

Subject: TO Members of the Redistricting Commission

Date: Monday, May 23, 2011 7:48 PM

From: francisco rivera <[REDACTED]>

To: <[REDACTED]>

Conversation: TO Members of the Redistricting Commission

Dear Members of the California Redistricting Commission:

Please see documents pertaining to our presentation before the Commission and the elements for the Central American Cultural District in the Pico-Union/Westlake community.

My name is Francisco Rivera, founder of the National Central American Roundtable in 2003 and we proposed the formation of the Little Central America, that has evolved to become the Central American Cultural District.

There are several community in support of this project.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Francisco Rivera
President
National Central American Roundtable
[REDACTED]
Los Angeles, CA 90057
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Elements of a Community of Interest Testimony

A community of interest testimony should give the redistricting entity a clear picture that your community shares too many common traits and characteristics to be divided and placed in different districts. When writing your testimony consider that you are speaking to someone that may have never visited your community. Be as descriptive as possible.

There are four main elements to a community of interest testimony: a map, anecdotal data about your community's experience, social and economic characteristics, and relation to other communities. Each is explained below and some examples are listed but remember that there is no one way to describe a community of interest. **Each community is unique and so be creative and comprehensive in describing your community of interest.**

- 1. A Map – Your testimony should include a map that shows your community of interest.**
 - a. Be specific in identifying your north/south and east/west boundaries; include distinctive features such as street names, rivers, highways, a mountain range, etc.
 - b. This is not a district map it is simply a map showing the outline of where your community is located. You can use a Thomas guide and draw in your street boundaries, draw a simple picture, use Google or Mapquest maps, etc.
- 2. Your community story – Use anecdotes to describe that your community is united**
 - a. Has your community worked together to achieve a common goal? (Examples can include, investments in redevelopment, organizing an annual festival or parade)
 - b. What are the common activities that your community participates in? (Examples can include, a soccer league, a shared religious congregation, a common shopping area)
- 3. Social and Economic characteristics – Use data and statistics to describe common traits of your community**
 - a. What is the common language spoke by your community?
 - b. What is the common ancestry?¹ Mexican, Salvadoran, Puerto Rican, etc (we are more than just Latino, let the redistricting entity know of our community's rich ancestry)
 - c. Is there a common income level to the community? What is the educational level?
 - d. Use publically accessible data such as that provided by school districts, or the US Census at <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data/>
- 4. Relation to communities around you – Identify which communities are most similar to you and most different from you**
 - a. Share which communities around share your experience or social and economic characteristics
 - b. Share with the commission which communities around you are different

Submit written testimony by Monday, May 23, 2011 for consideration into the first draft maps

Email: votersfirstact@crc.ca.gov

US Mail: Citizens Redistricting Commission 1130 K Street, Suite 101 Sacramento, CA 95814

Fax: (916) 322-0904

Online: http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov/contact_public_comment.html

¹ A community of interest cannot be described on race alone. We cannot say we are only Latino/Hispanic. We need to demonstrate

My Community of Interest Testimony

My name is _____ Francisco Rivera _____ and I am from Pico-Union/ Westlake, California. I have lived in this community for for the last 30 years.

I am here today to request that my community of interest is kept together in the maps that the Commission is drawing.

Other Comments: _____ Please find attached proposal for the creation of the Central American Cultural District _____

Define your Community Boundaries: *Identify street names, highways, landmarks, mountain ranges, rivers, etc*

North: _____ West 3rd Street

South_ W. Adams Blvd.

East: Bixel Street

West: Westmoreland Avenue

Describe what makes you a unified community: *Describe annual festivals, traditions, shared utilities, schools, etc*

