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Century Boulevard Commission
on Jobs, Tourism and Communities

Ruth Galanter, Chair
Distinguished Scholar in Los Angeles Urban Research, Loyola Marymount University;
former member of the Los Angeles City Council

Warren Furutani
Los Angeles Community College Trustee

Rev. Cecil (Chip) Murray
Pastor Emeritus, First AME Church, Los Angeles

Ninez Ponce
Faculty, UCLA School of Public Health

Susana M. Reyes
Political Committee Chair, Angeles Chapter of Sierra Club of California and
League of Conservation Voters
Importance of This Inquiry

By Ruth Galanter

IT IS ALL TOO RARE that an opportunity arises to improve conditions for communities, working families, businesses and local government alike. So when I was asked to chair the Century Boulevard Commission on Jobs, Tourism and Communities, I was eager to do so.

As a former City Councilmember who represented portions of the city’s Westside for 15 years, I witnessed firsthand how difficult it can be to bring various constituencies together for the common good. Yet today, the city, the LAX hospitality industry and its workers, and the adjacent neighborhoods have a historic opportunity to collaborate for mutual benefit.

The following report presents the findings and recommendations of our commission, which conducted a public forum on March 23, 2006 in Westchester. I was joined on the commission by a distinguished group of long-time civic activists who share a commitment to building a fair, prosperous city.

Our commission believes that the only way Century Boulevard can achieve its economic and social potential is through a partnership between local private enterprise, its labor force and the educational and religious institutions, community members, and elected representatives who have a stake in the area.

We urge the City Council to seize the moment: here is your chance to transform an industry, a business district and ultimately several long-neglected communities.

Likewise, we urge the LAX hospitality industry to join in this effort to revitalize an essential part of L.A.’s economy. Your involvement is vital to the success of this effort. You can make it possible for struggling workers and their families to join the middle class while generating revenue for your companies and our local government.

We would also like to recognize the impressively broad coalition of workers, residents, educators, clergy and students who answered the call of civic engagement by participating in our public forum. Your continuing activism is essential.

We understand that the City Council’s Trade, Commerce and Tourism Committee is holding hearings on the future of Century Boulevard. We applaud that effort and stand ready to assist the Committee and the Council in any way we can.
Executive Summary

The Century Corridor is the first view many people have of Los Angeles, and it’s not the best face our city could put forward. That the area is unattractive is clear to anyone who has ever been to LAX.

Perhaps less well known is the potential importance of the 13 hotels on and around Century Boulevard. This is by far L.A.’s biggest hospitality industry sector, employing more workers and serving more visitors than any other part of the local hotel industry.

Equally invisible to many is that the Century Corridor is adjacent to some of LA’s poorest communities. Next door, Lennox has a murder rate five times higher than L.A. County, while its rate of overcrowding is eight times higher, and the median income is 25% lower than the county’s.

This report contains the findings and recommendations of a Blue Ribbon Commission, sponsored by the Coalition for a New Century, following a community hearing on these and other conditions in the Century Corridor and surrounding communities. On March 23, 2006, the Commission heard testimony from a broad array of community members, including hotel workers, educators, social service providers, clergy, students, and hotel customers. Notably and regrettably absent were the hotel operators and the Gateway Business Improvement District; both declined an invitation to participate. It is our hope that the industry will join in the process and offer their ideas on how the Corridor could be made a better place for business. While noting their absence, we present findings from the hearing and specific recommendations on how to improve the area, upgrade jobs in the industry, and ensure a thriving tourism market.

1 The Coalition for a New Century is an alliance of religious organizations and clergy, community-based groups, workers and residents who are working to improve conditions in the Century Corridor.
2 The hearing was held at Westchester Christian Church, 8740 La Tijera Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045.
FINDINGS

1. The Century Corridor is home to the largest concentration of hotel rooms in Los Angeles County. Hotel occupancy rates here are also the highest in the County, but hotel room rates are among the lowest.

2. Century Boulevard is viewed by local residents and visitors as “seedy” and lacking in dining, entertainment and retail opportunities.

3. Hotel wages in the Century Corridor are below the industry standard. Average wages are 20% below those in downtown hotels and almost 30% below those in Beverly Hills and West Hollywood.

4. Many hotel workers live in the nearby communities of Lennox, Hawthorne and Inglewood, where almost one in four residents’ income is below the federal poverty line. Half the families served by a local relief center are working families, many of whom work in hotels.

5. Lack of affordable health insurance is a major obstacle to the health of hotel workers and their families and further contributes to local poverty. Workers must pay up to $290 per month for employer-provided family coverage. This is almost one-fourth of the after-tax income of a fulltime housekeeper; and, as a result, many have no health insurance at all. The Lennox School District has had to create a health clinic to provide for students without health insurance.

