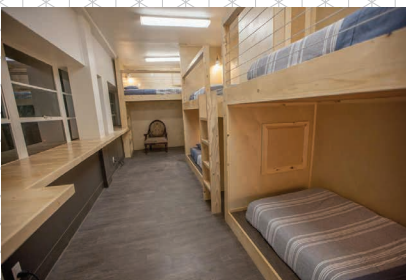


Experiments in Student Housing

A Preliminary Report



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Executive Summary

The following report is the culmination of a summer-long study of student housing insecurity at UCLA. The team at cityLAB partnered with administration and staff from UCLA Student Affairs, Student Housing, and Transportation, and spoke at length with several housing-insecure students and home hosts to diagnose the issue on campus and look at how to improve upon existing solutions. To kick-off our research we convened a task force comprised of administrators from UCLA Student Affairs and UCLA Housing, which outlined a two-pronged research agenda to be carried out over the course of three months.

cityLAB investigated two student populations with unmet needs: Fulltime residential students with deep financial need and Super Commuters. The first scenario regards the drive towards High-Density Housing as a way of creating more units and more affordable options for students, which also faces limits in meeting the needs of those confronting housing insecurity. The second scenario, Super Commuters, puts into relief the realities faced by students with long commute times and have different, and perhaps temporary, housing needs. We analyzed these scenarios to determine what was working and what was not, and used these assessments to inform and expand the range of potential housing alternatives for housing-insecure UCLA students.

In this Executive Summary we present key findings and recommendations from our research that can be implemented over the short and long term. These recommendations reflect both the immediacy of the issue and the need for long-term support and planning. We also present alternative approaches to the two housing scenarios that guided our work. Although housing costs, largely driven by the limited availability of nearby housing, may be the primary consideration for the university and for students, our findings suggest that interventions in other facets of the problem—transportation, housing options, and services—can still improve current housing conditions.

Short-Term Recommendations

We recommend a set of short-term actions, which cityLAB can undertake with additional university support, to address gaps in the existing provision of housing options for students. The university should consider reconfiguring its approach to High-Density Housing, from its programming and design of spaces up through its implementation and administration. This is particularly important if such a strategy is meant to more fully consider the needs of students who are more likely to be affected by issues related to housing insecurity, such as former foster care youth, transfer students, or students with precarious documentation status. For Super Commuters, more precise data on the number of students who face 90-minutes or greater commute to campus are still needed. Yet while we work towards understanding the full extent of this scenario, we can also implement design thinking and programs to ameliorate the effects of long-distance commuting. To understand student needs and their reception towards of these micro-interventions, focus groups of students facing housing insecurity of all types should be convened and engaged in discussion. Our short-term recommendations are:

1. Convene focus groups of housing-insecure students to understand their needs and evaluate the appeal of temporary and long-term housing alternatives. Prototype upgrades and micro-interventions to existing spaces and programs.
2. Acquire and analyze quantitative data on Super Commuters to address temporary housing need at the appropriate scale.
3. Prototype upgrades and micro-interventions to existing spaces and programs.

Long-Term Recommendations

Our long-term recommendations for the university fall into three categories. First, there is an urgent need for better data collection to measure housing insecurity among students and a need to establish more accurate cost-of-living metrics. Collecting this data will require statistical and survey expertise with long-term research investment, yet it will ultimately help the university make better policies to assist ill-housed students and its own challenges.

Second, there is a need to think creatively about how the university develops its housing and real estate resources. The range of scenarios faced by s-tudents demonstrate a need to create a variety of low-cost housing options, especially those who may have unconventional needs, such as a bed to sleep in only a few nights of the week. Creative approaches to student housing might include drawing upon resources in the greater Westwood community and nearby areas as well.

Finally, the university can foster a proactive and supportive campus climate regarding the housing insecurity affecting its students. It should work towards destigmatizing students faced with this hardship while striving for academic achievement, support student-led initiatives where it can, and provide space for affected students to be heard by both their peers and university administrators. Our long-term recommendations are:

1. Support bottom-up, student-led solutions for their housing needs.
2. Design and administer a basic needs questionnaire that accurately measures housing insecurity.
3. Engage in further research to develop updated cost of living metrics.
4. Host an event to destigmatize and raise awareness of students with housing need.
5. Reinstitute the Community Housing Office and engage community resources.
6. Investigate creative models for housing and real estate development.
 - a. Explore creating a university-owned co-op.
 - b. Provide options for flexible, short-stay accommodations.



