industrial spaces.

This study looks at the evolution of housing in the Valley—from the origins of small towns and developments to the massive tract-expansion of the post-World War II era and the development of a large multi-family housing stock. Housing has never been more of a critical issue than it is today. Steep appreciation in values has priced many families out of home ownership, causing severe overcrowding in some areas and deterioration of *quality of life* in others.

Our recommendations focus on the most practical ways to address these issues. At the center lies concern for fostering *communities*. One critical aspect, we believe, will be the creation of *urban villages* that can combine retail and commercial uses with a reasonable mix of higher density housing. City officials can help this by changing many of the zoning restraints on mixed-used housing, carrying a message to Sacramento to remove unreasonable barriers to condominium and multi-family developments. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on currently underutilized natural assets, such as the Los Angeles River, to create thoroughfares for walking and biking, in addition to greenbelts and green spaces that span the San Fernando Valley.

In our efforts, we retain our focus on maintaining the best aspects of the Valley—the large tracts of single-family homes, the decentralized districts and an increasingly diverse, and primarily middle-income, population. To preserve these characteristics, and prevent the twin perils of *barrioization* and an increasingly bifurcated community, we believe that Valley residents must work together for effective change. The alternative will not be the status quo, but steady decline. Doing nothing is not a viable option—doing the right thing is the imperative.

## Historical Overview: From L.A.'s Backyard to America's Suburb

**T**he evolution of the San Fernando Valley reflects both great accomplishments and a record of lost opportunities. From a small population base in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Valley emerged over the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century as one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country. If taken by itself, the Valley today would be among the six largest cities in the nation.

Yet, unlike many great metropolises, the San Fernando Valley was never designed to be a city. It is a region of many places covering some 345 square miles, over an expanse 31-miles long and 13-miles wide. Within its geology lies the source for the Los Angeles River, explaining why the Valley was so important to the City of Angels in the early years of the 20th century.<sup>1</sup> This supports the assertion that the rapid growth and success of Greater Los Angeles would not have been possible without the annexation of most of the San Fernando Valley.

Access to water made the Valley an ideal site for the region's Mission San Fernando, founded in 1797. The Valley grew largely as an agricultural area around the mission. Most of its residents were Native Americans. The conquest of California by the United States in 1847 placed the Valley squarely in play for subsequent real estate speculation and development.

*“The region’s future would now be shaped by L.A.’s need to derive water from the Owens Valley”*



Under American tutelage, the Valley was seen as an area for livestock and for growing wheat. Early speculators, such as Isaac Lankershim and Isaac Newton Van Nuys, left their legacies and their names on communities, streets and landmarks still recognizable to Valley residents. By the 1870s others saw the region, particularly the area around what was to evolve into the City of San Fernando, as a *Garden of Eden* that would attract large numbers of new residents.

Now connected by railroad to both San Francisco and Los Angeles, the Valley was no longer isolated from the periodic speculative land fever that swept through Southern California through the late 19<sup>th</sup> and much of the 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.<sup>2</sup> The 1880s expansion ushered in the existence of many early Valley settlements, including North Hollywood, the City of San Fernando and an area that came to be known as Chatsworth Park.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the focus of economic development, and locus of political power, lay in the City of Los Angeles. Without intervention from across the hills, the bulk of the Valley would have likely evolved into a series of independent separate cities, much like Burbank, Glendale and San Fernando are today.

This was not to be. The growing City of Los Angeles needed to tap into the water supplies of the Valley and, more importantly, to access the Valley lands beneath which the new Los Angeles aqueduct waters would flow. The region’s future would now be shaped by LA’s need to derive water from the Owens Valley 250 miles to the North. For Los Angeles’ ambitious business and political leaders, annexing the Valley became a necessity.

Although orchards and ranches would comprise the majority of the Valley for several more generations, Los Angeles development interests—including the Chandler family, who controlled the *Los Angeles Times*—increasingly saw the area as a logical place for a bedroom suburb for their ever-growing metropolis.<sup>4</sup> Even before the annexation of most Valley lands in 1915, the Chandlers and their allies—including suburban railway developer Moses Sherman and William Whitsett—were eyeing areas that would later become Van Nuys, Reseda, Sherman Oaks and Canoga Park.

Aided by the new water sources, the Valley shifted from a largely grain-growing area to an orchard/agricultural base, which tends to promote more intensive development. In the long run, however, using water for the maintenance of intense orchard agriculture was deemed too expensive; one acre of irrigated orchard land needed the same amount of water as one acre of property divided into fifty-foot units with homes built on them.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, if the expansion of Los Angeles into the Valley was in large part a usual tale of developer avarice and booster ambitions, the City also brought with it an element of idealism. Under the Progressive movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Los Angeles sought not only to grow large, but also to develop into a forward thinking metropolis—an archipelago of what may now be seen as *urban villages* connected, at that time, by the nation’s largest metropolitan railway system.

Part of the vision was to create a new city, of which the Valley would be part—that would avoid the overcrowding, unsanitary and often dangerous aspects of the typical industrial city. Critical to this process was the development of Henry E. Huntington’s Pacific Electric Railway, which made Los Angeles, in the words of the 1909 edition of Baedeker’s *United States*, “a city of small trips.” Los Angeles was to become an archipelago of communities where each community was more a town or village than a city neighborhood.

This ambitious vision was codified in 1908 when the City created the first comprehensive urban zoning ordinance in the nation.<sup>6</sup> Los Angeles was designed to be a large city, made up of smaller communities of detached middle-class single-family homes, comfortably clustered in village-like settings. By the 1930s this vision had been realized with astounding efficiency; single-family residences accounted for 93% of the City's residential buildings—almost twice that found in Chicago—spread over an area that, in terms of land, made Los Angeles the world's largest city.<sup>7</sup>

Automobiles, and the growth of freeways to accommodate them, further accelerated the centrifugal process. As early as the 1920s Angelenos were four times as likely to own a car as the national average, and ten times as likely as a Chicago resident. This alone accelerated the outward migration of commercial and industrial facilities, which established themselves along the periphery to accommodate the sprawling population.<sup>8</sup>

It was literally a new vision of city-making. In Los Angeles, however, downtown would never hold the reins as the downtowns of other cities did; it began to lose its importance almost simultaneously with the emergence of the City.<sup>9</sup> Some fought the centrifugal trend, as they still do today, but others embraced a new dispersed and bucolic vision of urbanity.

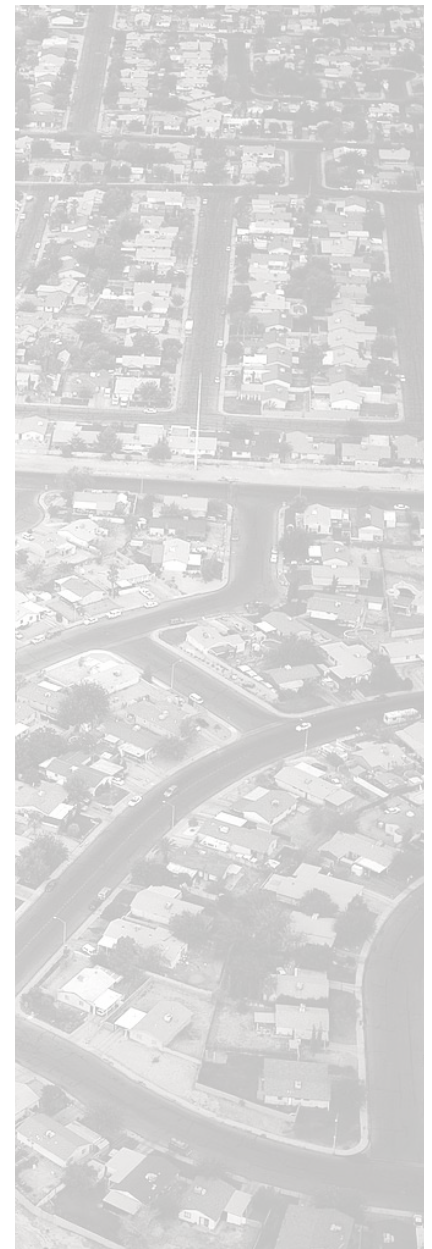
*Los Angeles will retain the flowers and orchards and lawns, the invigorating free air from the ocean, the bright sunshine and the elbow room. It will not be congested like the older cities, for the transportation lines built in advance of the demands, have made it possible to get far out in the midst of orchards and fields for homemaking.*<sup>10</sup>

As Los Angeles' pastoral backyard, the Valley seemed an ideal place to realize these new notions of metropolitan community. Yet ultimately Los Angeles failed to capitalize on them. Some Progressive ideas were incorporated into the development of the older sections of the City—as the parks west of downtown will bear witness—but by the 1920s, these increasingly began to fall by the wayside. The costs of the aqueduct, and other infrastructure, were part of the problem; so too was the desire of developers, in the Valley as elsewhere, to maximize the profits on their land.