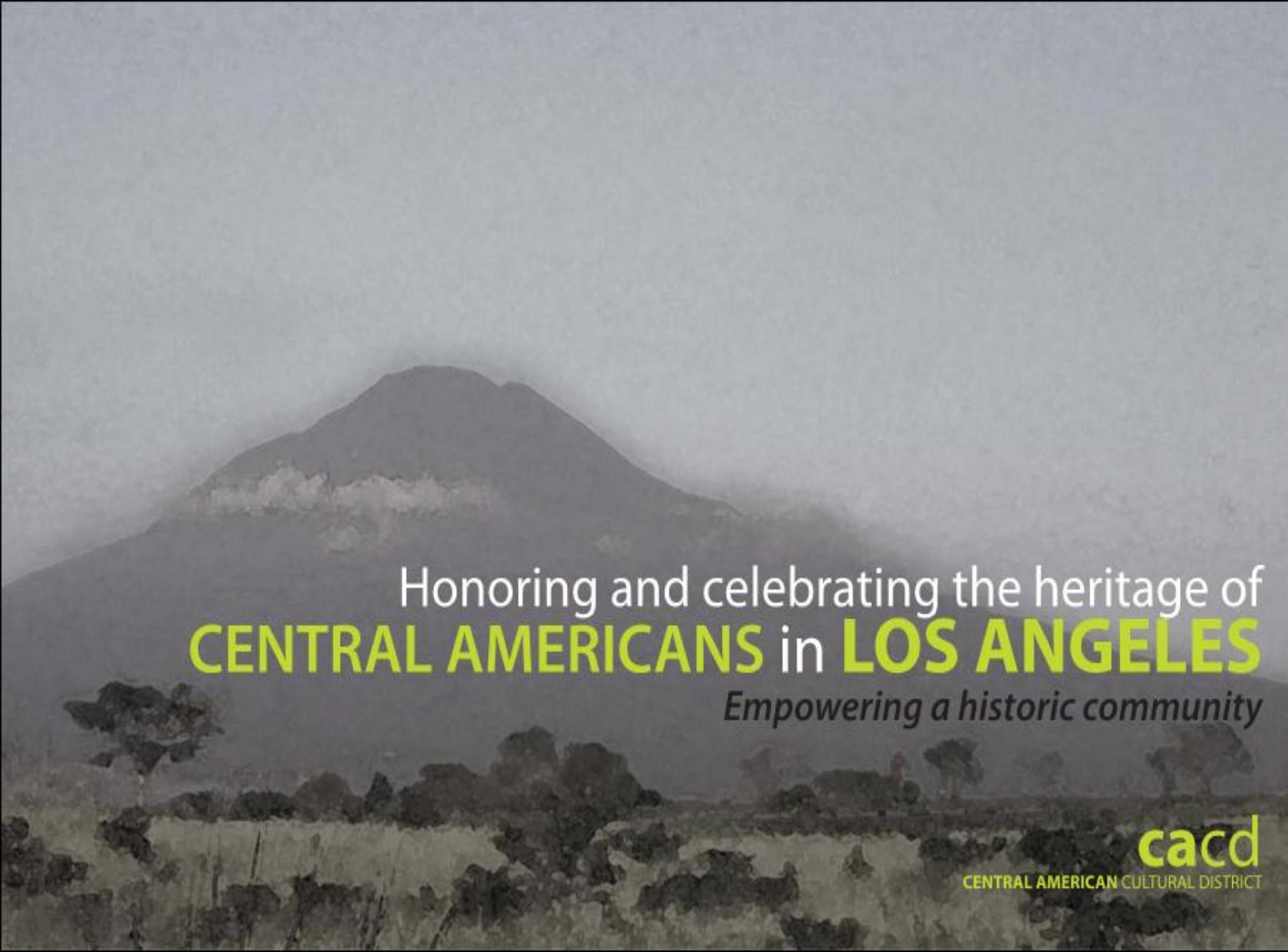
____ We have the Feria Agostina, the Central American Independence Parade, the Celebration of the Day of the Salvadoran, the Day of the Honduran and the Day of the Nicaraguan. There are many Central American Restaurants and there are many people that observe the traditions and culture of Central America.

Describe your shared community social and economic characteristics: *If available use demographic data if not available use anecdotes to describe the shared economic and social characteristics* __ PLEASE SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT.

Distinguish Your Community:

My (our) community is similar to _KOREATOWN _____

And it is unique/distinct/different from ___LITTL E ARMENIA



Honoring and celebrating the heritage of
CENTRAL AMERICANS in **LOS ANGELES**

Empowering a historic community

cacd
CENTRAL AMERICAN CULTURAL DISTRICT

Introduction

- Central American community in partnership with the CRA and CD1 seek help for Central American Cultural District
- Thai CDC, LA Commons, and Mia Lehrer Architects chosen to start community engagement process for project