Student Housing Basic Needs

There is emerging evidence of a growing, nationwide crisis where college students are struggling to find safe, affordable places to live near the campus they attend. A 2015 report by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development found that at least 56,000 college students are homeless. A more recent study by the Wisconsin Hope Lab found that nine percent of students report being homeless, while 36 percent say they are housing-insecure, meaning that they face "a broad range of challenges such as the inability to pay for rent and utilities or the need to move frequently" (Goldrick-Rab, Richardson, Schneider, Hernandez, & Cady, 2018). While state-level data for California is less specific, a recent Cal State University survey found that one in ten of the system's 460,000 students are homeless (Abcarian, 2016). Growing research suggests that housing insecurity, along with other basic needs such as food insecurity, is associated with poor academic outcomes. Housing insecurity is further associated with poorer self-reported physical health, symptoms of depression, and higher perceived stress (Goldrick-Rab, et al., 2018).

If the national average of housing insecurity applies at UCLA, about 14,000 students are inadequately housed and it is the university's responsibility to address this need. Acknowledging the gap in data on student housing security is a first step towards addressing the issue. Housing-insecure students remain a largely invisible population; traditional point-in-time counts that take inventory of homeless individuals living on the street are not designed to capture students who may be couchsurfing or sleeping on campus. The stigma attached to being homeless is often strong enough to prevent students from speaking up about their circumstances, which makes identification even more challenging. Different methods are needed to identify homeless students and to further address their specific needs.

While more research is needed, universities have moved forward with their own strategies on their respective campuses. The primary strategy thus far has been to find ways to lower the overall cost of attending college for students, principally by providing more housing options (HUD, 2015). And yet, by focusing principally on the issue of cost, these approaches have tended to overlook key aspects of students' experiences, such as those students whose housing needs are temporary or intermittent. Thus, existing strategies to address the student housing crises lack a holistic approach.

UCLA faces its own student housing crisis, one made worse by the high cost of living in Los Angeles, combined with a pattern of urban sprawl. Over the past several decades, the university is successfully transitioning from a commuter campus into a residential campus, yet UCLA's location in the affluent neighborhood of Westwood makes it difficult

Table 1. Housing Options

	UCLA Residence Halls (Suite)	Off-Campus Apartments General	UCLA Residence Halls (Triple)	UCLA 2-8s Alternative Housing	Living with Relatives	UCHA Co-op Housing
Tuition and Fees	\$13,225	\$13,225	\$13,225	\$13,225	\$13,225	\$13,225
Room and Meals	\$15,442	\$13,806	\$13,707	\$8,781	\$6,369	\$4,653 + 132 hours work
Books and Supplies	\$1,509	\$1,509	\$1,509	\$1,509	\$1,509	\$1,509
Transportation	\$432	\$867	\$432	\$432	\$1,473	\$432
Personal	\$1,470	\$1,680	\$1,470	\$1,680	\$1,605	\$1,680
Health Insurance	\$2,225	\$2,225	\$2,225	\$2,225	\$2,225	\$2,225
Total (CA Residents)	\$34,303	\$33,312	\$32,568	\$27,852	\$26,406	\$23,720

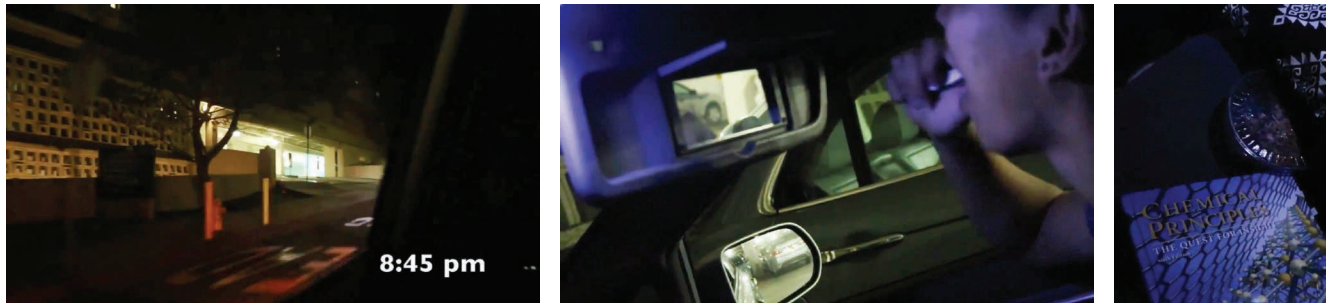
Sources: UCLA Undergraduate Admission, UCLA Housing, University Cooperative Housing Association