As a result, Los Angeles grew, and the Valley most notably, with a shocking lack of parks, green space or attractive public areas. The developers ignored the advice of city officials to designate parklands for their subdivisions, and by 1928, parks took up a mere 0.6% of the City. Later attempts to re-fashion the City—notably the 1930 Olmstead Plan—that would have placed park, river, and open space development at the center of the city plan, never materialized.<sup>11</sup>

This opportunity to create more livable communities was squandered not just because of perfidy on the part of city leadership, but also the shortsightedness of landowners in the Valley who did not want to pay for the creation of a park system. The depression, followed by the Second World War, ended all hope of funding any such model community.<sup>12</sup>

One casualty of this shift was the very thing that brought Los Angeles to the Valley—the River. In reaction to the occasional flooding that devastated the area, the Army Corps of Engineers dammed the River and concreted its banks, starting in the 1930s. The exhuming and paving over of the Los Angeles River was finally completed in the late 1950s, taking nearly two decades. Today, the River is concrete over 94% of its 52-mile length. It wanders through the Valley, a shadow of what it once was, and little more than a receptacle for urban runoff that accumulates from storm drains.<sup>13</sup>



Yet these environmental tragedies did not seriously erode the Valley's appeal. In the 1930s much of the growth came from the expansion of the motion picture industry. Farmlands were quickly converted into movie studios and lots, including those operated by Republic Pictures, Columbia Pictures, Disney, and Warner Brothers. Stars, entrepreneurs and workers all flocked to the area.<sup>14</sup>

With the onset of the Second World War, the aircraft industry provided thousands of new jobs and prodded the creation of more new housing. The San Fernando Valley, whose population was 112,000 strong by 1940, had already surpassed 175,000 by the end of the war.<sup>15</sup>

Los Angeles experienced severe growing pains, with its ever-expanding population. The land of the great City and its San Fernando Valley neighbor was becoming far too valuable for farming and ranching purposes. By 1950, these lands became tract homes, offered to residents at low prices and with attractive terms, as the City became the first to remove wartime rent controls. This tract boom resulted in the construction of tens of thousands of new homes, going to young couples just starting out in the postwar era, trying to create a new life. The establishment of new churches, school, and other local amenities followed.

The boom that came after the war—when the San Fernando Valley population quintupled between 1944 and 1960<sup>16</sup> didn't conform to the model planned by Progressives, but the existing, more rapid version of suburban development. The Valley, in an era before environmental impact statements and organized NIMBYs, grew too quickly to do so in an ordered, or well-thought-out manner.

In this sense, the Valley reflected the growth patterns of many other areas of the time, only perhaps more so. Through the media, its music and habits, the Valley became, as Kevin Roderick has put it, *America's Suburb*. The Valley seemed to exemplify everything we identify with the 50s and 60s epoch of community building—*The Brady Bunch*, auto-dominated retail centers, smog, and cheek-to-jowl communities spreading, often helter-skelter, over the landscape.

Whatever distaste this model may have for contemporary urbanists, it would be a mistake to see the Valley as an unalloyed disaster. For many newcomers—arriving from the crowded, transit-oriented cities of the Northeast and Midwest—the freedom, mobility and even the autonomy of Valley living was highly attractive.

Indeed, it is important to see that the Valley's evolution was not a complete failure by any means. In the end the Valley achieved some of what the Progressives sought—the creation of a largely decentralized middle-class community of homeowners—but at the same time failed to create the quality of environment suggested by the early visionaries. For all of its problems, the Valley, according to a recent Rose Institute survey,<sup>17</sup> still provides a quality of life that most residents find comfortable, albeit with growing reservations.



Population and Race or Ethnicity Percent Changes in City of Community for 1990-2000					
	Population	Hispanic	White	Black/African American	Asian/Pacific Islander
City/Community	% Change	% Change	% Change	% Change	% Change
LA County	7.40%	26.50%	-7.90%	-6.20%	22.00%
Valley Total	10.70%	43.30%	-5.30%	16.50%	25.80%

Figure 1—Population by Race, San Fernando Valley, 2000





Today these two aspects of the Valley—its success as a place and its limitations—define the current dilemma of its communities. The level of negativism about the Valley grew dramatically over the 1990s based on the declines in public schools, increases in crime, loss of quality of life, and in some cases, fear of ethnic changes.

By the end of the 1990s, according to a *Los Angeles Times* poll, nearly twice as many Valley residents believed life in their communities had gotten worse rather than better.<sup>18</sup> This kind of disenchantment threatens the future of the Valley as much as any single factor. This has manifested itself in out-migration to regions such as the Conejo Valley, the secession movement, and in strong opposition to virtually all types of development and growth.<sup>19</sup> Such expressions of concern were seen in the Rose survey,<sup>20</sup> which evinced concern about such things as overtaking the infrastructure, along with concerns over air and water pollution.

These attitudes also affect commercial development. Nancy Tullos, Human Resource Manager at Broadcom, a technology firm that relocated in the late 1990s from Los Angeles to Irvine, recalls how in a previous job for a company located in the San Fernando Valley, she was forced to route their travels carefully so that visitors would avoid adjacent strip malls, decaying barrios and abandoned defense plants. “I used to give them maps to get there so they would not have to come up and see what’s on De Soto Avenue,” she recalls mirthfully.

Yet in many ways, the potential for outlying areas such as the Conejo Valley, or the Antelope Valley, to serve as *escape routes* for Valley residents may also be declining. For one thing, rising housing prices and gridlocked freeways have made life in the outlying areas increasingly unpleasant.<sup>21</sup> In addition, areas such as the Conejo Valley, indeed the bulk of both Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, have become more and more inhospitable to development. The apparent defeat of the massive Ahmanson Ranch plan, on the north end of Los Angeles County, suggests that the prospect for massive new housing developments in peripheral areas could be dismal indeed.

Although such anti-growth sentiments place great pressures on the Valley, they also provide great opportunities for becoming a new hub of creative growth for the region. With the most rapid population and economic growth occurring on its northern fringe,<sup>22</sup> particularly in technology and high-end services, the Valley has emerged as the one place that is relatively convenient to the historic downtown core, the prosperous Westside and the burgeoning suburban *Nerdistan* on the periphery. Indeed, a 1999 poll of Valley residents found twice as many cited *locational convenience* as their reason for living there than any other factor.<sup>23</sup>

# The Valley Today: Challenged but Vital

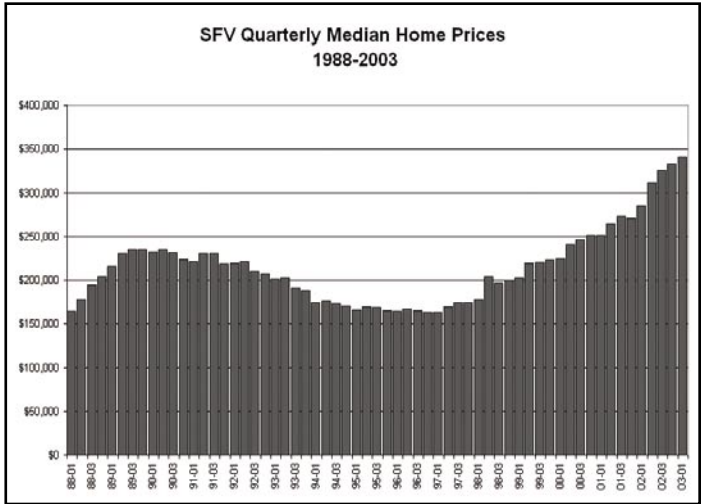


Figure 2—Quarterly Median Home Prices, San Fernando Valley, 1988-2003

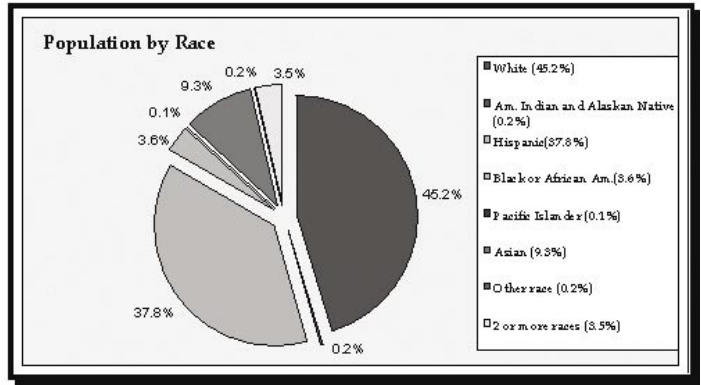


Figure 3—Population by Race, San Fernando Valley, 2000

The Valley's renewed strength can be seen in its economy. Both job creation and office occupancy have outperformed the rest of Los Angeles.<sup>24</sup> This performance contradicts Minnesota legislator Myron Orfield's popular notion—popular at least among policy intellectuals, some politicians and the media—that older suburbs constitute a kind of new victim region, exploited by the expanding, more affluent peripheral suburbs.<sup>25</sup> Whatever its problems, *America's Suburb* is not in danger of becoming America's next *crabgrass slum*.<sup>26</sup>