6. Hotel workers have little job security and can face layoffs when hotels are sold. While it is common practice in much of the region’s hotel industry to retain workers when a hotel is sold, this is not the case in the Century Corridor. At the Radisson LAX, for example, over 240 workers were laid off when the hotel was sold in 2000.

7. Most hotels charge banquet customers a service fee or “gratuity.” This fee is in lieu of a tip, and it is standard in the industry for this to be passed on to workers. However, at several Century hotels the management keeps this “tip,” costing an individual worker as much as $150 per day worked, according to testimony.
8. Workers say they face hazardous working conditions, including exposure to toxic cleaning agents and unsafe levels of work. Increases in bedding, for example, have caused numerous injuries. Commissioners note that the laundering of increased bedding has negative environmental consequences as well.

9. Hotel workers say efforts to improve conditions have been met with harassment and intimidation. Tactics used by hotels include captive audience meetings and allegedly illegal firings, according to testimony.

10. The local tourism industry creates traffic and pollution, which adds to the already heavy environmental impacts from the airport itself.

Together these findings indicate that the Century Corridor, its hospitality industry and the built environment, isn’t working for anyone. The low pay and lack of health insurance at the hotels helps to perpetuate poverty in the surrounding communities while children in local schools can’t get the help they need from parents working multiple jobs, leading to problems for the next generation.

Meanwhile, the Corridor itself has few attractions for residents or visitors. The absence of street life, shops, plazas, or inviting restaurants discourages both vacationers and locals. Even hotel guests sleep and move on. Conversely, businesses described by one resident as “seedy” actively repel nearby residents who might take their families or guests to local establishments if they were more appealing.

The absence of vital commercial activities, along with the comparatively low hotel room rates, means the entire city is deprived of tax revenues that could be used to fund essential city services to address these many problems. In short, the Century Corridor is in a downward spiral wherein an underperforming industry begets poverty in the surrounding communities. We believe it’s time to stop the cycle.
RECOMMENDATIONS—PUBLIC SECTOR

Community & Environmental Improvements to Attract a Broader Range of Customers and Enhance Business and City Tax Revenues

1. The City should use all available tools to upgrade the look of the Corridor and facilitate the creation of shops and restaurants, including establishing a design overlay zone and working with neighborhood-based groups such as the Sepulveda Beautification Committee.

2. The Commission had hoped to recommend the construction of a mini-conference center, a long-held goal of the hotel industry, but did not hear the testimony that would allow us to put forward such a recommendation at this time. Commission members are intrigued by the idea as a way to bring in more visitors but believe that any investment in such a facility should be predicated on improved conditions for hotel workers.

3. The City should require consolidation and the use of alternate fuels for hotel airport shuttles. This will reduce congestion, improve regional air quality, benefit the health of community residents and make the area more inviting for visitors.

4. The City should add pedestrian-level landscaping to screen sidewalk users from Century Boulevard’s vehicle traffic. Such landscaping would help scramble particulate pollution, a job that the existing palm trees on the Boulevard are not equipped to perform.

Basic Protections for Workers to Reduce Poverty and Improve Family Life

1. The City should extend its Living Wage Ordinance to cover hotels in the Century Corridor. As direct beneficiaries of LAX—a city-owned facility—the hotels have a special responsibility to provide decent wages and benefits to their workforce. Instead, they are collectively the lowest paying hotels in LA County.

2. The City should extend its existing Worker Retention Ordinance to cover hotels in the Century Corridor. By ensuring that hotel workers remain on the job for at least 90 days when a hotel changes hands, the City will discourage massive layoffs that cause major hardship to workers and their families.

3. The City should require that all “service charges” or “gratuities” charged to patrons be passed on to workers. The hotels should not be allowed to pocket the hard-earned tips of their employees.
4. The City should target job-training funds for a career-advancement program in partnership with the hospitality industry. The City has an opportunity to help transform low-paying service jobs into sustainable middle class jobs in an industry that is firmly rooted to the region.

5. The City should establish a first-source hiring program that provides job access for residents of nearby communities to hotel-related jobs (both permanent and construction). Those who suffer most from the impacts of LAX traffic and pollution should have access to the benefits of the local tourism industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS—PRIVATE SECTOR

Community & Environmental Improvements to Attract Business, Improve Revenues and Reduce Exposure to Hazardous Substances

1. The hotels should coordinate with City government and local community organizations to invest in their buildings so as to provide an environment attractive to local residents as well as visitors, including pedestrian entrances and landscaping along Century Boulevard.

2. The hotels should establish protocols to reduce use of toxic chemicals and inform workers about the risks of various cleaning agents. In addition, where such chemicals must be used, the hotels should reduce worker exposure through safety training and the use of proper gear. Vulnerable personnel, such as pregnant women or asthmatics, should be given appropriate assignments that avoid serious injury.