for many students to find affordable housing nearby. As UCLA seeks housing solutions for students who are now opting to commute, affordable and flexible options must be sought.

In the same way other campuses have traditionally looked at affordability issues, one possible view of UCLA's current approach to creating housing options is to look strictly at monetary costs. A comparison from this perspective shows that even the best efforts by the university fail to compete with what we might consider the "gold standard" of affordability: living with family or relatives costs students less than half of a triple dorm room.

Cost underlies most of one's ability to make basic ends meet. This is especially true for students who, unlike older adults, tend to be financially dependent and have a hard time finding alternatives to student housing in neighborhoods like Westwood. But the student housing issue is also driven by other factors that are made more complex by additional barriers faced by many students.

Figure 1. Stills from student-made video about homeless UCLA student



Ill-Housed Student Profiles

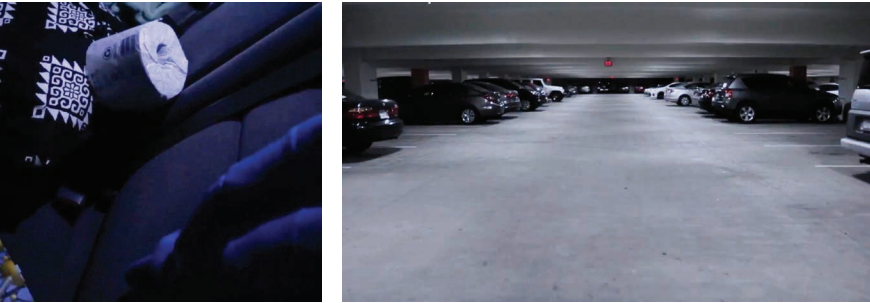
To better understand the additional barriers faced by housing-insecure students, we spoke with several UCLA students facing housing insecurity. These students, whose names have been changed here to protect their identity, first became known to cityLAB through social networks rather than a targeted outreach. As their relationships with cityLAB developed through engaged contact on campus, they opened up about their life circumstances. The experiences they shared were surprising, and hinted that similar stories might be more common than otherwise expected among various cohorts of students. At the same time, their stories reflect the need for a broader and more nuanced perspective when considering how to approach the issue of student housing insecurity.

One student's story became the topic of a short film made by undergraduate students from cityLAB's educational program, the Urban Humanities Initiative (UHI). "The Life No One Knows" (Garcia, Trazile, & White), features Ben, a second-year biology student, who is currently living out of his car. He describes how he came to this difficult decision. "When you can't have a place to sleep, and food to eat, and tuition, [you realize] what you can do without," he tells the filmmakers.

Ben deals with a reality that many college students throughout the country face. Like them, he is unable to balance the cost of his education with his need for housing, but his circumstances have not diminished his drive to succeed academically—if anything it further motivates him. "When you are faced with paying tuition for your dream job or living in a car for what you think is temporary, it's pretty obvious that [being homeless] can be the result of rational decision making under extreme duress," he says. Even though Ben recognizes his decision as a rational one, he still harbors some shame about his circumstances: "I don't want to be treated differently. That's one reason I haven't told anyone. I don't want to cause worry but I also house a little fear and embarrassment even from my own understanding of the issue."

The circumstances of Victor's housing insecurity differ from Ben's. This past summer, he

||
When you are faced with paying tuition for your dream job, or living in a car for what you think is temporary, it's pretty obvious that [being homeless] can be the result of rational decision making under extreme duress.