Much of this vitality stems from the Valley's increasing attractiveness to immigrants and other newcomers to the region. Almost completely white in the 1950s, today the Valley is roughly 50% minority. In the 1960s the Valley was about 90% white, and was nearly 75% white as late as 1980. By 1997, according to County estimates, Latinos accounted for approximately 39% of the Valley population, while Asians accounted for some 10% of the total.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps most important of all is the fact that the Valley still maintains a relatively egalitarian character. Where as the L.A. south of the mountains is increasingly a city divided between Westside rich and eastside poor, the Valley remains predominantly a middle-class haven. The Valley is not about extremes of either wealth or poverty; only four of Los Angeles' fifty richest people live there, compared to nineteen for Beverly Hills. But then again, the Valley also experiences lower rates of unemployment and houses a relatively smaller fraction of the City's poor. The Valley also has far higher concentrations of self-employed people in its private sector workforce than the Los Angeles County average. Its average levels of income are slightly higher than the norms for the City or County of L.A.; and its poverty rates, even in the northeast Valley are considerably lower.<sup>28</sup>

Although an increasing percentage of residents live in apartments and condominiums, the Valley also still epitomizes hopes for many: the great middle-class ideal of owning a home in a sunny, well-lit, comfortable community. At a time real estate prices on the Westside and the Conejo Valley are well out of the range of all but the affluent, the Valley is still affordable to a sizable portion of Angelenos, with above average levels of home ownership. This applies not only to the most affluent, predominantly Anglo sections of the Valley, but to the heavily Latino, and poorer northeast Valley as well.<sup>29</sup>

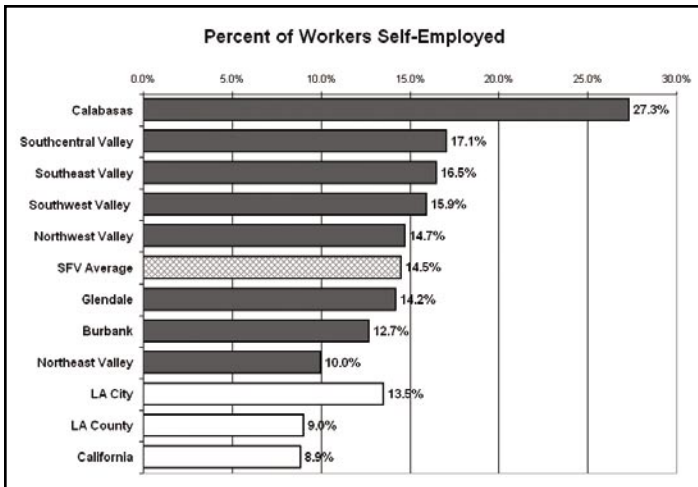


Figure 4—Percent of Workers Self-Employed, San Fernando Valley, 2000

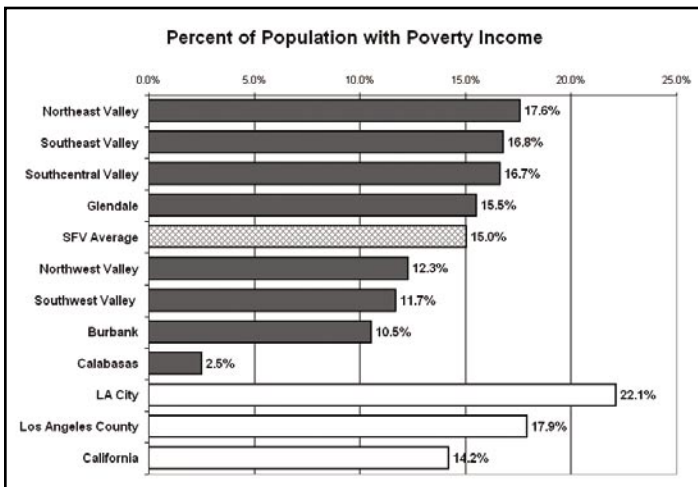


Figure 5—Percent of Population with Poverty Income, San Fernando Valley, 2000

Census 2000 Demographic Indicator	SFV	Los Angeles City	Los Angeles County	California
Total Population	1,696,347	3,694,834	9,519,338	33,871,648
Total housing units	603,158	1,337,668	3,270,909	12,214,549
Owner-occupied housing units	291,385	491,836	1,499,744	6,546,334
Percent owner occupied	50.1%	38.6%	47.9%	56.9%
Percent renter occupied	49.9%	61.4%	52.0%	43.0%

Figure 6—Owner-/Renter-Occupied Housing, San Fernando Valley, 2000

Getting a handle on the future of the Valley's neighborhoods—and then looking for the best options—depends largely upon understanding the underlying demographics. Being nearly built-out horizontally, its days of explosive growth are well behind it. The Valley has faced increasing population pressures over the last several decades. Indeed the San Fernando Valley's recent history has been one of adaptive growth, in-fill construction and redevelopment.

Between 1970 and 2000, the Valley's total population rose some 40% to 1.7 million residents, with the heaviest concentration in the eastern end. To accommodate this increasing population, the number of housing units in the Valley has grown by a comparable amount, increasing by 42%, from 420,000 in 1970 to nearly 600,000 units in 2000. On the surface, it would appear that all is functioning as it should be.

These aggregate numbers do not tell the whole story, however, and the details provide a different set of insights. One potentially troubling trend is that population growth has far outstripped the growth of both employment and housing. The 1970s were a period of moderate population growth for the San Fernando Valley, while the supplies of jobs and housing surged. The 1980s saw housing and employment grow, but population growth outpaced both considerably. The 1990s are almost a perfect mirror of the 1970s with population growing (moderately by the standards of the 1980s), jobs declining, and housing showing negligible growth.



## Looking Ahead: Forces Shaping the Future of Valley Communities

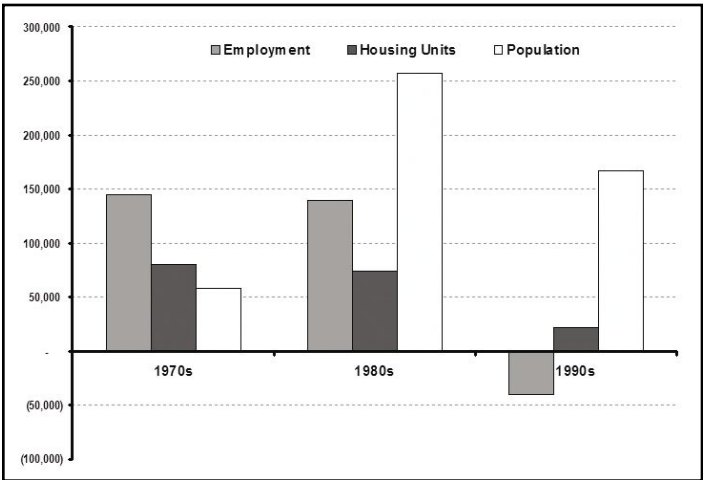


Figure 7—Ratios of Employment, Housing and Population, San Fernando Valley, 1970s-1990s

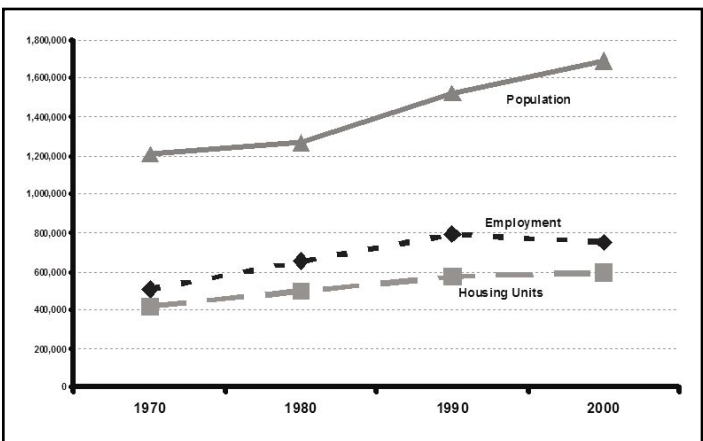


Figure 8—Ratios of Employment, Housing and Population, San Fernando Valley, 1970-2000

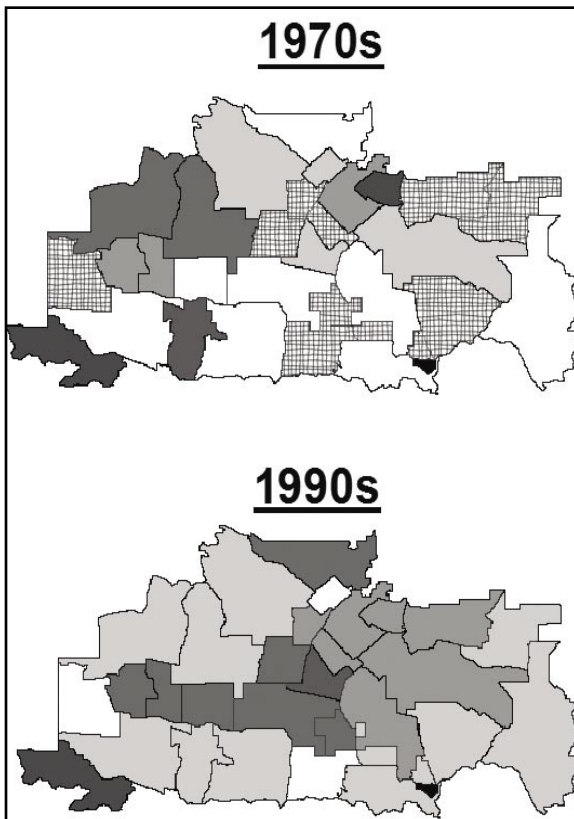


Figure 9—Population Growth, San Fernando Valley, 1970s and 1990s. Hatched areas represent population loss.

