

LITTLE TOKYO SERVICE CENTER

Azusa Street & SpiritWalk

Economic Development in Little Tokyo and
Downtown Los Angeles

Funded by U.S. EDA & Tom Bradley Legacy Foundation at UCLA

REISSUE
2014

A PARIO RESEARCH REPORT

1. REPORT SUMMARY: AZUSA STREET AND SPIRITWALK STRATEGY

1.1 REPORT SUBJECT AND PURPOSE

This report is a strategy detailing possibilities to establish and promote 1) the historical site of the Azusa Street Mission and 2) an urban promenade concept called SpiritWalk as attractions for both locals and visitors. The attractions can produce jobs, increase success for restaurants and other businesses, and increase attendance and revenue at museums, galleries, theaters, and other arts and culture organizations. Additional important outcomes can be contributions to urban revitalization, placemaking, cultural preservation, and general sense of neighborhood belonging and security.

1.2 SCOPE OF WORK

For both attractions, we present a value proposition, opportunities and threats, project components, partnering/funding/resource sharing ideas, and real estate investment and utilization opportunities. Possibilities for cultural tourism are also assessed, as are ways for these attractions to be unique amongst Los Angeles' numerous tourist destination options. A portion of study resources were invested in establishing connections with various projects, people, organizations, and other stakeholders that can be key in the implementation of both the Azusa Street and SpiritWalk promenade attractions.

Both proposed attractions are based in Little Tokyo, though the SpiritWalk promenade is envisioned as a thread to connect several adjacent neighborhoods and the L.A. River and, indeed, can be replicated throughout the City.

1.3 KEY FINDINGS

1.3.1 AZUSA STREET

1. The Azusa Street Mission, considered the cradle of the Pentecostal churches, is an important part of L.A. social, ethnic, cultural, and religious history.
2. Azusa Street has grown to be of global importance (Life Magazine #68 on list of most important events in human history).
3. Estimated 500 to 600 million or more Pentecostals globally, and growing fast.
4. With this many followers, and the commitment common in faith, there is opportunity to offer experiences, services, ceremonies, celebrations, etc in a way that establishes a notable enterprise at or near Azusa Street.
5. Media/internet/technology tools can be an important part of the marketing and content delivery systems. Superior access can appeal to different demographic groups, make access easier, provide a forward-thinking personality dimension to Azusa Street and SpiritWalk, and increase overall success.

6. Our Lady of Angels, the Crystal Cathedral, Trinity Broadcasting, and many other religious facilities demonstrate the power of providing a range of functions and meanings.
7. If the Pentecostal churches or entrepreneurial members desire to create Azusa Street facilities, there are real estate investment and business investment opportunities for both owners and operators.