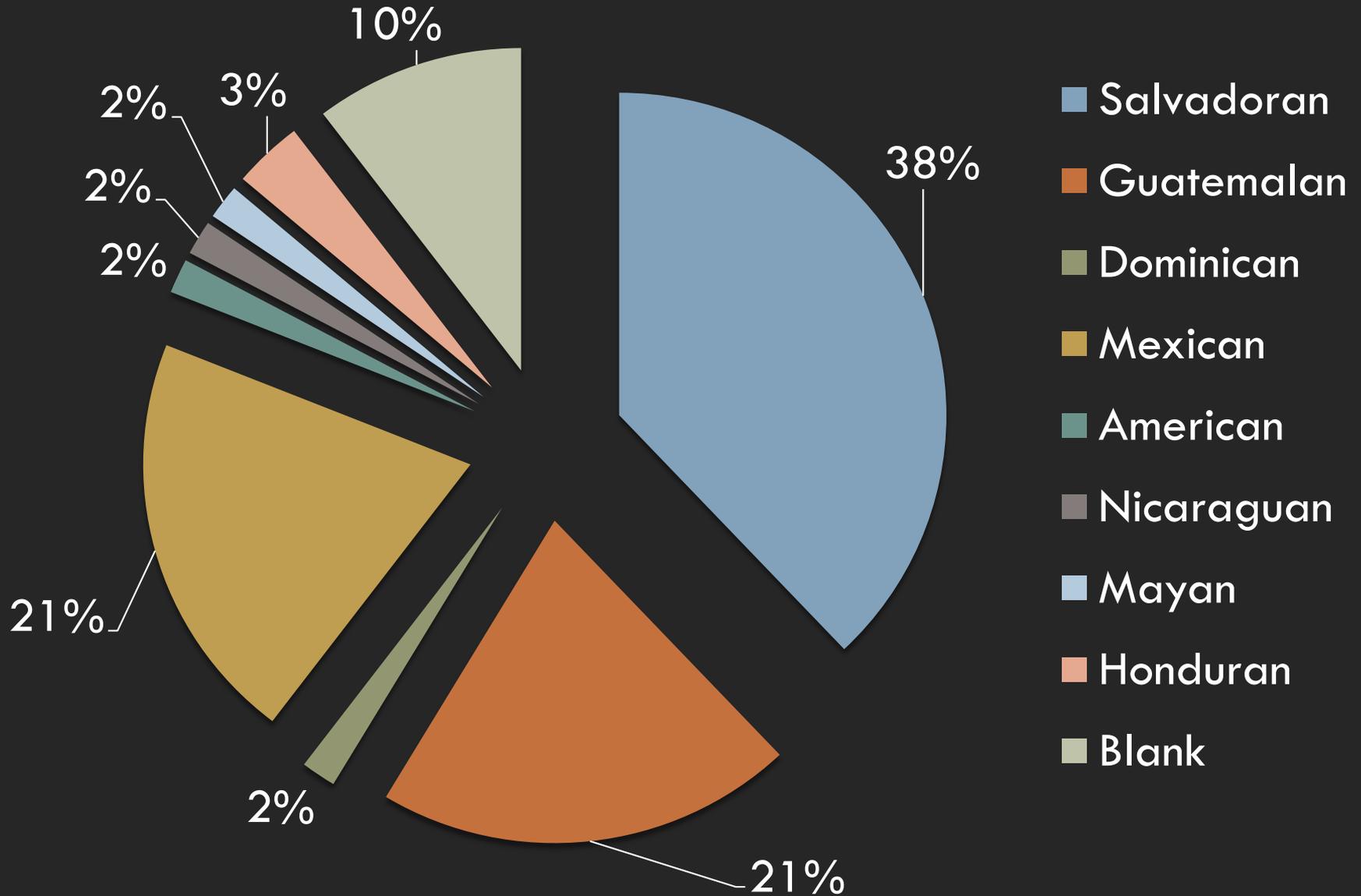
Central Americans in Los Angeles

- Central America has 7 countries each with their own history and geography
- Central Americans migrated in mass beginning late 1970s
- Organizations and business tailored services to meet Central American needs
- Late 1990s to present, organizations serving community expand and provide other services other than legal advice

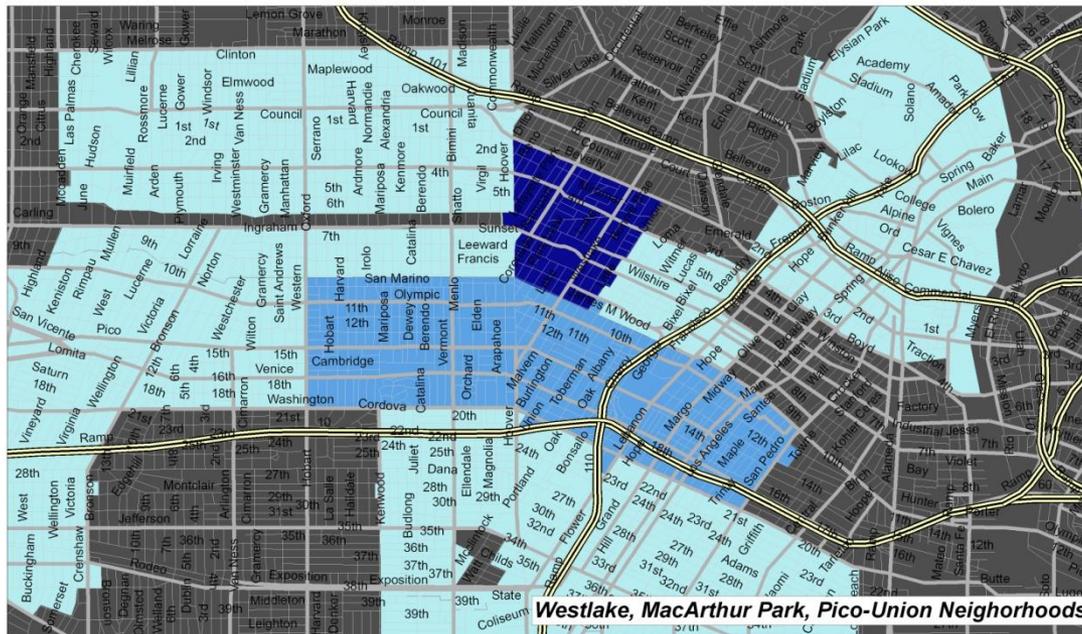
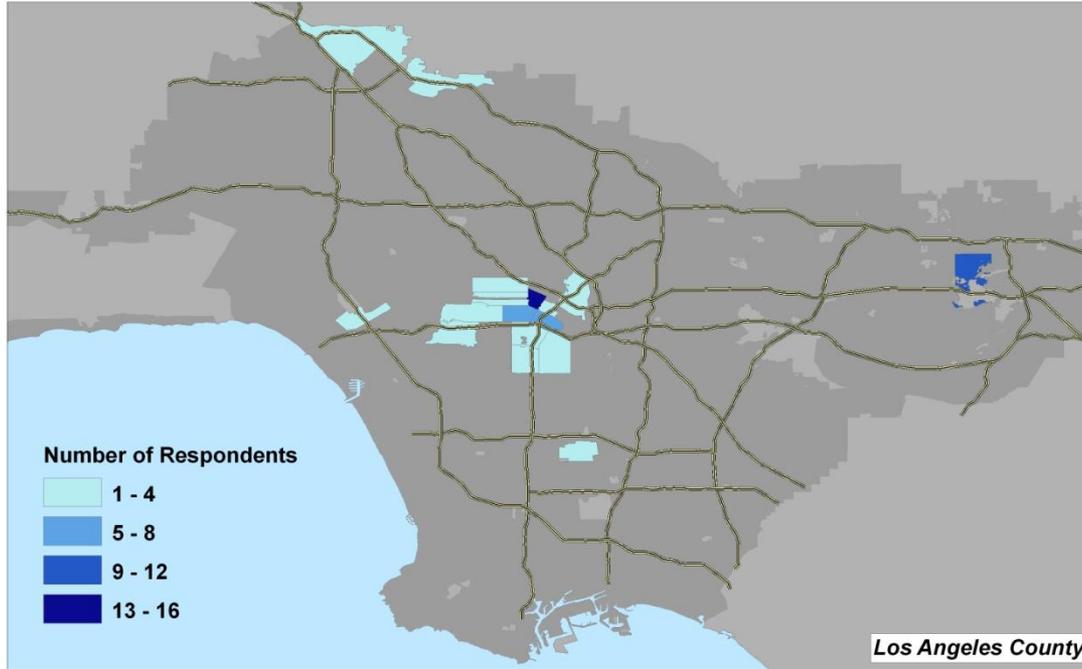
Main Findings: Interview Phase