Another trend that has emerged over the past 30 years is a shift in the pattern of growth in the San Fernando Valley. While population growth in the 1970s was concentrated in the periphery, the eastern Valley was actually experiencing population declines. These trends shifted dramatically in the 1990s as growth concentrated in the Valley’s central and northeastern areas, as depicted in Figure 9.<sup>30</sup>

The pattern for new housing development follows a more complex progression. In the early 1970s, new housing construction is spread across the entire western San Fernando Valley, as shown in Figure 10. This reflects the era when the Valley was growing west and land was abundant in these areas.

Over the 1980s, land became scarcer in the western areas of the Valley and the addition of new units was more concentrated in outlying areas like Sylmar, Calabasas, Tujunga, and Woodland Hills. At the same time, there was significant growth in the central communities like North Hollywood, Panorama City, North Hills, and Van Nuys, as developers began to build on smaller, less economically attractive parcels in response to the burgeoning demand, as shown in Figure 11. During this decade, growth in the number of new units in the western Valley fell by one-third while the number of new units in the eastern Valley grew by 15% to 20%.

The 1990s show a period where the majority of new housing growth is concentrated in the extreme periphery of the Valley in communities like Calabasas, Sylmar, and Sunland. There is also significant growth in post-earthquake Northridge and Pacoima, as shown in Figure 12. Overall, the Valley has seen weak housing growth —rising by only 3.8% overall in a period when its population increased by 10.9%.

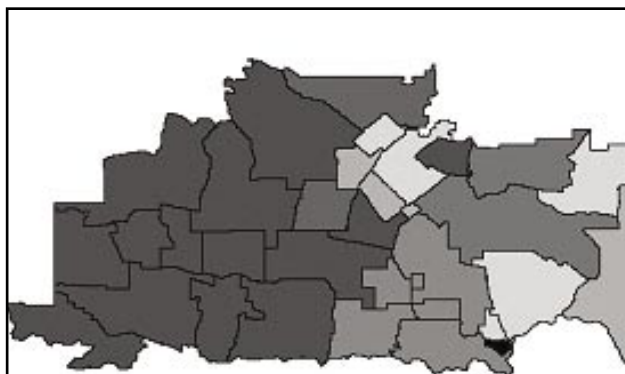


Figure 10—Housing Growth Patterns, San Fernando Valley, 1970s

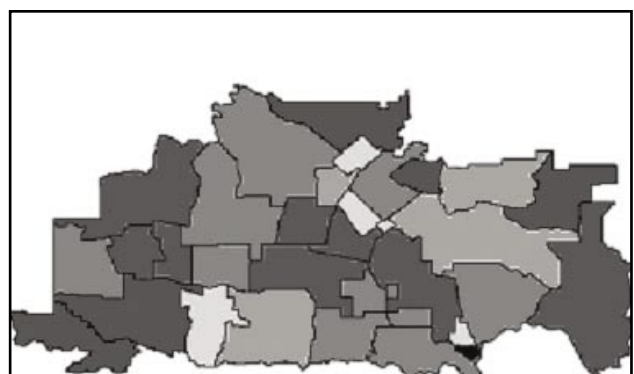


Figure 11—Housing Growth Patterns, San Fernando Valley, 1980s

## Northeast and Central Valley Becoming Much More Densely Populated

These new trends all suggest the inevitable *urbanization* of the Valley, particularly in the northeast sections. New multi-family units are scarce, and the supply of land for traditional single-family units has been severely restricted. The result has been to concentrate people into existing housing, increasing density without increasing capacity. This has been most dramatic in the older, lower income, parts of the Valley. The northeast (Pacoima, San Fernando, Arleta, Lakeview Terrace, and Panorama City) and central (Winnetka, Reseda Van Nuys, and Valley Glen) sections are becoming far more densely populated. Figure 14 shows how the population density of the Valley has changed over the last 30 years.

Overall there have also been dramatic increases in population density across the entire region—from an average of 4,200 people per square mile in 1970 to 5,900 people per square mile in 2000. Variation by community has been extraordinary. Some communities like Encino and Sherman Oaks experienced very little change in population concentration, growing by only 7.1% and 7.6% respectively. In contrast, Panorama City almost doubled its population concentration from 7,644 per square mile in 1970 to 13,520 in 2000, and Lake View Terrace increased by 140% to 6,616. On the western end of the Valley, Calabasas, Canoga Park, and Winnetka experienced similar growth rates, rising more than 60% each. Toluca Lake was the only community to show a decrease in concentration declining by 7%.

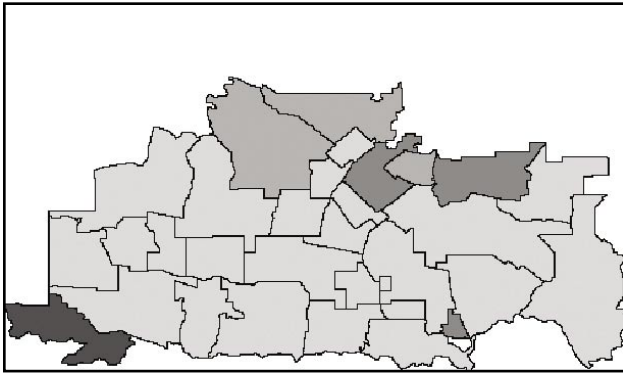


Figure 12—Housing Growth Patterns, San Fernando Valley, 1990s

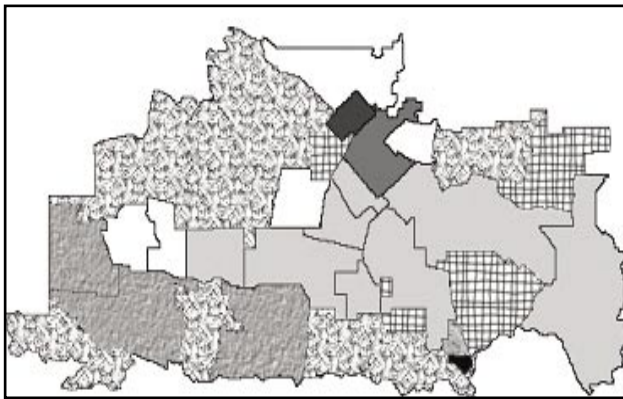


Figure 13—Change in Average Household Size, San Fernando Valley, 1970-2000. Hatching indicates decrease in average size

*“Overall there have also been dramatic increases in population density across the entire region”*

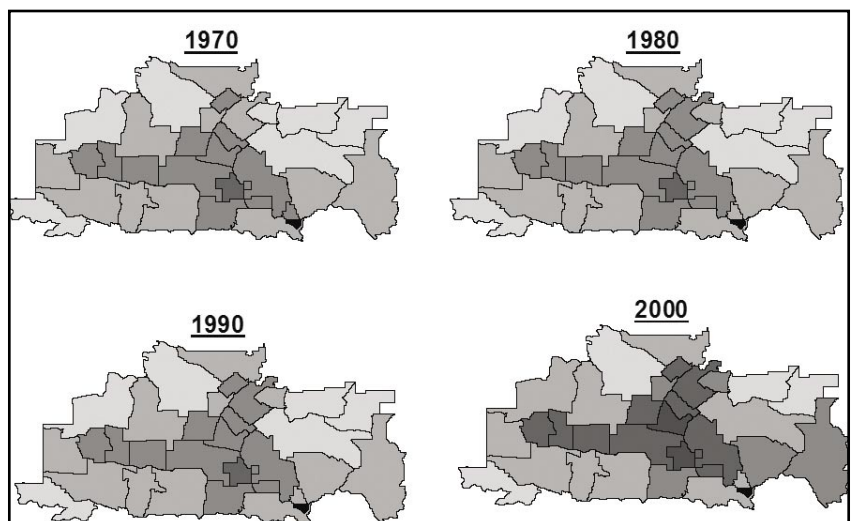


Figure 14—Population Density in the San Fernando Valley, 1970-2000

## Household Size Has Grown, Especially in the Eastern Valley

One of the aspects of these changing dynamics has been an increase in the size of households across the Valley. Figure 13 shows average household size in the San Fernando Valley over the past 30 years. One of the most striking trends exhibited in this figure is the marked decline in average household size in the western Valley and the tremendous growth of household size in the northeastern Valley.

These changes in the average household size between 1970 and 2000 are shown in Figure 15.

The west Valley, once the center of new families, is now aging. Forty-one percent of the population of Woodland Hills was under 20 years of age in 1970, and by 2000 the number had dropped to only 22%. The fraction of the population over sixty-five years of age has risen from less than 5% in 1970 to more than 15% in 2000.

The contrast with the Northeast Valley, with its heavy immigrant population, is stark. In San Fernando the proportion of the population under 20 has risen slightly from 37% to 38%, while the fraction over 65 has declined from 11% to 7%. There has been a surge in the growth of this region, primarily concentrated through the 1980s and 90s, which corresponds to the efforts of families trying to find increasingly scarce housing. As the affordability of the housing stock continues to decline, families are pushed into the lower-rent northeast portion of the Valley, and beyond.

