



# Fact Sheet & Media Brief

## A Long-Term Vision for the Community of Northridge

A project to create a *new vision* for the future is under way in Northridge, California—a project intended to guide the re-invention and improvement of Northridge and the Northridge business district over the next twenty years. Natural assets, economic clusters, unique advantages and points of interest will combine to lay a foundation for future community enhancement and economic growth.

The leadership of Northridge and the north San Fernando Valley have launched an aggressive campaign to establish a vision and develop a strategic “concept plan.” The visioning group is incorporating community goals, the existing Northridge Community Plan and local and regional demographics, to determine the potential for public and private redevelopment. They are seeking strategies for working with, and improving, the current mix of commercial tenants. As an important part of this effort, they are evaluating the relative success of other plans in Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley, and of prior local initiatives. The vision will also focus on the Cal State University Northridge campus as the hub of the community—how best to develop the “college town” personality, synergies between the university’s new Valley Performing Arts Center, and cultivate “walkable village” areas in the business district.

The working group has established an elaborate website: [www.NorthridgeVision.org](http://www.NorthridgeVision.org), that allows visitors to choose between five different community and business surveys. These range from a short form with 28 questions

to a long form with 200 questions—for those who want to be more involved in the process. A portion of each survey seeks opinions on challenges and opportunities in Northridge as it stands today. Participants are then given the opportunity to weigh-in on several dozen proposals, and share their personal views on how Northridge can be improved over the long term.

A series of live Stakeholder Roundtable are being conducted for various groups, including residents, neighborhood councils, government, businesses, property owners, the university, manufacturing and industry. Participants are looking most favorably at common sense development strategies, and recommendations that are practical for implementation. The final report will provide a vision and a model from which to launch implementation efforts. It will recommend best practices from similar projects in similar communities. This will set the stage for Northridge leaders to guide the community into the future.

An important outcome of the project is the development of consensus recommendations for the next Northridge Community Plan Update. The Northridge Community Plan is one of thirty-five that help make up the City of Los Angeles General Plan. In addition to land use, these plans can include such special tools as specific plans, scenic corridors, commercial design overlay districts (CDOs) and ordinances to control public spaces and signage. While such regulations have been somewhat controversial, they have also been very successful in the past in cleaning up commercial blight. Guidelines are expected to make the business district more attractive to pedestrian traffic by making the area more “walkable.” *More...*

## How You Can Participate

- Take the Community Survey
- Take the Business Survey
- Attend a Stakeholder Roundtable
- Log in to [NorthridgeVision.org](http://NorthridgeVision.org)
- Email: [MyVision@NorthridgeVision.org](mailto:MyVision@NorthridgeVision.org)



# [www.NorthridgeVision.org](http://www.NorthridgeVision.org)

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## Northridge Vision Supporters

The strategic partners supporting the process include: The Northridge East, South and West Neighborhood Councils, the North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, Cal State University Northridge and the City of Los Angeles, through 12th District Councilman Greig Smith

This 12-month process is engaging a diverse and effective group of community stakeholders in a series of Stakeholder Roundtables and interviews in order to develop buy-in and build a credible and actionable strategic “concept plan.” Collaborators include: residents, civic leaders, elected officials and their staffs, property owners and businesses as well as neighborhood councils, industry representatives, service clubs, nonprofit organizations, developers, and educators. Community consensus-building is seen as critical to the success of the planning process.

Northridge Vision is being managed and facilitated by the San Fernando Valley’s Mulholland Institute. “This is a trailblazing event for a community such as Northridge” says Project Director Robert L. Scott. “With their 100th anniversary and the opening of the new Valley Performing Arts Center at Cal State Northridge, there is a lot to energize the process.” The \$166,000 cost of the work is being covered through the joint efforts of the City of Los Angeles and Northridge Neighborhood Council funds.

The Institute’s consultants and experts are participating in the outreach and planning meetings, gathering information and data to develop an in-depth profile of the area. They are evaluating challenges and opportunities in order to provide a vision for Northridge on 5, 10 and 20 year planning horizons—to assess opportunities and programs that will allow the business district to project itself and its branding into the public spaces, sidewalks and boulevards and to evaluate the potential of adding tourist or travel destinations such as hotels, attractions, galleries, eclectic shopping and upscale restaurants. The Institute team is experienced with planning in the San Fernando Valley, thus providing a critical and objective regional perspective to local challenges.

## History

Much has happened and there is much to celebrate in the fifteen years since the devastating Northridge Earthquake. Many Northridge assets and properties have already been renewed and renovated, but there is still much to do to bring out and showcase the area’s distinct personality. The Reseda Boulevard business district is “ground zero” for the renewal process. An earlier Business Improvement District fell somewhat short of expectations and was terminated. Part of the project team’s challenge is to determine the weaknesses of the BID, and develop strategies to avoid them in any future initiatives.

## The Process

Sound visioning relies heavily on outreach—changing the public’s perception of their community, primarily through re-imaging—refocusing on cultural, ethnic and demographic strengths. Through cooperation and the development of shared values, the plan can address important issues of cleanliness, security, marketing, relevance and aesthetics.

The Mulholland Institute team is setting the stage with a thorough review of prior initiatives and historical economic trends in the area. Given the importance of history and continuity, recent studies and reports by the American Institute of Architects and The Valley Economic Alliance are providing a base upon which the newer work will stand. The group is considering economic, social, housing, transportation and employment issues, as well as issues identified in the 2001 2010 Vision2020: San Fernando Valley project.

The team is assembling information and data relating to the economic, social, civic and demographic characteristics of the local area as well as to the commercial catchment area from which potential economic activity can be derived. They are identifying existing commercial and industrial clusters where Northridge has a distinct advantage—clusters that may be candidates for further cultivation. Economic activities that will complement the developing performing arts center at Cal State University Northridge, are also being identified, evaluated and proposed, including development of a theatre/entertainment district and village lifestyle areas.

An objective needs assessment is being conducted to map assets and to realistically and critically determine improvements, actions and resources needed to enhance the viability of the business district, improving its ability to attract retail, dining, entertainment and other forms of commercial traffic. Aesthetic evaluation—a key component of this assessment—will result in practical recommendations for theme development for facades and streetscape.

## Outcomes

At the conclusion of the research and roundtables, the materials will be distilled into a comprehensive and practical consensus document—a document that will articulate a vision capable of being implemented by the private sector or by various combinations of private investment and public resources.

A “concept plan” will be prepared that, above all else, includes actionable steps to redirect the future development and evolution of the district in a way that maximizes the synergy between the district and the university. Recommendations will be made on how to strengthen the tenant mix to appeal to pedestrian orientation and create a “village” setting where visitors are encouraged to stay longer, to enjoy the ambiance, and to patronize multiple local businesses—often in conjunction with university activities.

**Northridge Vision** is a year-long partnership of the Northridge Neighborhood Councils, the North Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, Cal State University Northridge, and the City of Los Angeles, 12th District Councilman Greig Smith

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Visit Our Website to Find Out More

[www.NorthridgeVision.org](http://www.NorthridgeVision.org)