- Insight into community
 - Landmarks and organizations that represent the history of the community (MacArthur Park, CARECEN, La Curacao, COFECA, and SALEF)
 - Cultural values and assets
- Designation of the area will improve political representation, economic development, youth involvement, culture and community engagement
- Concerns
 - Risk of gentrification due to the development projects
 - Political fragmentation within community

Main Findings: General Public Meeting Surveys



SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY ZIP CODE



Main Findings: General Public Meeting Surveys



- Perceptions of Area
 - Safety
 - Points of Attraction
 - Shops
 - Events
- Thoughts on Designation
 - Most felt that showcasing Central American culture would improve community by bringing about social and economic benefits
 - Most expressed support for the establishment of a cultural and/or historical district

Main Findings:

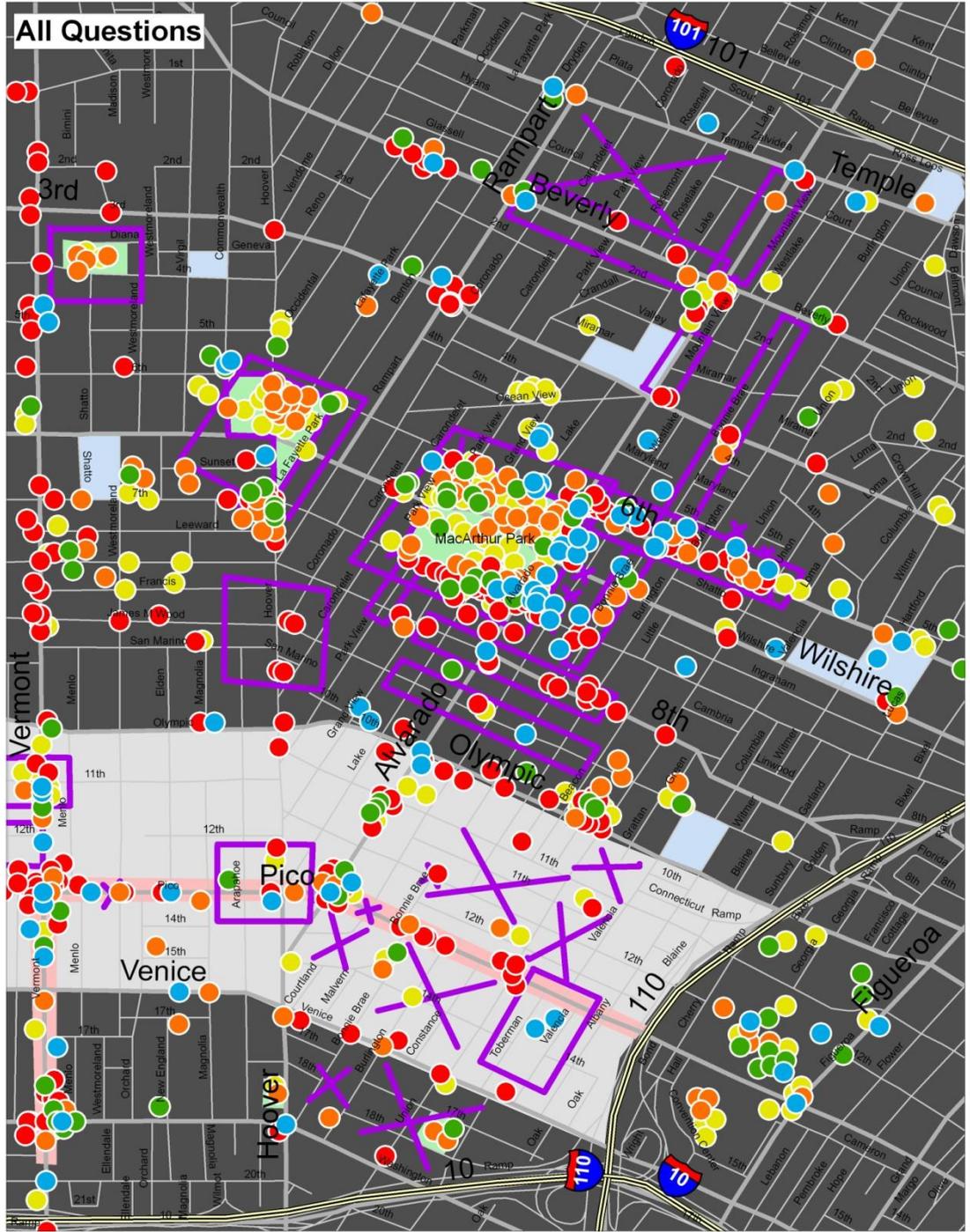
General Meeting Focus Groups

- Cultural traditions, amenities, and infrastructure:
 - Music, food, festivals, and cultural programming
 - High demand for cultural resources
 - Landmarks: MacArthur Park, Mama's Hot Tamales, La Curacao and CARECEN
- Mechanisms and Policies:
 - Partnerships and collaborations
 - Good communication across different sectors such as schools, churches, neighborhood council, police, and community organizations
 - Should be an organization as a focal piece of cultural center and community infrastructure
 - Improvement of public spaces, public safety, and green areas.
- Impact of cultural District:
 - Sense of identity, increased community pride, and better quality of life
 - Benefit to youth and future generations
 - Education and career opportunities
 - Greater visibility and enhancement of civic engagement