3. The hotels should reduce the use of multiple bed linens, both to prevent worker injuries and conserve water. Hotels should reduce overall workload, especially for housekeepers, to prevent injuries.
Worker Protections to Enhance the Productivity and Well-Being of the Workforce

1. The hotels should agree to be neutral if workers choose to organize, and they should recognize the union if a majority of workers signs authorization cards. Workers’ freedom to organize is a basic right that should be respected in any working democracy.

2. The hotels should raise wages and benefits to at least the county average and provide affordable family health insurance. Better compensation of low wage workers has been linked to a reduction in turnover and improved quality of service.

3. The industry should partner with the City, their workers, and the local community to provide job access to local residents and a career ladder within the industry. A collaborative approach will yield better results for all parties.
The Century Corridor’s hotels play a vital role in Los Angeles’ tourism industry. The Corridor is home to the largest concentration of hotel rooms in the county and produces among the highest lodging industry revenues of all of the region’s sub-markets. As the gateway to Los Angeles, it is also the first view many visitors have of Los Angeles. Yet, as discussed in this report, the Century Corridor suffers from some severe deficits – lower than average wages and benefits for its 3,500 workers, room rates that are also below the county average, and poor planning. The shortcomings of the industry are felt in the surrounding communities of Inglewood, Hawthorne and Lennox where many hotel workers live. The tables and figure below provide a snapshot of the local hospitality industry and the community.

### Table 1

**Snapshot of the Century Corridor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Century Boulevard (between LAX and the 405 freeway)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of hotels</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of rooms</strong></td>
<td>7,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated number of workers employed in hotels</strong></td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Occupancy rate of Century Corridor hotels** | Highest in the county**

| **Amount occupancy rate has risen in last two years** | 16% |
| **Total lodging industry revenue** | Second highest in the county** |
| **Average room rate** | Lowest in the county** |
| **Estimated Transient Occupancy Tax from Century hotels** | $23 million |
| **Hotel workers’ average monthly earnings** | $1,694 |
| **Ratio of Century hotel workers’ average monthly earnings to the county industry average** | 90% |


*These figures are for hotels in the Century Corridor and Pacific Coast Highway sub-market.

**The Economic Roundtable compared the Century Corridor/Pacific Coast Highway sub-market to twelve other sub-markets in L.A. County.

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3 Exhibit C includes a full list of Century Corridor hotels.
### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Snapshot of Surrounding Communities of Inglewood, Lennox and Hawthorne</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residents employed in the accommodation &amp; food service industry</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage of hotel workers paying more than 30% of their income in rent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ratio of violent crime rate in study area to rate in L.A. County</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ratio of Lennox murder rate to rate in L.A. County</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ratio of Lennox overcrowding rate to rate in L.A. County</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CRES analysis of 2000 U.S. Census data and Los Angeles County Almanac crime data.
Findings

1. **The Century Corridor is home to the largest concentration of hotel rooms in Los Angeles County. Hotel occupancy rates here are also the highest in the County, but hotel room rates are the lowest.**

   We need to revitalize our hotels, and link them to attractions. We need to train workers and improve wages for workers. These are all things that make sense to do to improve the industry.

   -- Dan Flaming, Economic Roundtable

   - Dan Flaming, executive director of the Economic Roundtable, presented findings from a recent report comparing the economic impact of L.A.’s tourism industry to that of competing destinations (ERT 2005). He testified that while Los Angeles is highly competitive in terms of attractions and transportation infrastructure, it is underperforming in other respects. When indexed to the cost of living, L.A.’s room rates are below the national average and below those of competing destinations, according to the Economic Roundtable.

   - Flaming also offered specific testimony on the Century Corridor/Pacific Coast Highway hotels, which have the highest concentration of rooms in the County. He testified that these hotels have the highest occupancy rates, and the second highest industry revenue in the county. However, he also reported that hotel revenue per available room in the LAX PCH market is among the lowest in the County. (The Economic Roundtable notes that LAX PCH hotels have room rates that are the lowest in the County.)

2. **Century Boulevard is viewed by local residents and visitors as “seedy” and lacking in dining, entertainment and retail opportunities**

   - Karen Mary Davalos, an associate professor at Loyola Marymount University and a Westchester resident, testified that she steers clear of Century Boulevard because of the blight and lack of amenities. “Even when [family members] arrive hungry and ready to stop and grab a bite to eat, we drive north on Sepulveda rather than venture too long on Century.” Davalos suggested that the area could benefit from such improvements as more shops and restaurants, green space, wide sidewalks, and culturally appropriate and inspiring public art. “Right now, Century Boulevard is the place to drive through quickly—it is a thoroughfare on the way to somewhere else.”
Jeff Good, a former Inglewood teacher who is now executive director of the South Bay United Teachers Association, reported that he is disappointed with the amenities at the Century Corridor hotels when he attends conventions there. “I am a frequent patron for many of the hotels in the Century Corridor. This is not a user-friendly area. There are few restaurants, no shops. We have conferences with hundreds of people, and there is nowhere to go. Other areas have a lot more amenities.”