1.3.2 SPIRITWALK

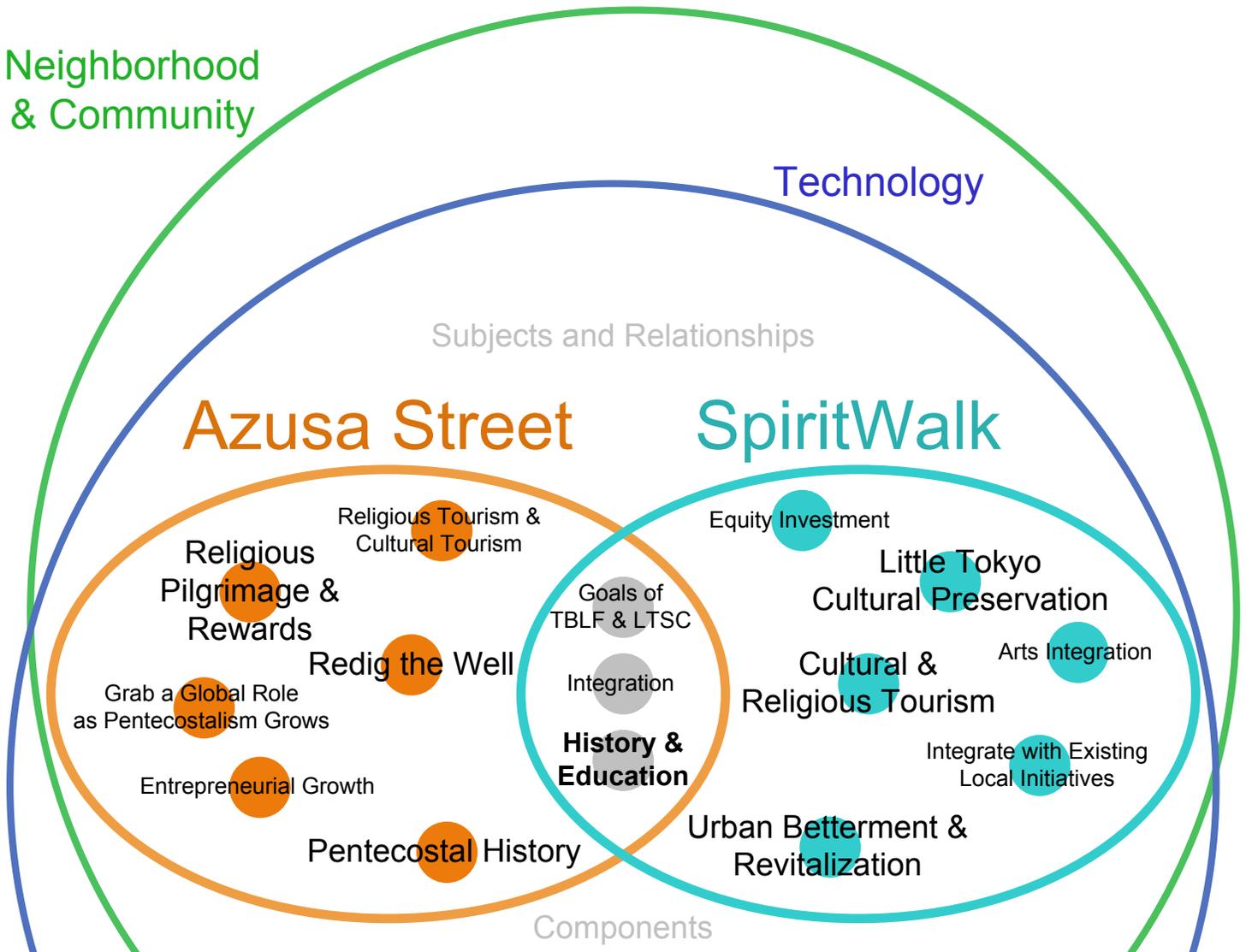
1. Churches and temples are rich containers of history—that of individuals, families, companies/industries, and cultures.
2. There is increasing demand for historical exposition, cultural preservation, and related education and tourism.
3. SpiritWalk, which celebrates Azusa Street as well as all other religious assets in the downtown area, creates a pluralistic and equitable presentation of history as seen through churches and temples.
4. Further, SpiritWalk celebrates all of the many meanings of ‘spirit,’ including spirit of community, art, gardens, food, organizations, etc.
5. SpiritWalk can be a promenade that threads together various neighborhoods, cultures, and assets—including the L.A. River as spirit of nature.
6. SpiritWalk can be a brand that supports cultural preservation and business development goals.
7. As with Azusa Street, superior technological access for SpiritWalk can be an important contributor to success and a key personality dimension differentiating the promenade from competitive offerings.
8. SpiritWalk can be a neighborhood based tool to stimulate tourism, complementing the corporate/institutional tourism industry infrastructure in Los Angeles.

1.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Stakeholders of both Azusa Street and SpiritWalk can be approached for further development of the concept. These include adjacent and nearby real estate and business owners.
2. Pentecostal churches leadership in the Los Angeles region should be approached with the opportunity to become leaders, process sponsors, and ongoing stewards of an Azusa Street enterprise of their choosing. High level support can be productive, and activate entrepreneurial actions.
3. On a larger scale, likely investors, owners, and operators of Azusa Street and SpiritWalk facilities should be solicited for not only aforementioned process support, but also capital investment into real estate, infrastructure, and operating entities.
4. In addition to owners and operators, other beneficiaries of both Azusa Street and SpiritWalk be communicated with to educate them about their benefits and to enlist their support, such as with community endorsement, government approvals, and formal and informal partnerships.

The subjects and components of Azusa Street and SpiritWalk, along with their relationships, are shown in Exhibit 1 – 1. Detailed conclusions and recommendations are presented in the report.

Relationship Diagram: Azusa Street and SpiritWalk Subjects and Components of Each



Azusa Street Component Possibilities

1. Memorial marker such as an obelisk, pavement inlays
2. Bookstore & café near Azusa Street for gathering, events, sales of historical and spiritual material
3. Active church respecting the Azusa Street Mission
4. Robust visitor center to serve pilgrimages, religious tourists, cultural tourists, and a global audience through the internet and technology

Common Elements

1. Presenting history in urban context
2. Azusa Street can be 1 of 20 to 25 SpiritWalk religious places = pluralism
3. Advanced use of technology for access, communication, education
3. Encountering others
4. Integration of layers of history into a story
5. Neighborhood Integration
6. Job generation, business and economic development

SpiritWalk Component Possibilities

1. Pedestrian promenade
2. Connect promenade with other neighborhoods
3. Mobile and internet access to local and historical stories
4. Nature & LA River integration
5. Design guide for development and cultural preservation
6. Design and interpret with art
7. Education programming
8. Business development
9. Pluralistic encounter of other faiths