Source: Garcia, Trazile, & White

was unable to attend a student workshop for which he had a tuition fellowship because the program was not long enough for him to qualify for university housing, and because his parents lived too far from campus for residing with them to be a reasonable option. A fourth-year undergraduate student, Victor entered UCLA as a transfer student and was guaranteed housing for one year per university policy. When he did not receive housing his junior year, he relentlessly pursued the housing department until a space opened up. Victor says this type of persistence is the norm for students experiencing housing insecurity. He felt he needed more clarity and assistance from the housing office, particularly when he was denied housing, and he was frustrated by the excess capacity on campus during summer and winter breaks.


Both Ben and Victor belong to student populations that are especially vulnerable to housing insecurity. These groups include transfer students, very high-need students, undocumented students, formerly incarcerated students, and current or former foster youth. While cost seems to be the primary factor preventing students like Ben and Victor from finding adequate housing, it is not the only aspect that housing providers such as UCLA must consider as they plan for the future. The housing insecurities of college students also stem from a lack of housing options, a mix of transportation factors, and are impacted by on-campus services. The following section details each of these considerations.

Key Considerations

Understanding how to tackle housing insecurity must consider the other facets affecting housing choice for students. Even among the housing options examined above, each has their distinct advantages and disadvantages. A comprehensive approach to university housing will provide a menu of options that can accommodate a student's particular circumstances and empowers them to make decisions that support their future. We identify four key aspects the university should consider in order to meet student housing need.

1. Cost

For college students nationwide, living costs exceed and even dwarf the cost of tuition and fees. For example, the average published cost for an in-state student at a public, four-year college is \$18,943 for 2014-15 (HUD, 2015). Room and board, at an average of \$9,804, accounts for more than half that cost. For students at public two-year colleges, room and board accounts for more than two-thirds of the cost. At UCLA, room and board in a dorm triple costs 42 percent of the overall annual cost for college. Housing expenses are a major part of students' living costs, and they have steadily increased during the past 25 years (HUD, 2015).



UCLA currently guarantees three years of housing for incoming (non-transfer) undergraduate students, and one year of housing for transfer, upper division, and graduate students. Despite this, many students are unwilling to incur the debt associated with housing on top of their academic loans. We need data to know how many students are unable or unwilling to pay for UCLA housing. Additionally, students who are unable to obtain on and off campus apartments but wish to remain in the area will pay market rate rents 10 to 40 percent higher than what UCLA offers.

2. Housing Options

Housing options remain limited for UCLA students. The neighborhoods surrounding campus are composed of mostly single-family residences, the small area of Westwood with apartments is severely constrained geographically, and other nearby areas with market-rate apartments cater to an affluent Westside clientele. The limited space of the university does not have the capacity to house every undergraduate and graduate student in need. Traditional models that feature on-campus dorms are insufficient to provide housing on the scale that is needed, and furthermore, they reflect a single-minded idea of a residential university lifestyle. University students need denser, more affordable, and more satisfying housing options. We must focus on design solutions that creatively expand the kinds of housing available for the diverse student population that attends today's university.

3. Transportation

Wherever one decides to live, maintaining consistent access to the university is essential. While ideally students walk to their classes from on-campus dormitories or nearby housing, safe and reliable modes of transportation like bicycles, carpools, and buses can expand their range of housing options without having to own a personal vehicle. However, the high cost of housing combined with our sprawling region, limited public transit options, and traffic congestion mean that a growing number of UCLA students are "Super Commuters" who travel for more than 90 minutes each way. These students suffer both personally and academically because they have less time to study and to be among their social support systems. The stress of planning their daily commutes, negotiating traffic patterns, paying transportation costs, and organizing their schedules around mandatory classes, negatively affects their experience as well as performance at the university.

4. Services

The wide range of services and resources at the university campus form another part of the housing equation. While these most often exert a considerable pull towards living nearby, tailored programs can also make up for less-than ideal living situations and help with particular life circumstances. And as college enrollment nationwide has increased, today's college students have new needs. Mental healthcare services for students experiencing hardship, vanpool shuttles for students who commute, community learning centers that cater to first-generation college students, and legal advice for students who are undocumented; all are examples of university services that could play a part in a student's ability to create a suitable housing scenario for themselves. The support and stability these

resources provide in addition to housing help students to reach their full academic potential.