Kent Strumpell, of the Westchester Streetscape Improvement Association, submitted testimony after the hearing suggesting that the Century Corridor should function both as a “Main Street” for the communities surrounding it and a gateway to LAX. He proposed a professionally-facilitated community design workshop process that would bring community members and a broad cross section of Century Boulevard stakeholders together to develop a vision and an implementation plan for the area.

Strumpell suggested that the extension of the Green Line could present planning opportunities: “Nascent plans for extending the Green Line north of LAX envision a station on Century Boulevard and Aviation. Station area planning could offer significant urban development opportunities.”

A conference center has been a long-held goal of the hotels along Century Boulevard. Strumpell argued that the conference center should not be viewed as an island, but “carefully integrated into a district-wide revitalization strategy.”

3. Hotel wages in the Century Corridor are below the industry standard. Average wages are 20% below those in downtown hotels and almost 30% below those in the Beverly Hills and West Hollywood sub-market.

Flaming testified that Los Angeles’ lodging industry pays lower average wages than most competing destinations. Hotel workers in Las Vegas, San Francisco, and New York earn higher wages than Los
Angeles’ hotel workers, and are also more productive than their L.A. counterparts, according to the Economic Roundtable. The average lodging industry worker in Los Angeles earns about three-quarters of a living wage, which the Economic Roundtable defines as the minimum earnings needed to meet basic family costs, such as housing, transportation and health care.4

- In a region noted for low hotel wages, earnings in the Century Corridor hotels are lower than average. Flaming testified that average earnings for LAX PCH lodging workers are 90% of the average for lodging workers in LA County. According to data provided by Flaming, wages in the Century Corridor are 20% below those in downtown hotels and 30% below those in Beverly Hills and West Hollywood hotels.

- Housekeeper Maria Martinez testified that she earned $9.38 per hour after 18 years at the LAX Hilton.

- Rev. Norman Johnson, pastor of the First New Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, testified that the shift from a well-paying manufacturing job base to a low-wage service sector job base has negatively affected African American and Latino workers alike. “The absence of opportunity for job stability and even upward mobility is one of the greatest crises we face in Southern California,” Johnson said. But Johnson added that the tourism industry represented an opportunity for better jobs – if growth and revenues in the industry can be more broadly shared.

The absence of opportunity for job stability and even upward mobility is one of the greatest crises we face in Southern California.

-- Rev. Norman Johnson, Pastor of First New Christian Fellowship Baptist Church

4 Flaming assumed a family of one parent and one child, and used the Economic Policy Institute’s basic needs budget, which is calculated for regions across the country.
4. **Century Boulevard is viewed by local residents and visitors as “seedy” and lacking in dining, entertainment and retail opportunities**

- Many hotel workers live in the nearby communities of Lennox, Hawthorne and Inglewood, where almost one in four residents’ income is below the federal poverty line. Half the families served by a local relief center are working families, many of whom work in hotels.

- Educators testified that the low wage poverty endured by many hotel workers puts a strain on their children and on the local schools. Thomas Johnstone, assistant superintendent of the Lennox School District said that the Lennox schools must compensate for the fact that many parents lack family health insurance and must work two or three jobs. The schools provide after-school programs and a school-based health clinic. “Indeed, it seems like the local tourism industry has passed these responsibilities on to the Lennox School District and the taxpayers,” Johnstone said. “Our families have the same aspirations for their children as more affluent communities. They have a right to earn a fair wage and basic healthcare for their families,” Johnstone added.

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*Unfortunately, that decreased amount of parental supervision and access leaves my students vulnerable and easy prey to such negative alternatives as absenteeism, crime, gangs, and drugs.*

-- Aisha Blanchard-Young, Inglewood School Teacher and Resident

- Aisha Blanchard-Young, an Inglewood school teacher and resident, said that students also suffer from the lack of quality time with their parents, who are not around to help with homework, attend parent conferences, and monitor after-school activities. “Unfortunately, that decreased amount of parental supervision and access leaves my students vulnerable and easy prey to such negative alternatives as absenteeism, crime, gangs, and drugs.” She added that the violent crime rate in the communities around the hotel is five times higher than for the county as a whole. “It’s difficult to inspire children to love learning if their access to basic needs is constantly being challenged,” she added.

- Fr. Perry Leiker, pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Hawthorne, testified that “Low-paying jobs are keeping families dependent and incapable of building better futures. When individual families suffer, struggle and do not succeed, the whole community suffers, struggles and does not succeed.”