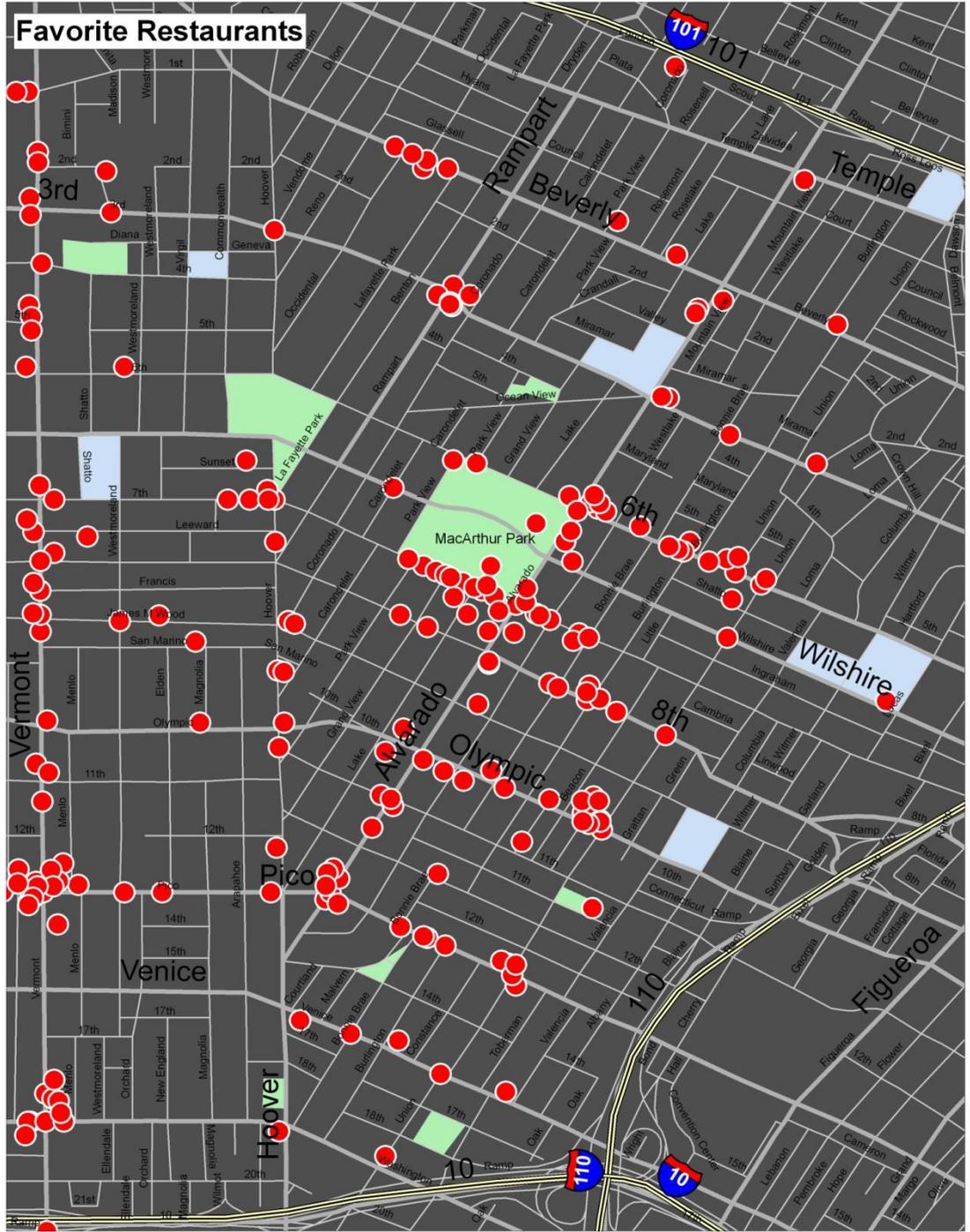
MAPS



All Questions



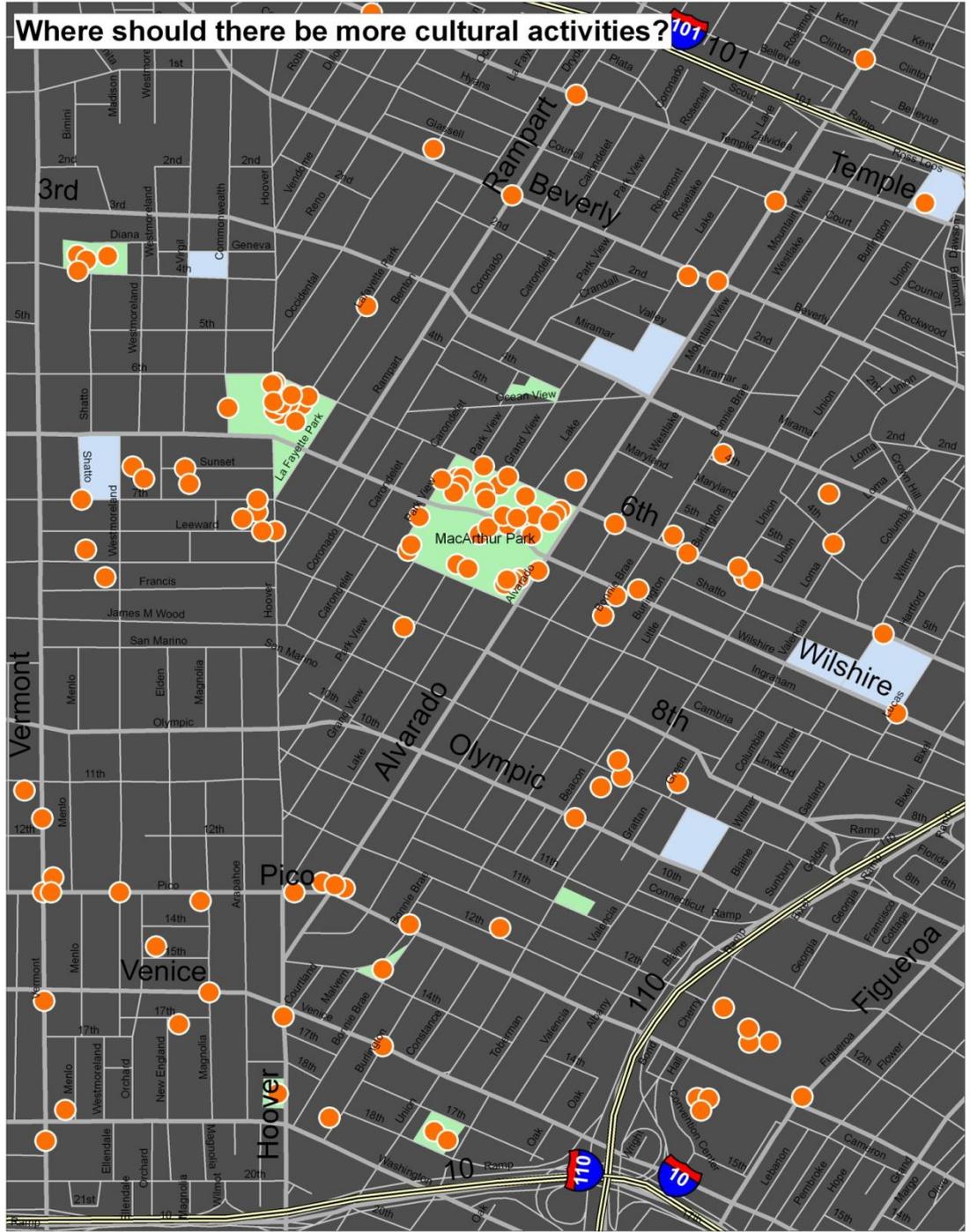