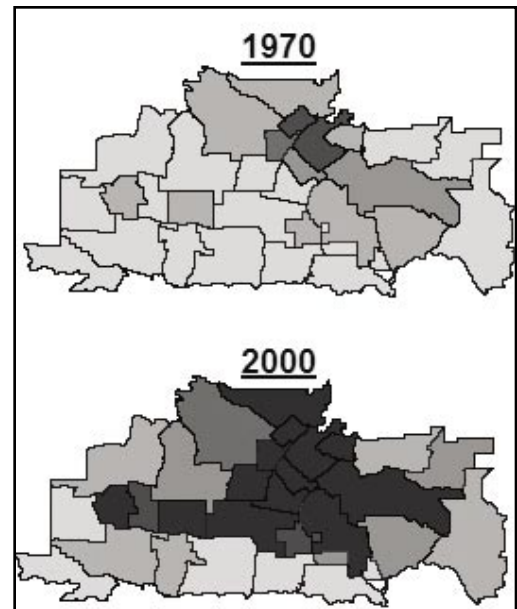


Figure 16—Hispanic Population, San Fernando Valley, 1970-2000

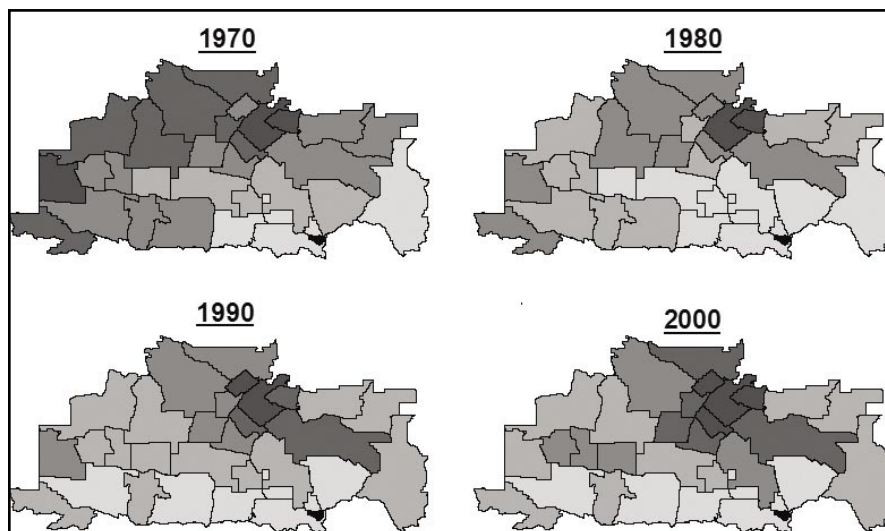


Figure 15—Average Household Size in the San Fernando Valley, 2000

*“The west Valley, once the center of new families, is now aging.”*

Even taken as a whole, it is increasingly clear that the Valley suffers from a deepening shortage of housing, particularly at the *affordable* level. An analysis of the various housing elements required by each city in the State of California by students at Pepperdine’s School of Public Policy suggests that most Valley communities are already well short of their project housing targets.

The current housing element of the *Los Angeles General Plan* anticipates the addition of 60,280 housing units *citywide* between 1998 and 2005 with nearly 23,000 projected for the San Fernando Valley. The other four cities in the Valley account for another 8,000 housing units.

Our analysis suggests that significantly less than the needed 31,000 housing units have been built. While the numbers are not available for Los Angeles, we know that Burbank was only able to complete 41% of its 1994 RHNA (1,221/2,970 housing units) and San Fernando only built 16% of its previous RHNA (50/306 housing units).

Aside from existing residents’ anti-growth sentiments, the biggest constraint for these communities is the availability of vacant land for new housing development. The City of San Fernando, for example, only has enough vacant land zoned for 57 additional units, but needs 201 units. Glendale only has vacant land zoned for 3,110 units, yet has need of 5,783 units. This means that the growth in housing will have to be accommodated through revisions to the General Plans and through redevelopment activities. These would be targeted at increasing permitted and zoned land use densities in these communities, moving them closer to the maximum levels allowed by existing zoning ordinances. Both of these require time and the ability to endure a considerable amount of public process.

Clearly these communities, and the Valley portion of Los Angeles, are likely to fall well short of meeting their housing goals. Even if the Valley only grows at the 7.8% rate projected for Los Angeles County overall,<sup>31</sup> the Valley’s overall population would still increase by 131,000 people, from 1.69 million in 2000 to 1.82 million in 2010. In a best case scenario, the SCAG Regional Housing Needs Assessment would accommodate only 87,569 of these new residents—assuming that these goals were fully attained by the end of the decade. This all points to a serious and ongoing shortfall in the availability of new housing in the San Fernando Valley.

## A Growing and Critical Housing Shortage

*“This all points to a serious and ongoing shortfall in the availability of new housing in the San Fernando Valley.”*



Valley Community	2000 SCAG RHNA	Population Growth Supported
Los Angeles-Valley	22,815	66,053
Burbank	2,242	5,302
Glendale	5,783	15,410
Calabasas	0	0
San Fernando	201	804
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,041</b>	<b>87,569</b>

Table 1—SCAG Regional Housing Needs Assessment, 2000

SOURCES: Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census; City of Burbank, *Housing Element of the City of Burbank General Plan*, June 2001; City of Calabasas, *2000-2005 Housing Element*, October 2001; City of Glendale, *Housing Element of the General Plan*, May 2000; City of Los Angeles, *Housing Element (1998-2005)*, January 2002; City of San Fernando, *2000-2005 Housing Element*, November 2000.

## Implications of a New Housing Shortfall

What does such a shortfall in the production of new housing mean to the Valley region? One of the key results has been soaring prices, a trend that has been particularly marked in the last year or so. Although good for current homeowners, this situation restricts access to home ownership for many current and future Valley residents.

This threatens the very essence of the Valley’s suburban *dream* of a community of homeowners. The Valley could end up increasing the divide between an owner class—largely white and older—and a renter class group of residents, heavily Latino and younger, who are no longer able to purchase a home.

Finally, there is a distinct threat to the future viability of the Valley’s already congested transportation network. If housing units are not available, more and more people will have to commute from outside the region. This produces transportation challenges. The current Regional Transportation Plan prepared by SCAG shows significant transportation bottlenecks within the Valley. Figure 18 shows that the Valley already had significant congestion problems in 1997.



### Transit Bottlenecks

A close examination of Figure 19 depicting this same area in 2025 projects tremendous increases in the congestion in the San Fernando Valley region. Nearly every roadway is congested at least half the time, and many more than three-fourths of the time. This has serious implications for the quality of life, both for Valley residents and for those in the surrounding regions.



Figure 17—Median Home Sale Prices (Resale), San Fernando Valley, 2000



Figure 18—SCAG Congestion Map, San Fernando Valley, 1997 Source: SCAG, *Regional Transportation Plan*



Figure 19—SCAG Congestion Map, San Fernando Valley, 2025p Source: SCAG, *Regional Transportation Plan*



## What Communities Can, and Are, Doing to Deal with the Housing Crisis— *BIDS, Urban Villages and the Future of the Valley*

There seems to be little room for optimism in finding solutions to problems underlying the shortage—increasing prices of houses in many areas, overcrowding in others, the restrictions on growth on the periphery, and a pre-existing lack of neighborhood focus. These threaten to make the Valley an increasingly dysfunctional, and often less livable, jumble of disjointed communities.

There are alternatives to the current patterns. “The community plans we have now don’t go forward,” argues longtime Valley developer Jim Brewer, Vice President for Construction at Spiegel Development, “we need a vision.” The key question becomes, what is the most appropriate *vision*. One of the more appealing ideas would be to, in some senses, return to the original concept of Los Angeles as an archipelago of communities—each with its own vital center. This notion of *urban villages*, as it is now evolving, suggests that dense development, including multi-use centers, is gaining credence nationally, and could evolve in the Valley as well.

The Los Angeles area, and the Valley in particular, are ideal places to test and develop this concept. Despite its association with the term *sprawl*, Los Angeles is actually one of the densest cities in the country—more so even than the New York area. It is simply a heavily populated region whose residents also happen to spread out over a wide area, including places like the Valley.<sup>32</sup>

The *urban village* approach provides several critical solutions to the problems that emerge from this reality. First, it deals with the core issue of increasing housing stock, but without impinging on the fundamental single-family nature of most Valley neighborhoods. Second, it provides a locational focus for communities, that reduces the need for extra trips that can increase congestion. Third, it provides the Valley something that has been missing from many post-World War II suburbs, a sense of *place*, and of community identity.

This last notion of the *urban village* may be the most critical. Addressing the development of cities throughout the ages and loss of a sacred geography, theologian John S. Dunne has noted: “What has happened, it seems, is that the hope of consorting with the gods has been given up and been replaced with the simple hope of consorting with human beings.”<sup>33</sup>

The development of *urban villages* is an attempt to, at least, fulfill the desire of associating and/or mingling with other human beings in an aesthetically pleasing, functionally whole, safe neighborhood center. *Urban villages* are designed to be neighborhoods or a series of neighborhoods that are:

- Walkable with a mix of commercial, retail and housing uses
- Community oriented with public squares and parks
- Pedestrian friendly
- Environmentally friendly
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Safe
- Close to transit
- Technologically savvy
- Economically viable
- Civically oriented

### **Panorama City Urban Design Assistance Team**

One place that bears particular watching is Panorama City. The predominately Latino section of the northeast Valley is now attempting a bold new approach to uplift itself through the creation of a new village-like environment. If successful, it could mark the beginning of a remarkable comeback.