- Rev. Norman Johnson, of the First New Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, testified that investment in the industry should be tied to benefits to the community, including the African American community that, he said, is underrepresented in the workforce at the region’s hotels.
5. **Lack of affordable health insurance is a major obstacle to the health of hotel workers and their families and further contributes to local poverty.** Workers must pay up to $290 per month for employer-provided family coverage. This is almost one-fourth of the after-tax income of a fulltime housekeeper; as a result, many have no health insurance at all.

- Company-provided health insurance is out of reach for many hotel workers. One housekeeper reported that her lack of health insurance caused her seven-year-old daughter to develop a life-threatening infection that almost caused the loss of a hand and led to a $37,000 hospital bill. “After a few weeks, I had to leave the hospital because I couldn’t afford to pay the bill,” she said.

- Maria Martinez reportedly pays $200 a month for family health insurance. “The only way I can afford it is by working a double shift,” she said.

- Full time banquet worker Moises Tamayo reported, “I have no insurance. I have four kids, and I have to take them to TJ [Tijuana, Mexico] when they get sick.”

- UNITE HERE Local 11, the union that represents area hotel workers, has presented the commission with wage and benefit comparisons of Century hotels with hotels in other parts of Los Angeles. (See Exhibit G.) Those comparisons show that while Century workers must pay as much as $290 per month for family health insurance, workers at unionized hotels receive free family health insurance.

6. **Hotel workers have little job security and can face layoffs when hotels are sold. While it is common practice in much of the region’s hotel industry to retain workers when a hotel is sold, this is not the case in the Century Corridor.**

- When the Radisson LAX hotel changed hands in 2000, 240 workers were laid off from their jobs, causing massive disruption and hardship for them and their families. Miguel Mata, who won his job back more than five years after the sale, said he lost his health insurance after he was fired. He reported: “Many of my co-workers had worked for 10, 20, or 30 years at the hotel. Those
that were older knew they couldn’t get another job. Many had houses that they lost. They had cars that they returned to the dealers. Many took medicine daily. Without health insurance, they couldn’t buy their medicine,” Mata said.

7. **Most hotels charge banquet customers a service fee or “gratuity.” This fee is in lieu of a tip, and it is standard in the industry for this to be passed on to workers. However, at several Century hotels the management keeps this “tip,” costing an individual worker as much as $150 per day worked, according to testimony.**

- Tipped banquet workers at a number of the Los Angeles hotels report to commissioners that they are not getting the service charges that customers pay. Moises Tamayo, a banquet worker at the Westin LAX, presented commissioners with a Banquet Event Order form, which indicated at the bottom that a “20% service charge is added to all food, beverage, rental and audio visual charges.” However, Tamayo said the he and his co-workers never receive the gratuity, and that the money, instead, goes to the hotel. “I lose at least $150 a day. We talked to one of our managers and asked for [our] tips, and he said it will never happen.” Banquet workers at the Sheraton Gateway, the Marriott, and the Renaissance also report that they do not receive the service charge that customers pay.

8. **Workers say they face hazardous working conditions, including exposure to toxic cleaning agents and unsafe levels of work. Increases in bedding, for example, have caused numerous injuries. Commissioners note the laundering of increased bedding has negative environmental consequences as well.**

- Long-time Hilton housekeeper Maria Martinez reported that the workload at the hotel has been increasing over the years, forcing housekeepers to work during their breaks in order to meet their 16-room quotas. The plush beds—with duvet covers, nine pillows, and mattresses—have also caused injuries among housekeepers, according to worker testimony. “I know those mattresses are very comfortable for the guests, but they are very heavy for the housekeepers…out of ten housekeepers, nine are injured,” Martinez said.

"I know those mattresses are very comfortable for the guests, but they are very heavy for the housekeepers.

Maria Martinez, Housekeeper at LAX Hilton

- Rosie Delgado, a housekeeper at the LAX Hilton, testified that she had a miscarriage after management refused to heed two doctors’ notes requesting that Delgado not be subjected to harsh chemicals and that she be allowed to work light duty while pregnant. “The managers told me I could either keep working, or go home,” she said.
9. **Hotel workers say efforts to improve conditions have been met with harassment and intimidation. Tactics used by hotels include captive audience meetings and allegedly illegal firings, according to testimony.**

- David Wheeler, an organizer with Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, alleged that there have been nine firings associated with the union organizing drive at just one hotel.

- Isabel Brenner, a worker at LAX Hilton, testified that the company had spent $166,000 to hire Cruz & Associates, Inc., a firm whose website markets its ability to counter union organizing campaigns. Brenner submitted an “Item B.5 Statement of Receipts” that Cruz & Associates filed with the U.S. Department of Labor verifying that L.A. Hilton & Towers (at 5711 W. Century Boulevard) had paid for the company’s services.

- Referring to captive audience meetings, Westin housekeeper Enedina Alvarez testified: “For two weeks, we had two managers on the line and they were trying to intimidate us to make us go to the mandatory meeting. Many of my co-workers were crying because they were afraid to go to the meeting.”

