



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Re-Imagining Empty Space: Innovations for an Active South LA Summit • Tuesday, March 15, 2011 • 4:00-8:00pm

LOS ANGELES, CA — More than 130 residents who gathered for a bus and bike tour of South Los Angeles on March 12, 2011 will reconvene on March 15th to share what they learned and to explore strategies to transform empty space into areas to enjoy, relax, play and be active in park-deficient neighborhoods. South Los Angeles is one of the most park-poor areas in the state, with barely one acre of parkland per thousand people vs the recommended standard of 6 to 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. According to the 2005 *LA County Health Survey*, less than 75% of South LA's children have access to a park, playground or other safe place to play. South Los Angeles also has the highest rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes in all of Los Angeles.

The bus and bike tour visited 5 different sites, three of which have already been transformed but face continuing challenges including the lack of programs to support their safety or rising costs for monthly rental fees on community gardens. Two projects just getting started are the Avalon Green Alley Pilot Project, which is finding ways to transform 900 linear miles of alleys in Los Angeles into useable open space with pedestrian-friendly green connections, and Project RENEW 103rd Street Station, which will apply streetscape designs to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to mass transit.

Participants in Tuesday's Summit will share their experiences and reflections from the tours. A panel of experts that includes Los Angeles City Planning and the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust will answer questions and describe the city's current policies to transform vacant lots into places for healthier use. The final panel will bring together advocates and planners from across the country to illustrate successful projects and how they overcame challenges to transforming empty space into healthy space.

WHAT: Re-Imagining Empty Space Summit • Tuesday, March 15th 4:00-8:00pm

WHERE: **Martin Luther King Jr Recreation Center** • 3916 South Western Avenue • Los Angeles 90062
(Parking is available in the Rec Center parking lot off Western or there is street parking on Western & 39th Street. There is also parking in the Bethune Library's parking lot off 39th Street.)

WHO: Community members, local and national advocates including representatives from City of LA Department of City Planning, Baldwin Hills Conservancy, City Parks Alliance, Green LA, LA Neighborhood Land Trust, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, People for Parks, Trust for the Public Land, UCLA, University of Detroit Mercy Design Center, and USC are among the participants.



Supported in part with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention under REACH US and RENEW initiatives.

Community Health Councils is a non-profit, community-based health promotion, advocacy and policy organization. Established in 1992, CHC's mission is to improve health and increase access to quality healthcare for uninsured, under-resourced, and underserved populations.

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