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Title

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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7k6981vw>

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Publication Date

2025-06-26

DOI

10.17610/T60P5V

June 2025

Broxton Plaza: An Avenue for Revitalization and Mobility in Westwood Village



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Issue

Westwood Village, once a thriving commercial hub adjacent to UCLA, now faces a prolonged economic decline marked by a high commercial vacancy rate (40%), despite appreciating residential property values. Broxton Plaza has been part of Westwood Village Specific Plans since 1989. Under the LADOT People St program, Westwood Village applied for a plaza application in 2015. Despite several delays, the plaza's phase 1 finally launched as a pilot in 2024 as one of many economic measures to revitalize Westwood (Figure 1).

Strategically located near the upcoming Metro D Line station, Broxton Plaza is designed to support walkability and community activation, boost the local economy, and create an upcoming entertainment zone enabled by SB 969, which permits public alcohol consumption. These goals align with the city's Mobility Plan 2035 and the transit-oriented vision for LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games, during which athletes will be hosted in Westwood Village.

Broxton Plaza demonstrates how pairing tactical urbanism (low-cost piloted projects with seating, lighting, planters) and placemaking strategies (community-centered programming and public art) can activate underutilized commercial corridors. This approach fosters foot traffic, strengthens neighborhood identity, generates community engagement, and supports small business growth. Ultimately, it offers a scalable model for other mixed-use districts seeking to address vacancies and support community and economic revitalization.

Study Approach

This post-implementation study utilized a mixed-methods approach, including 124 surveys, 73 pedestrian counts, 323 traffic and parking assessments, 38 field observations, and 10 interviews with businesses and community stakeholders from January to May 2025.

Key Findings

- **High Community Approval:** Respondents rated the plaza 4.45/5 on its community impact on Westwood. It is most frequently (once a week or more) used by students, locals, and families who prefer walking to the plaza (62%) compared to other modes of transport. Most families were observed on Saturdays (3 p.m – 6 p.m.).
- **Increased Foot Traffic:** Activity counts show high engagement, especially on event days like the farmers markets and UCLA flea markets. A high share of visitors reported coming with friends (41%), followed by solo visitors (32%), and with family (22%). The majority of observed activity (71%) was concentrated along the western, restaurant-facing side, likely due to the vacant properties on the opposite side of the street. The top plaza activities included dining and shopping (61%), resting (40%), and participating in events programming (20%).
- **Accessibility and Design:** The plaza received a strong safety rating (78.2%), attributed in part to the Westwood Ambassadors on-site. A lack of public restrooms placed a burden on local businesses during high foot-traffic events.



Figure 1. A map taken from WVIA showing Broxton Plaza and nearby amenities like parking (Westwood Village Map, 2025)

Community feedback also highlighted a need for additional seating, shade, better wheelchairs access, and lighting to attract people.

- **Traffic, Transit and Parking:** Some businesses reported challenges related to the loss of a loading zone and the lack of a designated ride-hail pick-up zone, causing congestion and ticketing by traffic enforcement. The city-owned parking structure accessed via Broxton Avenue can also create a bottleneck on event days. Looking ahead, the opening of the Metro D Line Station is expected to significantly increase foot traffic — especially during the 2026 FIFA World Cup and 2028 Games.
- **Business and Community Engagement:** The business and community feedback highlighted a need to revitalize Westwood as a college town village through event partnerships with UCLA clubs and local cultural institutions (e.g., the Geffen Playhouse, Hammer Museum). However, there were also concerns about vacant commercial properties, long-term rent increases and small business displacement as the plaza receives more attention.
- **Entertainment Zone:** A few businesses expressed high interest in the entertainment zone, while others expressed reluctance about disturbances and intoxication in a public space late at night.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the researcher proposed the following recommendations:

- **Public Improvements:** Install shade structures, seating, public restrooms (permanent or temporary for events), hand-washing stations, wayfinding landmarks, public art and murals, lighting, and seasonal decorations.
- **Mobility Improvements:** Designate ride-hail and loading zones, add shaded bike racks, and repave uneven sidewalks. Consider petitioning the city to purchase the underutilized private lot across from the city parking structure to repurpose it for the plaza and implement the loading, delivery, and ride-hailing zone. Install a second exit for the city parking structure.
- **Marketing and Communication:** Foster stronger UCLA collaborations and deliver event marketing materials to nearby residents to strengthen community impact. Create more consistent events and programming to attract visitors to the plaza.
- **Business Support:** Encourage retail diversity in the area, such as more food trucks and pop-up options. Encourage promotions with businesses (e.g., shared discounts) for financially constrained students. Support more flexibility in design regulations for local business storefronts. Mitigate the potential displacement of smaller businesses through rent controls, grants, or incentives. Pilot the entertainment zone's hours and boundaries in partnership with local businesses.
- **Mega Events:** Transition Broxton Plaza from its current temporary testing phase to a permanent public space. Develop a Phase 2 expansion plan of the plaza north up to Le Conte Avenue in time for the 2028 Games. Develop a Mega Event Activation Plan with additional safety monitors like training the Westwood Ambassadors to manage crowds and function as guides for live event screenings and potential athlete meet-and-greets. Invest in adaptable infrastructure to repurpose for recurring community programming.



Shakeel, E. (2025). Pedestrianization and Urban Connectivity: A Study of Broxton Pedestrian Plaza (Master's capstone, UCLA). Retrieved from: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/22c019wj>

Project ID LAS2502 | DOI:10.17610/T60P5V