- Workers submitted anti-union flyers that have been circulated at their hotels. (See Exhibit H.)

10. **The local tourism industry creates traffic and pollution which adds to the already heavy impacts from the airport itself.**

- Hotel shuttle vehicles account for approximately 15% of all commercial passenger trips into the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Collectively, these vehicles emit approximately 20 tons of oxides of nitrogen, 3 tons of hydrocarbons, 28 tons of carbon monoxide and 1.25 tons of particulate matter every year. Because these emissions are generated in a relatively small area, the results are that skycaps and other airport employees are exposed to harmful concentrations of pollutants which can result in long-term negative health effects (SCAQMD).
Recommendations

As described throughout this report, the Century Corridor is a vitally important part of Los Angeles that is currently not living up to its potential. We believe that with cooperation and investment by both government and the private sector, millions of dollars in revenue could be generated by business in the Century Corridor. The kind of investment could and should be a boon to all those impacted by the Corridor:

- Companies that own and operate hotels in the area would see increased profits
- Workers at the hotels would see improved benefits and wages
- The additional money paid to workers would cycle through the nearby largely impoverished communities like Lennox, where 20% of working residents are employed in the accommodation and food service industries
- These communities would also benefit from the creation of additional shops and restaurants, as well as a refurbishment of the boulevard itself and the potential job opportunities that could arise
- Finally, all residents would benefit from the increased revenue earned by the City in the form of bed, parking and sales taxes

We believe that an aggressive program of targeted and creative economic development in the Century Corridor could address the many problems businesses, workers and residents in the area currently face. We believe the public and private sector must work hand-in-hand to make such an endeavor successful.

RECOMMENDATIONS—PUBLIC SECTOR

Community & Environmental Improvements to Attract a Broader Range of Customers and Enhance Business and City Tax Revenues

1. The City should use all available tools to upgrade the look of the Corridor and facilitate the creation of shops and restaurants, including establishing a design overlay zone and working with neighborhood-based groups such as the Sepulveda Beautification Committee. Clear design standards and a beautification plan established with community input will go a long way toward improving what is currently an unsightly area. LEED green building standards provide a useful framework for ensuring that new construction and major renovations are undertaken in a sustainable manner that is pedestrian friendly.
2. The Commission had hoped to recommend the construction of a mini-conference center, a long-held goal of the hotel industry, but did not hear the testimony that would allow us to put forward such a recommendation at this time. Commission members are intrigued by the idea as a way to bring in more visitors but believe that any investment in such a facility should be predicated on improved conditions for hotel workers.

The Commission had hoped to recommend the construction of a mini-conference center, a long-held goal of the hotel industry, but did not hear the testimony that would allow us to put forward such a recommendation at this time.

3. The City should require consolidation and the use of alternate fuels for hotel airport shuttles. This will reduce congestion, improve regional air quality, benefit the health of workers and community residents and make the area more inviting for visitors. In a region with such severe air pollution, it is crucial that local industries work to minimize their impact on the environment.

4. The City should add pedestrian-level landscaping to screen sidewalk users from Century Boulevard’s vehicle traffic. Such landscaping would help scramble particulate pollution, a job that the existing palm trees on the Boulevard are not equipped to perform.

Basic Protections for Workers to Reduce Poverty and Improve Family Life

1. The City should extend its Living Wage Ordinance to cover hotels in the corridor. As direct beneficiaries of LAX—a city-owned facility—the hotels have a special responsibility to provide decent wages and benefits to their workforce. Instead, they are collectively the lowest paying hotels in LA County. One housekeeper reported being paid $9.38 per hour after 18 years on the job.

2. The City should extend its existing Worker Retention Ordinance to cover hotels in the Century Corridor. By ensuring that hotel workers remain on the job for at least 90 days when a hotel changes hands, the City will discourage the kind of massive layoffs that caused 240 Century Corridor hotel workers to lose their jobs in 2000.

3. The City should require that “service charges” or “gratuities” charged to patrons be passed on to workers. The hotels should not be allowed to pocket the hard-earned tips of their workers. One banquet worker said he lost as much as $150 per night in tips due to current hotel policy.
4. The City should target job-training funds for a career-advancement program in partnership with the hospitality industry. The City has an opportunity to help transform low-paying service jobs into sustainable middle class jobs in an industry that is firmly rooted to the region. The creation of jobs with career paths is crucial to the well-being of local communities that are largely Latino and African American.

The City should target job-training funds for a career-advancement program in partnership with the hospitality industry.