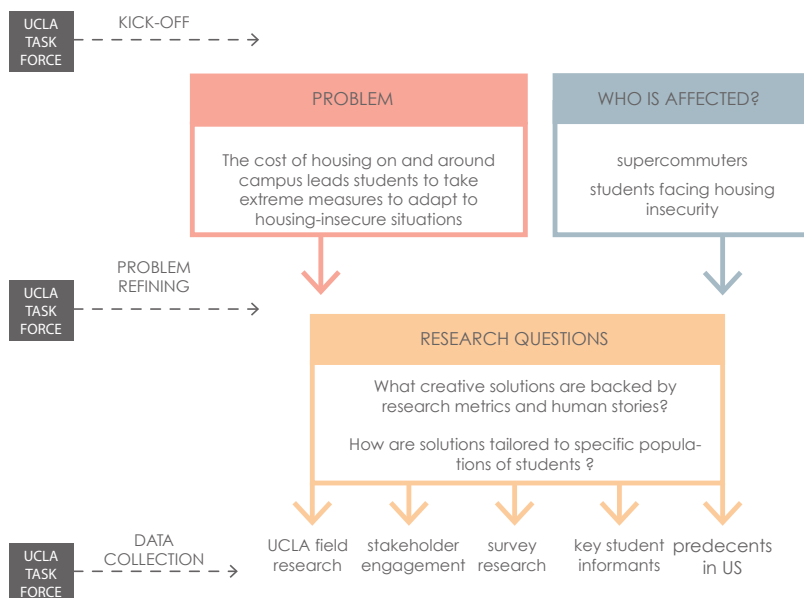
Each of these four considerations can alleviate or exacerbate the conditions of ill-housed students and affect their basic ability to succeed and thrive at UCLA. With these four considerations in mind, we begin our analysis into two critical housing scenarios: High-Density Housing and Super Commuters.

Two Critical Housing Scenarios

To focus the scope of its research, cityLAB met with key administration officials in UCLA Housing and Student Affairs. This process involved creating a "Student Housing Task Force," to decide the issues and areas that were of most immediate concern and where cityLAB could lend its expertise in complex design problems and affordable housing solutions to find new, creative housing options for UCLA. The conclusion from these convenings was that cityLAB would focus its research on two critical housing scenarios: High-Density Housing and Super Commuters.

High-Density Housing on the one hand considers students with a consistent housing need, the options currently available to them, and what the University is doing to address those needs. Super Commuters focuses on research and solutions for students with intermittent housing needs brought on by their long commutes. We conclude each section with a set of possible alternatives the university might consider to further address these two housing scenarios more adequately.

Figure 2. cityLAB Research Process





High-Density Housing


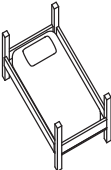



Our analysis shows that the provision of High-Density Housing emanates from effective university housing and campus initiatives as well as student activism. UCLA Housing is working vigorously to increase its overall stock of housing for students. Its current master plan aspires to guarantee four years of housing for undergraduates and two years for transfer students (right now they only guarantee three years for undergraduates and one year for transfers) (Dundish, 2018). To achieve this, UCLA is building three new dormitories that will collectively create 5,400 new bed spaces by 2021. Most of these projects will house triples, but they plan to incorporate other layouts as well, including 4-8s (or four bedrooms with eight students) (Faybick, 2018). Forecasting models are used to predict whether or not the planned projects will meet the increasing need for housing. The current model suggests that the increased provision of units will reduce the triple occupancy rate from 80 percent occupancy, its current rate, down to at least 60 percent.

To address immediate needs of students facing housing insecurity, as well as other kinds of financial hardships, the university has the Economic Crisis Response Team (ECRT). Students can take advantage of up to two weeks of emergency housing in the event of a sudden eviction or during a roommate dispute. ECRT also connects students to academic scholarships, psychological services, food vouchers, and other helpful resources. In addition to these generally-available resources, UCLA's Guardian Scholars Program specifically caters to former foster care and emancipated youth.

To summarize, the university has developed important programs for short-term solutions to immediate housing needs, and has a long-term plan to guarantee student housing for four years. Student advocates have also worked to create a number of high-density housing solutions, often in partnership with the university. Here we evaluate three of these approaches: 2-8 Alternative Housing, the Co-op Model, and Students 4 Students.