Panorama City represents a particularly intriguing locale because it was so much a part of the post-war Valley experience. It epitomized what might be called a mass-industrial approach to community building. Announced in 1945 by land developer Fritz B. Burns and industrialist Henry J. Kaiser, Panorama City was envisioned as “a grand venture to build tens of thousands of mass-produced homes on the West Coast.”

By the standards of the time, Panorama City was state of the art. To reduce the monotony of such a large tract, Burns curved the streets, altered rooflines, varied the placement of garages, and used vibrant colors. These were tracts that were meant to be more than collections of homes; they included schools, playgrounds, churches, a Kaiser Permanente hospital, a movie theater and a bowling alley.

Like so much of the Valley, Panorama City reached its height in the 1950s. It boasted a booming shopping district with 100-plus shops including several major department stores such as Broadway, Robinson’s, Montgomery Ward, and Orbach’s—and eighteen acres of parking lots.

—cont’d on page 23

*Urban villages* offer hope and a design for creating more geographically and socially intimate communities, which in turn can offer a more supportive environment for families and individuals alike. “People are yearning for a stronger sense of community” suggests former Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg of Sherman Oaks, citing the need for a centering force in the community.

This necessary force would lead to the growth of intermediary institutions and the active participation of community members. This, in turn, helps to address issues affecting the every day lives of the people living in the communities: development, crime, transportation, education, jobs and housing.

Perhaps the most pressing issue is how to get there. One favored solution by policy elites would be to force change on communities through regional governance. This has been the mantra of reformers such as Minnesota’s Myron Orfield, which has been to create central planning boards that cross traditional boundaries, to eliminate the “social polarization and wasteful sprawl that are common in our nation...”<sup>34</sup> Some advocates in Southern California also take this stance, perhaps seeing an organization such as SCAG steering the future direction of Valley housing growth.

We believe this approach is largely mistaken, and is likely to be counterproductive since people generally do not appreciate having *solutions* imposed on them from above. Equally important, this essentially elitist notion vastly underestimates the potential for both market and grass-roots forces to address the problems facing the Valley. It doesn’t seem wise to have the character and texture of our neighborhoods dictated by a remote centralized authority, using *one-size-fits-all* assumptions.

Despite complaints by the media, academic and political leaders, most Valley residents seem to be optimistic, having more positive views of their communities than might be supposed—this in contrast to views of the City of Los Angeles. Of those surveyed, a full 71% responded that their community’s quality of life was “excellent or good” and 85% were “very or fairly optimistic about the future of their community.”<sup>35</sup>

Are the people ready to accept change? It is often assumed that most neighborhoods oppose any kind of development, particularly housing. Yet the survey found that 73% support “more office and industrial development if it creates more jobs;” 76% for “more single-family homes;” 88% for “affordable housing for seniors and the poor;” 49% supportive of “more condominiums and apartments” and about half (51%) of the respondents favored “housing located over businesses on main streets;”<sup>36</sup> with 40% opposing such mixed-use housing.<sup>37</sup>

Clearly there is sizable element that is inclined to support denser development, if it also improved the area’s *quality of life*. As to adding more “shops and restaurants in neighborhoods” 57% supported it, 39% were against it. “A majority of respondents, 64%, also favored stronger sign and design regulations, with only 26% opposing.”<sup>38</sup>

*“Valley residents seem to be optimistic, having more positive views of their communities than might be supposed”*

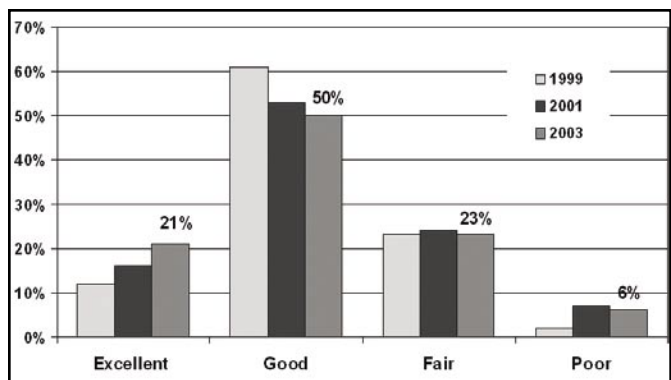


Figure 20—Public Opinion Survey: Quality of Life in the San Fernando Valley, 2003

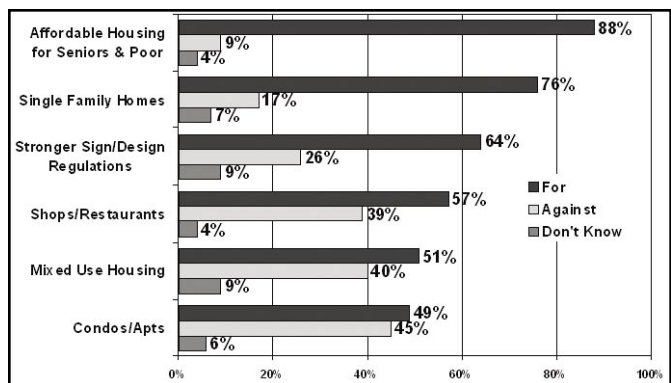


Figure 21—Public Opinion Survey: Growth Issues, For or Against, San Fernando Valley, 2003

## Burbank Models for Urban Villages

The marketing slogan is “Come out and play in downtown Burbank.” Sounds almost laughable when contrasted with the Johnny Carson’s droll old routine about “beautiful downtown Burbank.” Burbank has been the beneficiary of many trends, most notably the rapid growth in the number of single people and couples without children now settling in what had once been family-dominated suburbs.\*

To attract this demographic, Burbank needs to open more restaurants and bars that stay open later. This will help create a nightlife attractive to those who work hard all day and want a place to gather with friends or meet new people. This will be further enhanced by the creation of new housing above retail shops—a critical element in urban village development.

Four more restaurants are expected to open in the BID area by the end of summer and Urban Outfitters, a funky retail chain, is coming in as “an anchor on one side” of the BID. Big name stores are not all the focus however, BID Manager Stephanie Pillard points out that “we are doing what we can to keep smaller businesses, like bookstores. For example Sky Blue Pink which was helped to move to a new location that is still within the BID through a tenant incentive program for smaller businesses.” In addition, the BID is working on unified parking signs for parking “people come and think there isn’t any parking but there is, they just don’t know where it is.”

—cont’d on page 22

The survey data suggests that there is a positive constituency for making significant changes and improvements in the Valley’s neighborhoods. In conducting interviews with the wide range of Valley stakeholders, we have found a growing willingness to tackle the various housing and neighborhood problems on a grass-roots level.

We have also found that many business people and developers believe that there is a considerable market incentive to construct the kinds of denser, more *village*-like environments—the very kind that many residents would like to see. This does require vision, changes in thinking and in policy.

“The Valley is becoming an urban area,” suggests developer Jerry Katell, who recently constructed 300 apartment units near Warner Center. “It’s an urban area whose growth can be accommodated by increasing density along the key corridors. You can do that without taking out a single family unit.”

Perhaps the most evolved tangible efforts towards more clustered development can be seen in the growth of BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) throughout the Valley. In theory, the creation of BIDs only deals with one aspect of *village* building, the cultivation of a commercial core, extending out into the public spaces. But this does represent a powerful first step. The existence of thriving commercial *villages*, such as Sherman Oaks or Studio City, suggests that Valley residents appreciate and enjoy clustered, pedestrian-friendly development. At the same time, it can, and we believe will, lay the foundation for the future evolution of housing alternatives close to, or adjacent to, these thriving areas.

Now, even at this early stage of *village* development, it is critical to note that *one size does not fit all*. The efforts underway to create *centers* for communities and neighborhoods, while sharing some basic implementation strategies in common (e.g. signage, facade improvements, security and community festivals) are varied according to the type of identity the community would like to create.

Creating identity is a tricky business. Throughout the San Fernando Valley, those responsible for managing the BIDs are faced with developing (often in conjunction with a consultant and/or board of directors) an understanding and vision of the past, present and future of their BID areas, and then communicating that understanding to others (residents, desired businesses, realtors and developers). In speaking with BID managers one can detect a present, but often unspoken tension in developing a specific identity, especially where little or none had existed before.

Individual communities within the San Fernando Valley are trying to create an identity and at the same time better understand themselves in the context of the larger picture of Los Angeles. This includes the ethnically and culturally based historical aesthetics and values of each area.