5. The City should establish a first-source hiring program that provides job access for residents of nearby communities to hotel-related jobs (both permanent and construction). Those who suffer most from the impacts of LAX traffic and pollution should have access to the benefits of the local tourism industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS—PRIVATE SECTOR

Community & Environmental Improvements to Attract Business, Improve Revenues and Reduce Exposure to Hazardous Substances

1. The hotels should coordinate with City government and local community organizations to invest in their buildings so as to provide an environment attractive to local residents as well as visitors, including pedestrian entrances and landscaping along Century Boulevard. Increased investment will make the Corridor more successful both as the gateway to Los Angeles and as a Main Street for surrounding communities.

Increased investment will make the Corridor more successful both as the gateway to Los Angeles and as a Main Street for surrounding communities.

2. The hotels should establish protocols to reduce use of toxic chemicals and inform workers about the risks of various cleaning agents. In addition, where such chemicals must be used, the hotels should reduce worker exposure through safety training and the use of proper gear. Vulnerable personnel, such as pregnant women or asthmatics, should be given appropriate assignments that avoid serious injury.
3. The hotels should reduce the use of multiple bed linens, both to prevent worker injuries and conserve water. In addition, hotels should reduce overall workload, especially for housekeepers, to prevent injuries.

**Worker Protections to Enhance the Productivity and Well-being of the Workforce**

1. The hotels should agree to be neutral if workers choose to organize, and they should recognize the union if a majority of workers signs authorization cards. Workers’ freedom to organize is a basic right that should be respected in any working democracy.

2. The hotels should raise wages and benefits to at least the county average and provide affordable family health insurance. Providing better jobs and benefits is a matter of justice, but it will also reap benefits for the industry. Better compensation of low wage workers has been linked to a reduction in turnover and improved quality of service (Reich 2003; Fairris 2005; Howe 2005).

3. The industry should partner with the City, their workers, and the local community to provide job access to local residents and a career ladder within the industry. A collaborative approach can ease the hiring burden for the industry while providing job access to those most heavily affected by airport traffic and pollution.
Works Cited


- Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, Presentation to the Los Angeles City Council Trade and Commerce Committee, March 29, 2006. “LAX Hotel Overview.”


- South Coast Air Quality Management District. May 19, 2000 Board Meeting Agenda.
EXHIBIT A

List of Panelists

Panel #1: Conditions in the Local Tourism Industry

Maria Martinez
A housekeeper at the LAX Hilton for 18 years

Fr. Perry Leiker
A Roman Catholic Priest for 30 years, the pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Hawthorne

Karen Mary Davalos
Associate professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles
and Westchester resident

Jeff Good
Executive Director of the South Bay United Teachers Association and a former Inglewood school teacher

Panel #2: How Conditions in the Local Tourism Industry Impact Our Communities

Aisha Blanchard Young
A nine-year Inglewood resident and K-12 educator

Rev. Dr. Norman Johnson, Sr.
Pastor of First New Christian Fellowship Baptist Church and former Executive Director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Tom Johnstone
Assistant Superintendent of the Lennox School District

Maria Moratoya
Housekeeper at the LAX Four Points Sheraton
EXHIBIT B

List of Participants Who Testified or Turned in Cards

Provided Testimony

David Wheeler, Organizer, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice
Mark Edwards, Associate Director, Great Beginnings
Cheryl Grills, Professor of Psychology at Loyola Marymount University
Miguel Mata, Radisson LAX
Antonio Plascencia, Senior at Loyola Marymount University
Isabel Brenner, Hilton LAX
Enedina Alvarez, Westin LAX
Rosie Delgado, Hilton LAX
Moises Tamayo, Westin LAX
Mary Agnes Erlandson, Director of St Margaret’s Center

Turned in Cards

Woodrow Coleman, Busriders’ Union
Louis Mendez, Inglewood
Denny Schneider, Los Angeles
Segunda Brentner
Harry Rose
Tony Thomas, Carson
Kent Strumpell, Westchester
Miguel Vargas, Inglewood
Andy Griggs, Santa Monica
Noah Zatz, Progressive Jewish Alliance
Wilfredo Matamoras, Inglewood
Luis Salazar, Inglewood
## EXHIBIT C

### Century Corridor Hotels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Rooms</th>
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<td>Sheraton Gateway</td>
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</tr>
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<td>360</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four Points by Sheraton</td>
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<td>Embassy Suites</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>7297</td>
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</tr>
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Workers: bold = from LA Bus. Journal; not bold = estimate
March 13, 2006

Grant Coonley, Chair
Gateway BID
C/o Los Angeles Airport Hilton Hotel
5711 West Century Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Dear Mr. Coonley,

On behalf of the community Coalition for a New Century, I would like to invite you to offer testimony on the challenges facing the local tourism industry at a public hearing scheduled for Thursday, 5:30-8:00pm, March 23 at Westchester Christian Church 8740 La Tijera Blvd.

A Blue Ribbon Committee including former City Councilwoman Ruth Galanter, Pastor Emeritus Chip Murray and Sierra Club Board member Susana Reyes will be receiving information from a recent Economic Roundtable study on the Los Angeles tourism industry.

