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Annual Reports

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Director's Report 2021

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Lewis Center
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GROWING OUR INFLUENCE

Director's Report
2021



Director's Message

This past year was a difficult one. The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked untold hardship on families and communities in the region. The negative effects were magnified in communities of color, underscoring as always the importance of racial equity in our efforts.

Remote work did not slow us down. Despite these challenging circumstances, we continued the long tradition of Lewis Center scholars leading and responding to critical issues and events with timely scholarship.

We have been actively engaged in expanding our reach. These efforts included the launch of our Access to Opportunities Initiative, research on child care as essential infrastructure, a new podcast to more widely disseminate housing research, and a growing number of events.

We look forward to engaging with you as we transition from our homes back to in-person activities at UCLA and throughout the L.A. region.

– Evelyn Blumenberg, Director



By The Numbers

In 2020-21, the UCLA Lewis Center continued to advance research and knowledge on how people live, move and work in the Los Angeles region.



17

New reports and briefs



39,082

Publication views



34

Students supported



\$177,400

Funding to students



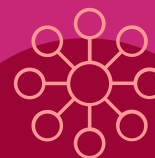
32

Community events



95

Media hits



18%

Growth in reach



\$1,104,700

Additional support

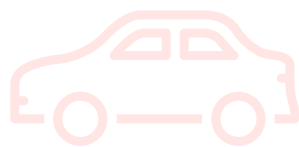
COVID-19 Responses

The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis affected nearly every sector of life and it called for timely and accurate information to inform public policy and programs. The Lewis Center conducted research and work on the pandemic's impact on mobility, access, food and housing security, and what can be done in response.

Advocating

COVID-19 Responses Shouldn't Revolve Around Vehicles

In a Los Angeles Times op-ed, we argued that, even in car-centric L.A., not only were too many testing sites drive-thrus but also that too few walk-up sites were accessible to carless Angelenos.



Warning

Offering Critical Services Only by Car Creates Inequities

Beyond testing and vaccination sites, many aspects of day-to-day life turned to drive-ins and drive-thrus during the pandemic. Car ownership shouldn't be a prerequisite for full participation in U.S. society.

Explaining

COVID-19's Transportation Impacts Widened Already Existing Health Disparities

During the pandemic, trips to the doctor's office, like all travel, became more complicated. Disruptions to health care have been widespread, but particularly so for low-income people and people of color who already have higher rates of chronic health conditions and transportation disadvantage.



Illustrating

Food Insecurity Spiked

In a study meant to guide economic relief programs, researchers found that in the first three months of the pandemic, more than 3 million people in the Southland and Bay Area reported not having enough food to eat, a 22% increase from the pre-pandemic rate.



Events & Communications



The Future of Federal Housing

Julián Castro, former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, joined us to discuss the urgency of federal housing policy, especially with an eviction crisis looming due to the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

Cash Works — What's Next?

Experts of cash assistance pilot programs across the U.S. and Canada convened to discuss how guaranteed income has helped their local communities — and its potential application in the L.A. region.

Rental Registries

At the state level, Assembly member Buffy Wicks said that California lacks an important tool to protect tenants — data on rental units and its most vulnerable renters. Wicks has twice proposed statewide rental registries to inform policy decisions.

Child Care in L.A.

Child care is essential infrastructure and a shrinking of the sector over the past year has left many working parents with limited options. How will the lack of care access impact L.A.'s economic recovery, including housing affordability and transportation access?

New UCLA Housing Voice Podcast

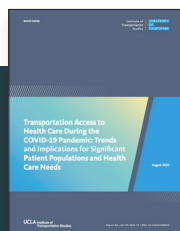
Housing research is fast-moving with important implications for policy and people. But research findings don't often get shared beyond academia. Our new podcast breaks down new research and how it can be applied in the real world.



Select Research



A Call for Real Estate Transfer Tax Reform



Transportation Access to Health Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic



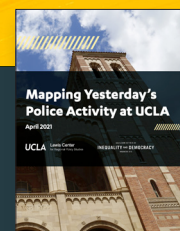
The Need to Prioritize Black Lives in LA's Traffic Safety Efforts



The Effect of Market-Rate Development on Neighborhood Rents



Bolstering Mobility and Enhancing Transportation Options for Low-Income Older Adults



Mapping Yesterday's Police Activity at UCLA



Access to Child Care in Los Angeles County



Value Capture Reconsidered

Access to Opportunities Initiative



Transportation allows people to reach essential destinations. It enables workers to get to jobs, students to school, and patients to see doctors. But for those who lack transportation, whether it be because they don't have their own vehicles or because public transit doesn't get them where they need to go in a timely manner, these opportunities can cease to exist.

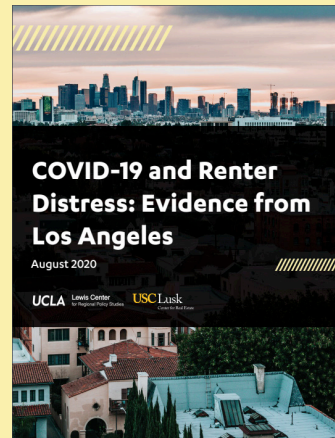
This year, we launched the **Access to Opportunities Initiative** — an interdisciplinary research project that focuses on how transportation connects people to economic and social opportunities.

In partnership with the UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies, this multidisciplinary program leverages the expertise from diverse UCLA departments, including urban planning, health policy, Chicana/o studies, medicine, public policy, public health, and social welfare, to delve into the specific role that transportation plays.

Research & Education



Research Spotlight



1 in 5 L.A. Tenants Struggled to Pay Rent During Pandemic

This survey and report documents the hardships faced by tenants during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it traces those hardships overwhelmingly to lost work and wages as a result of the economic shutdown. The study also found that renters were suffering disproportionately from anxiety, depression and food scarcity, and were relying much more than in the past on unconventional methods to cover their expenses.

Research in Action



The **City of Culver City** passed a ballot measure in November 2020 to increase the one-time tax on property sales, reflecting Lewis Center research that found reforms to the real estate transfer tax are an effective and equitable solution to immediate budget needs, while also supporting important long-term priorities including affordable housing and tenant assistance.

The **Los Angeles City Council** introduced a motion to address street harassment, particularly on public transit systems, that drew heavily from the expertise of UCLA professor Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, whose recent work investigated the scope of sexual harassment in transit journeys and recommendations to address it.

Bruin Highlight



Rayne Laborde, M.Arch I '20, MURP '21

Rayne analyzed park dwelling and park-based encampments in Los Angeles and how parks can adapt to support all members of the public, especially in the midst of a housing crisis.



Up Next: Rayne will stay at UCLA as associate director of cityLAB and work on housing innovation, continuums of accommodation, and access to public space.



About Us

Los Angeles is the center of one of the largest and most economically powerful regions in the world. But it also has some of the country's highest levels of racial and economic inequality, driven by surging housing costs, residential segregation, historic and systemic racism, stagnant wages, and gaps in access to high-quality transportation.

As we look beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and the region's recovery, the Lewis Center will continue to produce high-quality research, events and publications on how people live, move and work in the Los Angeles region.



Live

Housing Affordability
Quality Communities
Gentrification & Displacement



Move

Transportation Equity
Access to Opportunities
Environmental Justice



Work

Regional Economy
Employment Distribution
Workforce Policies

In Memoriam: Martin Wachs

In April 2021, we lost a dear friend and colleague. Marty Wachs was a preeminent figure in transportation planning with an academic career spanning seven decades. He was a consummate professional and mentor, always willing to support our efforts at the Lewis Center and make L.A. better.



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