The key to understanding these efforts lies in appreciating their diversity. An area such as the Burbank Village BID has natural advantages, being located close to major entertainment industry employment centers. “The resources here,” suggests BID manager Stephanie Pillard “would be used to show that this is a funky, fun area to live in and attract young professionals with some upscale housing and resume festivals in an actual downtown.”<sup>39</sup>

Other BID-*urban village* efforts target a more middle-class homeowner constituency. The Canoga Park BID, which is a property-owner based BID managed by Mary Paterson, covers 12 blocks from Topanga Canyon Blvd. to Canoga Ave. and from Gault St. to Wyandotte St., including approximately 270 property owners and 300 businesses. The effort here has been to rehabilitate and enhance the old commercial core along Sherman Way—anchored by the rebuilt Madrid Theater—by improving landscaping, boosting security and marketing the area.

This *village*-building activity has won the support of a wide variety of local players, including the Chamber of Commerce, the Historical Society, local churches and charities and the police department. The emphasis is on cultivation of a core district providing needed amenities and retail opportunities—and around which the community can identify.

Similar efforts are taking place throughout the Valley. Susan Levi manages five different BIDs including Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Reseda and Northridge. In many of these areas unique *village* environments have evolved, at least in terms of retail. Some, according to Levi, may now be ready to enter the stage of bringing in mixed-use housing. Sherman Oaks, for example, is now considering adding senior housing to its *village* area.

To an outside observer, the efforts of these BIDs may seem relatively modest—a festival here, a few pedestrian benches there, and a store where there once was a vacant lot. But, these initiatives actually represent the beginnings of new neighborhood-based collaborations. The sense of a greater community blends with meeting the Valley’s need for more focused, land-intensive development.

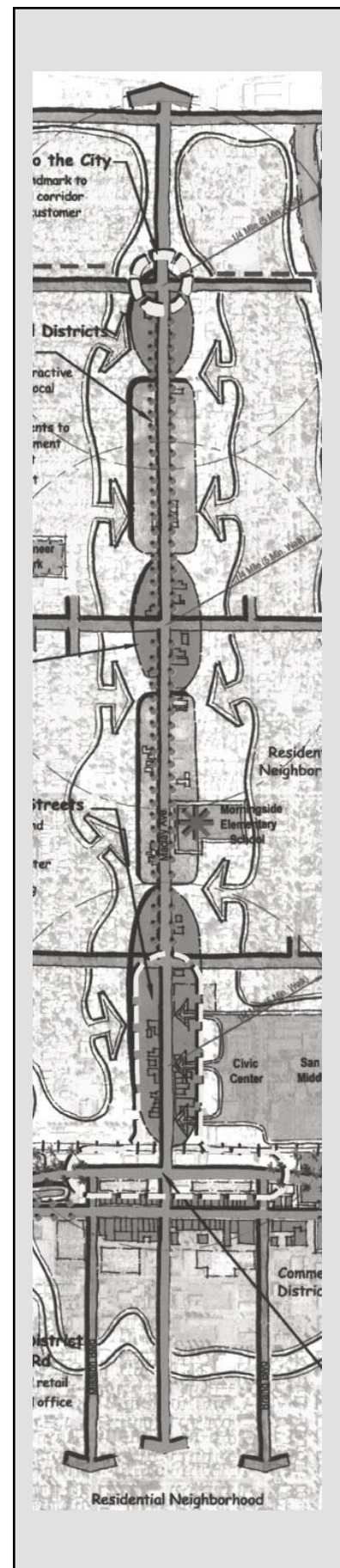
The next stage of this process, the key to developing *urban villages* and addressing the region’s future needs, will require more ambitious steps. Interestingly, two places where this appears furthest along is in precisely that part of the region plagued with the most crowded housing and demonstrated short-falls—the northeast Valley.

Perhaps the best case in point lies in the City of San Fernando. Like Burbank, San Fernando has the unique advantage of itself being an *urban village*—a small compact city—and being the master of its own fate. But beyond the advantage of self governance, which in no way should be downplayed, “in San Fernando you can make an impact,” notes developer Severyn Aszkenazy, “I usually stay out of L.A.”

The City of San Fernando, he adds, has particular assets as “the first town of the Valley.” It is coherent socially, and has a sense of its own history. The existence of a historic downtown core represents an enormous potential asset.

But perhaps most of all, the City has a leadership keenly focused on improving both the housing stock and urban core of its tiny 2.4 square mile domain. Some of the improvements have come about because the area appeals to people attracted to a good quality of life and relatively affordable housing. It is a city of younger people, and a city of owners, with 50.1% of the City’s population falling between the ages of 20 and 54, with a full 25.7% between the ages of 20 and 34 years.<sup>40</sup> Seventy-two percent of the City of San Fernando’s owner-occupied housing is valued between \$100,000 and \$249,999.<sup>41</sup>

Jose Pulido, City Administrator, says that the City of San Fernando is “changing from a pass through community to a bedroom community.” Improvements in the downtown core, he suggests, are a critical part of that transition.



A good portion of this change began nearly two years ago when the City secured \$1 million through MTA to do streetscapes, and in January 2002 when they applied for a \$150,000 Downtown Rebound Grant to provide affordable housing in the area of Maclay, Truman and San Fernando along corridors.



One proposed plan would include light industrial below and lofts above, which would be adaptive overtime so that they could be used for either offices or housing. The developer would like to repeat the process on two other blocks as well.

If successful, the San Fernando example could present an intriguing model for other communities throughout the Valley. Although cities outside Los Angeles may have a leg up in terms of appropriate planning and relative lack of

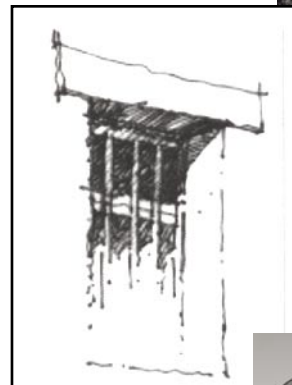
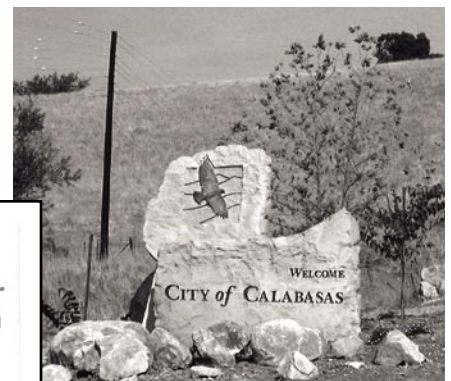
regulatory delays, such efforts may not be at all impossible, as we may already be seeing in the community of Panorama City. (see sidebar)



## Conclusion: Recommendations for Meeting Housing Needs and Creating Better Future Neighborhoods

The future of the Valley rests greatly on how we meet the challenges addressed in this report. Our solutions combine preserving that which is good—that is, the predominately middle-income, family-oriented, multipolar character of the Valley—with efforts to address problems, such as affordable housing, lack of community centers and the potential of barriozation—all implemented through enlightened public policy. These recommendations also tend to follow those presented by the San Fernando Valley’s Vision2020, a February 2002 report that addresses the future of the Valley.

In our understanding of good public policy, there are two main prerequisites. One is that the policies have strong and broad community support—not just that of professional advocates. The second is an understanding that creating market conditions to attract private capital will be critical to any successful effort. With the state and local governments facing a fiscal crisis of unprecedented proportions, it would be foolhardy to look primarily at government as the primary financial resource.



## Dominant Themes:

**1. Expand the quantity of housing available in the Valley.** This will not only help to hold prices down, but also to diffuse transportation costs, enhance labor markets, and help the local economy. There are a couple of dimensions to this goal: first the emphasis should be less on direct government investment and more on eliminating the barriers to this activity imposed by government—notably the commercial exclusion for strip malls, opening them up for residential mixed use development). Second, it should be done in such a way that it improves the quality of life in Valley communities. Lots of huge, boxy apartment buildings may be efficient, but not necessarily desired.



**2. We need to focus on steps to improve the quality of life for existing and new residents.** A community is not just a geographic distinction but should reflect the life and actions of the residents. As we promote mixed use, and the development of *urban villages*, we should take care that we do it at a scale that is appropriate to the various Valley neighborhoods. In addition, the classic anti-car version of mixed use may need to be customized to reflect the lifelong patterns of Southern Californians, and should accommodate easy auto access and parking along with attractive pedestrian environments.



**3. We need to better leverage our existing space resources.** The Valley is just about built out, so any serious community enhancement model must leverage the available resources. This includes using underutilized lots, developing open space and housing in discarded industrial tracts, and reviving the Los Angeles River as a kind of greenway connecting various Valley communities. According to a recent analysis by The Trust for Public Land, Los Angeles is more than 50% below the parks-to-people ratio of 10 acres per thousand residents, as recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association. And the availability is even lower in most minority communities in the Valley.



**4. There needs to be better usage of existing housing.** Successful *urban villages*, particularly in attractive areas such as along Ventura Boulevard or a revived Los Angeles River, may help lure some older couples, whose now-grown children have left the nest, out of their large family homes. This would open up the Valley for other middle-income families, who constitute the key element in the region's workforce. At the same time, greater emphasis should be placed on loan programs and zoning changes which might lead to the speedier rehabilitation of now deteriorated homes. According to The Gas Company, there are over 500 abandoned homes and nearly 14,000 abandoned apartment units across the Valley; these represent a potential resource that can help relieve our current housing shortage.