Favorite Restaurants



Landmarks



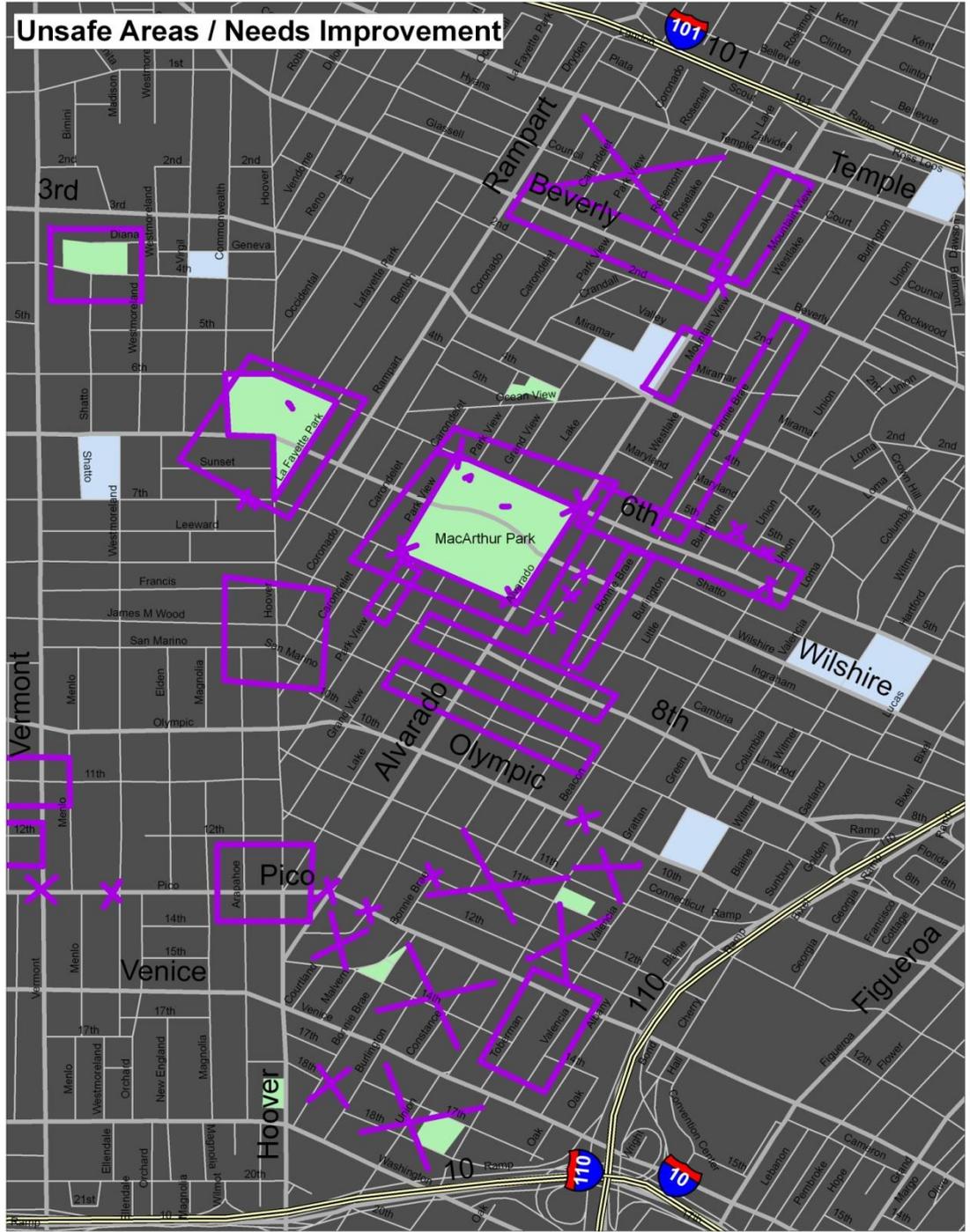
Where should there be more cultural activities?