In response, individuals will reflect on the local tourism industry and the impact of that industry on the surrounding communities.

We very much would welcome you or a representative of the Gateway BID reflecting on your challenges, vision and opportunities for the future. For more information on the hearing please contact me at 213-977-9400 ext 105.

Sincerely,

Vivian Rothstein
Deputy Director
Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy
March 14, 2006

Ms. Vivian Rothstein  
Coalition for a New Century  
c/o LAANE  
464 Lucas Ave., Suite 202  
Los Angeles, CA  90017

RE: PUBLIC HEARING

Dear Ms. Rothstein:

On behalf of Gateway to L.A., I am respectfully declining your invitation to participate in the public hearing scheduled for March 23rd.

While it is not in Gateway to L.A.’s purview to offer testimony regarding the tourism industry in Los Angeles, more appropriate speakers would be representatives from LA Inc. and/or the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Laurie Hughes  
Executive Director
### EXHIBIT G

**Union/Non-Union Hotel Wage & Benefit Comparison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sheraton Universal Beverly Hilton (Both Union)</th>
<th>Westin LAX (Non-Union)</th>
<th>LAX Hilton (Non-Union)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health and Dental Insurance</strong></td>
<td>Free Family Coverage</td>
<td>Family Coverage: $206 to $290 per month (approximate range)</td>
<td>Family Coverage $216 to $248 per month (approximate range)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housekeeper Hourly Wage</strong></td>
<td>$11.42 (starting)</td>
<td>$7.25 to $10.15 (approximate range)</td>
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**Source:** Worker interviews & pay stubs from 2005, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 11 Contract (2005-2006).
LEARN THE TRUTH BEFORE YOU SIGN A UNION AUTHORIZATION CARD!

"39 THINGS THAT THE UNION CANNOT DO FOR EMPLOYEES"

1. THE UNION CANNOT CREATE JOBS
2. THE UNION CANNOT GUARD YOUR CUSTOMERS FOR OUR NABE
3. THE UNION CANNOT PAY YOUR SALARIES
4. THE UNION CANNOT PREVENT LAYOFFS
5. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE HEALTH CARE
6. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE EMPLOYEE BENEFFITS
7. THE UNION CANNOT PREVENT A RASH OF LAYOFFS
8. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES
9. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE FINANCIAL STABILITY
10. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A FULL CASE OF A STRIKE
11. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A FAIR AND HONEST PROGRAM
12. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT IDEAS
13. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE LEGAL PROTECTION
14. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE SECURITY
15. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE EQUITY
16. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A NICE WAGE
17. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE ON-TIME PAYCHECKS
18. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE SAFETY
19. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A PROMOTION
20. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A HOLIDAY
21. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF SECURITY
22. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF HUMANITY
23. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF SELF-DEFENSE
24. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF COMUNITY
25. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF RECOGNITION
26. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF DIGNITY
27. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF PRIDE
28. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF POWER
29. THE UNION CANNOT PROVIDE A SENSE OF CONTROL

IN FACT, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THE UNION CAN'T DO MUCH AT ALL.

KEEP THE UNION OUT OF YOUR WORKPLACE!

APRENDAN LA VERDAD ANTES DE QUE FIRMEN LA TARJETA DE AUTORIZACION DE LA UNION!

"39 COSAS QUE LA UNION NO PUEDE HACER PARA USTED!

1. LA UNION NO PUEDE CREAR PUESTOS DE TRABAJO
2. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROTEGER LOS CLIENTES PARA SU NABE
3. LA UNION NO PUEDE PAGAR SUS SALARIOS
4. LA UNION NO PUEDE EVITAR DESpidOS
5. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR SALUD
6. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR BENEFICIOS DE EMPLEADO
7. LA UNION NO PUEDE EVITAR MALESTRES DE DESPIDOS
8. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR SUCESOS LABORALES
9. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ESTABILIDAD FINANCIERA
10. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR CADA CASO DE UNA HuelGA
11. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR UN PROGRAMA DE ACTITUDES HONESTAS
12. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE UNA NABE
13. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES LEGALES
14. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE SEGURIDAD
15. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE PROMOCION
16. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE HOLIDAY
17. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE SEGURIDAD
18. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE AUTODEFENSA
19. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE CONMUNIDAD
20. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE RECONOCIMIENTO
21. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE DIGNIDAD
22. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE PRESTIGIO
23. LA UNION NO PUEDE PROVOCAR ACTITUDES DE CONTROL

EN EFECTO, CUANDO SE PENSE EN EL UNIO, LA UNION NO PUEDE HACER MUCHO DE TODO.

NO UNION

If your privacy has been violated and you feel harassment

**Enough is enough!!!**

You are not alone, you can call 1-800-336-3600.
EXHIBIT I

Photos of Century Corridor