**5. Finally, we need to turn the Valley into a more self-sufficient cultural hub.** Instead of placing all our major emphasis in the arts and entertainment north of Mulholland, there should be an effort to boost local districts so that they can provide interesting venues, particularly for the single, *empty nester* and younger populations who may be attracted to the new *village* environments. The proliferation of farmers markets and street fairs in recent years represents a promising sign, and should be further developed.



## Specific Mechanisms for these Policy Actions:

- **General Plan revision for the Valley:** Update commercial zoning and RA zoning to allow smaller subdivided lots, build-in incentives (density bonuses, fee discounts, expedited processing) for strip mall conversions.
- **Specific Plan for the L.A. River:** Develop a specific area plan for the Los Angeles River. Other U.S. cities, including Denver, San Antonio and Chicago have had successful restorations of river systems, with positive effects on adjacent urban areas.
- **Open spaces as cores to villages:** Using the current inventory of open spaces, develop specific incentive areas for new mixed-use developments. This requires both the zoning changes suggested above as well as getting the interest of innovative developers who might want to invest in the area.
- **Encourage the development of thematic villages around ethnic, historical and cultural themes:** This could work in such places as Panorama City and San Fernando for Latinos; for arts and entertainment communities such as Burbank, Studio City, Sherman Oaks and North Hollywood; and perhaps for other emerging ethnic areas, such as the Persian population in Encino.

Ultimately our vision for the future neighborhoods looks to restore much of what attracted people to the Valley in the first place. This will require a lot of new thinking, and in the current budgetary atmosphere, a greater attention to the needs of private capital. Restoration of the Los Angeles River—something we see critical to the health of our future neighborhoods—could be facilitated by selling *air rights* above the River; developers would get rights to build along greenway in exchange for helping defray the cost of constructing it.

We believe improvements in the natural and built environment can be leveraged as to help finance improvements even under the current fiscal crisis. Research on the impact of open space or park facilities on home prices reveals a significant boost in home prices (Lutzenhiser and Netusil 2001). This was also found to be true in studies of water-based parks in Oakland, San Diego and Columbus, Ohio (Geisler and Daneker 2000).<sup>42</sup>

It is also appears increasingly clear that *urban village* development also enhances property values in a similar fashion. The success of the areas around Studio City and Sherman Oaks suggest that, eastern perceptions of Southern Californians notwithstanding, Valley people actually are attracted to and will pay money to be near *village* environments.

But perhaps more important, these measures—improving existing housing stock, the creation of *urban villages* and the restoration of the L.A. River—could all enhance the Valley’s sense of identity and cohesion.

Ultimately, this is what the future of the Valley rests upon. The quality of neighborhood life is the basic bone structure of any region. With its legacy of middle-income opportunity, many distinct neighborhoods and a growing grass-roots activism, the Valley now has the opportunity to shape its future in ways appealing to its residents, past, present and future. This is far better than allowing others, and outside events, do the shaping.



*“Ultimately our vision for the future neighborhoods looks to restore much of what attracted people to the Valley in the first place.”*



*“We believe improvements in the natural and built environment can be leveraged as to help finance improvements.”*

### Burbank—cont’d

Pillard, echoing statements from various developers and real estate experts, believes her task has been made easier by the fact that Burbank is an independently run city. “It is easier here,” she explained, “because [Burbank] is a small city and we have access to our (government) officials.” Another difference noted by Pillard is that many of the other BIDs had to “deal with graffiti a lot” whereas Burbank police tend to be very efficient in reining in this kind of blight, freeing-up the Burbank BID to focus on actual development issues.

\* William H. Frey and Alan Berube, *City Families and Suburban Singles: An Emerging Household Story from Census 2000*, Brookings Institution, Center for Urban and Metropolitan Policy, 2001





## Panorama City—cont'd

The houses built in Panorama City were designed to be homes with *minimum floor plans* at affordable prices, and their location was driven by their close proximity to “regional industries such as General Motors, Anheuser-Busch, Lockheed, and Rocketdyne.” Therefore, veterans and others could find gainful employment, become homeowners, and locate their families in a “total community.” In fact, “The National Association of Home Builders awarded Panorama City its first prize in the *Best Neighborhood Development* category in 1949 and both the building trades and architectural press showcased the project.” Although the houses were based on *minimum floor plans*, “Burns argued for a variety in unit prices ‘to provide a varied community atmosphere and to prevent un-American economic and social stratification.’” The 1950 Census showed that Panorama City did accomplish the class heterogeneity and occupational diversity Burns desired.

“Building a City where a City belongs” was the slogan used on Panorama City print advertisements. “And yet, the careful design was fatally flawed; a close separation between residences, employment, recreation, and public institutions worked against the creation of a *village atmosphere*.” The intentional planning also did not insulate Panorama City from the demographic and economic shifts that soon swept much of the north Valley.

By the 1990s, Panorama City was predominately Latino, and much of that population was poor and living in substandard homes. Crime and gangs became rampant; many of the post-war buildings dilapidated and abandoned. In recent years there have been more concerted efforts to address these challenges, largely from the grass-roots level. Business organizations like the local Wells Fargo Bank, the Panorama and the Mid-Valley Chamber of Commerce have all promoted festivals and events to appeal to the increasingly Latino population. Efforts have also been made by religious organizations and social service agencies to provide anti-gang support, such as an organization known as Graffiti Busters, and stand to offer English as a second language instruction to local residents.

While endeavors listed above are a sign of hope and renewal, perhaps the missing element has been the creation of a sense of space and identity. To meet this need, the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the Urban Design Assistance Team—a multidisciplinary team made up of several architects and other professionals chaired by architect Jerry Pollak—is putting together a study and plan for the redevelopment and renewal of Panorama City. They are working separately from but in cooperation with the L.A. City Planning Department represented by Tom Rath.

The Urban Design Assistance Team iplan calls for new streetscapes, mixed-use development and greater use of transit corridors. All of the above are elements that lead to the creation of a community identity, but according to Jerry Pollak, the UDAT Team does not want to impose their ideas on the community at large. They want to hear what the residents are concerned about and what they want in their community. If they gather strong support, Panorama City may be the next community in the Valley, following the lead of Burbank and San Fernando, to start building its own *urban village*.

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# San Fernando Valley Quick Facts 2003

## Population (2000)

- City of Burbank: 100,316
- City of Calabasas: 20,033
- City of Glendale: 194,973
- City of Los Angeles – Valley Portion: 1,357,374
- City of San Fernando: 23,564
- Unincorporated Areas and Hidden Hills: 10,882
- San Fernando Valley Total: 1,707,142
- Population Forecast (2010): 2,130,000

Source: Census 2000, California Department of Finance

## Industry Strength

Within the United States, the San Fernando Valley is home to the:

- Largest number of aerospace firms
- Third largest number of entertainment firms
- Fifth largest number of manufacturing firms
- Sixth largest number of finance, insurance and real estate firms

Source: San Fernando Valley Almanac 2000

Median Household Income (1999): \$50,418

Per Capita Income (1999): \$26,507

Source: San Fernando Valley Almanac 2000

Labor Force (2001): 701,942

Employment (2001): 669,442

86% of Valley residents are under 60 years of age

36% of Valley residents are under 24 years of age

Source: San Fernando Valley Economic Research Center 2002-2003, California State University, Northridge

Median Price of a Single Family Home (January 2003): \$335,000

Source: Southland Regional Association of Realtors

## Travel and Transportation

The Valley boasts three airports, eight freeways and a vast array public transportation. The Valley's own Burbank Glendale Pasadena Airport is served by six major airlines and handles 4.6 million passengers annually. With neighbors such as the Los Angeles International Airport and the Port of Los Angeles, the Valley does more than \$1 billion in tourism and \$2 billion in international trade annually.

## Ethnic Diversity

The Valley is increasingly multi-cultural and diverse, largely as a result of migration of immigrants from places such as Central and South America, India, Asia and Armenia. One-third of the Valley's 1.7 million residents are foreign born.

45.2%	White
37.8%	Hispanic
9.3%	Asian
3.6%	Black or African American
3.5%	2 or more races
0.2%	American Indian and Alaskan Native
0.2%	Other race
0.1%	Pacific Islander

Source: The Changing Face of the San Fernando Valley Report 2002

## Education Opportunities

The Valley is home to California State University, Northridge, San Fernando Valley College of Law, Woodbury University, IIT Technical Institute, DeVry University, four community colleges, eight regional occupational centers, and several charter schools. Nationally recognized institutions – University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and University of Southern California (USC) – are located immediately adjacent to the San Fernando Valley. More than 300,000 Valley residents have higher education degrees.

## Location and Characteristics

The San Fernando Valley region is home to more than 70,000 businesses and 1.7 million residents. Located in Northern Los Angeles County, the Valley is comprised of five major cities: Burbank, Calabasas, Glendale, San Fernando (general law) and the Los Angeles City portion of the Valley (charter law). The region also includes a small, unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County and the city of Hidden Hills.

## Climate and Terrain

The San Fernando Valley is surrounded by mountains and has direct access to the ocean. With average temperatures ranging from 50°- 80° F, the Valley's temperate climate makes year-round recreation a reality.

Economic Alliance  
of the  
San Fernando Valley