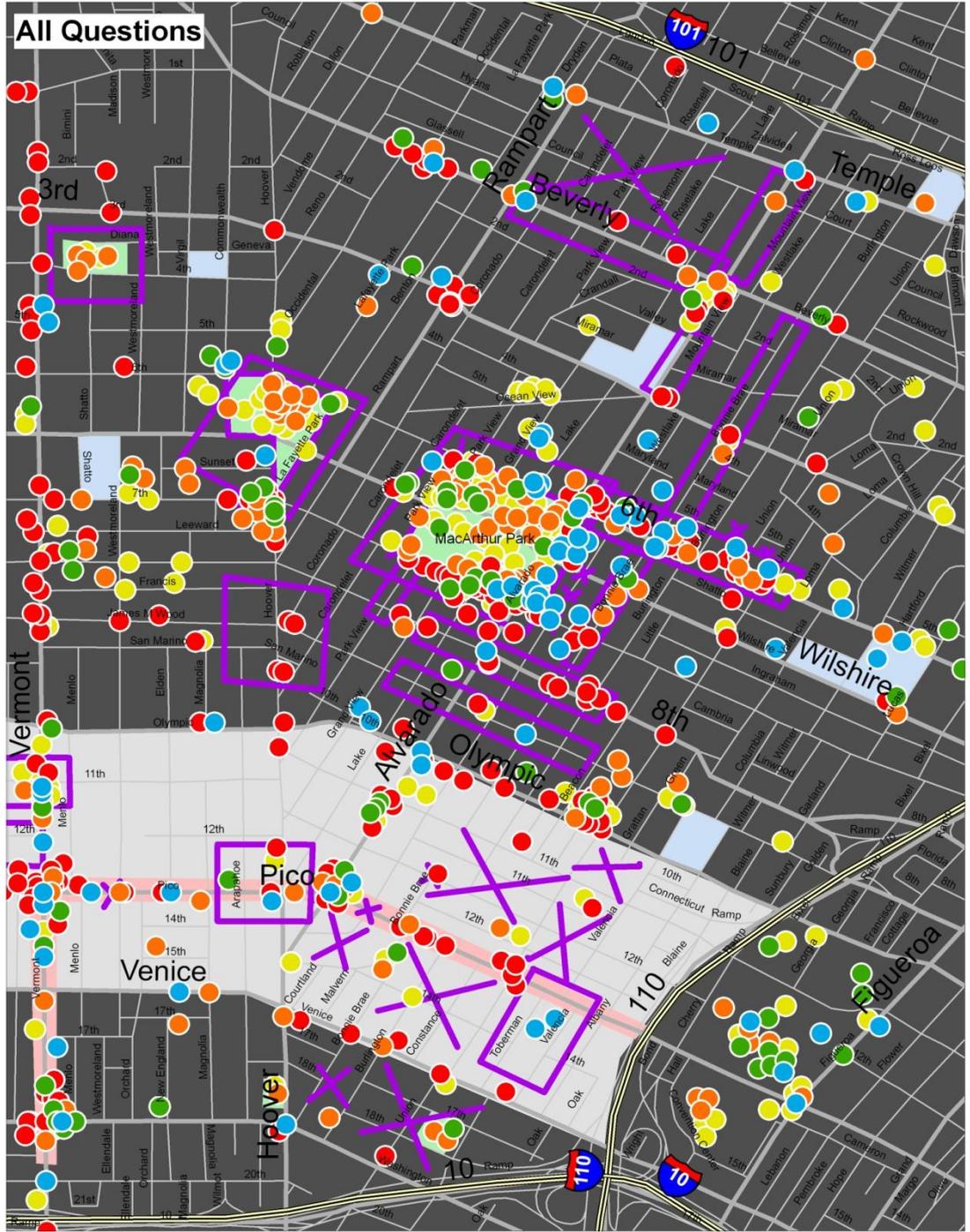
Neighborhoods (grey) and Commercial Corridors (red)



Unsafe Areas / Needs Improvement



All Questions



Main Findings: Business Surveys

- Who was Surveyed?
 - Small businesses such as bakeries, restaurants, and parcel services
- Challenges
 - Internal factors: high taxes, weak sales, and rising cost of business
 - External factors: lack of parking, litter, and low education
- Planning
 - Some businesses plan to make additional investment to open new markets
- Showcasing Central American culture will improve political representation, economy, and community engagement

Summary of Key Findings

- General support for establishing a cultural district with a recognition of the following benefits to be gained: economic development, increased political representation, youth development and quality of life
- More work needs to be done to clarify the benefits of if designating the area as a Central American Town.
- MacArthur Park is clearly a hub for the community
- There is still some disagreement about the boundaries

Summary of Key Findings

- There is strong support for a broad based coalition to facilitate cultural district development in the area but this is challenging giving the political fragmentation within the community
- Strong support for a cultural center and a desire to increase art and cultural activities reflective of the community in general
- Significant level of retail reflective of community culture and need
- Public safety and infrastructure are major concerns
- It appears business owners would be willing to invest in infrastructure but more input is needed

Little Tokyo: A Model Cultural District

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Boundaries

- Focus on areas of high cultural activity and historic significance
- Ensure area is conducive to walking and for visitors to explore a core concentration of businesses, landmarks and cultural assets
- Be mindful of resident sensitivities and form coalitions that cross-promote and complement objectives



2. Political Feasibility

- Some groups may oppose; ultimate boundaries will define scope of opposition
- Smaller, compact area with clear Central American presence more viable
- Cultural district less controversial than ethnic designation
- Clear focus on supporting and investing local businesses, non-profits, and arts and cultural activities – *social mission*

3. Leadership

- Area's leadership capacity practices collaboration, consensus, and community-driven partnerships
 - Ex: COFECA-the broad based support that is needed to coordinate Central American Independence festival and parade
- The importance of having leadership that is democratic, inclusive, and collaborative
- The need for a hub to manage cultural programming all year round



4. Public Support

- Community “buy in” critically important
- Inclusive process that addresses opposition and engages diverse segments of the community
- Advocate shared benefits
- Toolbox for a successful community campaign:
 1. Assess and survey community’s needs
 2. Create community committee
 3. Committee develops proposal around a vision
 4. Committee organizes broad based support
 5. Celebrate victory with the community!
 6. Institution building to implement vision

5. Policies and Frameworks

- How to best sustain and promote district?
- Plenty of existing models of varying forms and strengths:
 1. Business Improvement District (BID)
 2. Strong and respected community-based organization to coordinate investment and adhere to community vision
 3. Overlay zoning
 4. Targeted community-led initiatives



Summary of Key Recommendations

- Establish:
 - A leadership structure within the community to steward the process for implementation of goals, strategies and programs, and to lead the advocacy effort that will be required for success
 - Establish clear boundaries which result in a dense cluster of cultural activities, existing or planned
 - Bring community leaders from outside the Central American community into the dialogue to develop a win-win approach that addresses the needs of all
 - Engage the broader community in the development of goals and priorities for the community in order to mobilize support and to define the focus of activity
 - Determine what resources and policies will be necessary to accomplish the priorities and work with the broad community to implement an effective advocacy effort