Figure 3. Anatomy of a 2-8

Westwood Chateau

- resident  x8
- bed  x8
- dresser w/
fold-out desk  x8
- folding chair  x8
- bathroom  x2



Westwood Chateau 2-8 UCLA University Apartments	
number of residents:	8
approx square footage:	980
monthly cost per person:	\$525.67
number of bedrooms:	2
number of bathrooms:	2
per person:	
approx square footage:	122.5
number of bedrooms:	.25
number of bathrooms:	.25

Figure 4. Photo Tour of a Westwood Chateau 2-8



Four Beds in Bedroom



Living and Dining Room



Alternate Dining Room and Kitchen

Research: Site Visits

The 2-8 Model: UCLA Alternative Housing

In the 2017-18 academic year, UCLA Housing offered a new, low-cost off-campus housing option referred to as "2-8 Alternative Housing" or "2-8s," where two-bedroom apartments are outfitted with four bunk beds to a room and can accommodate up to eight students per suite (Leou, 2017). The 2-8 option was created in response to the loss of the Pamilya House, a non-university affiliated organization that worked to provide housing for undocumented students and other vulnerable students in need of low-cost housing. Pamilya House residents and activists worked with UCLA Housing to create this high-density, low-cost option, and succeeded in establishing 19 units of this type (Dundish, 2018). But when the 19 units were made available, the university had difficulty filling them. This was at least partly attributable to a failure in advertising, and administrators acknowledged that getting the word out about the 2-8 option was difficult in the program's first year. While it is difficult to assess the range of reasons why students may have decided not to pursue the 2-8 option without conducting further research, our initial assessment indicates several other reasons why the 2-8s might not be attractive to students in-need, and explain why the 2-8s failed to be the kind of high-density-low-cost housing model that administrators had anticipated:

- While the 2-8s are viewed as a less expensive alternative to on-campus housing, the overall cost is still more expensive than some of the other options students might consider, such as a co-op or living with a relative (Table 1).
- Compared with other housing options, the 2-8s sacrifice a degree of comfort and privacy in order to live densely and economical. Figure 3 shows the anatomy of a 2-8, along with photos from a site visit. The square footage and configuration of the 2-8s varies from suite to suite, but in most there is space for each student to have their own dresser-desk (a piece of furniture serving both purposes) in the bedroom. However, in some of the smaller suites, due to limited space in the bedrooms, students' dressers are placed in the living room space, adjacent to the kitchen.
- The specific student population for which the 2-8s were originally intended may be more sensitive to issues of privacy, since the Pamilya House it replaced provided a safe space for undocumented students. If the 2-8s are to fully take into consideration the needs of this group, a more intentional approach to outreach may be necessary.

Figure 5. Photo Tour of the Co-op



Triple Bedroom (Photo by UCHA)



Dining Commons


Figure 6. Co-op Conversations Flyer

How Has The Housing Affordability Crisis Affected You?

UCLA cityLAB wants to know!

What attracted you to co-op living?

What has been your experience living in a co-op?

 **About cityLAB**

Housed within UCLA's Department of Architecture and Urban Design, cityLAB is dedicated to studying contemporary urban issues, urban design, and especially housing in Los Angeles. To better understand the housing options available to UCLA students, we want to hear from students who are part of a cooperative living community.

If you are interested in sharing your story, please join us in the UCHA lobby on:

**AUGUST 13
4pm - 6pm**



Recreation Room



Outdoor Patio

The Co-op Model: University Cooperative Housing Association

Cooperatives offer many of the same amenities as other high-density, low-cost housing models but differ in their governance structure. In exchange for a room and meal plan, tenants work a set number of hours per week to sustain the operations of the Co-op and are typically assigned rooms based on seniority. cityLAB vi sited the University Cooperative Housing Association in Westwood to tour its main building, Hardman Hansen Hall (HHH), and speak with tenants. We coordinated the visit with Co-op resident and office manager, Jonathan Banfill, who helped circulate flyers advertising informal interviews in the main common area (Figure 6).

All of the tenants with whom we spoke cited cost as the number one reason they decided to live in the Co-op. A strong sense of community, proximity to campus, access to meals, and the ability to trade work shifts with other tenants were among their other reasons for joining. At the building we visited, singles rent for \$1,551 a quarter; doubles rent for \$1,717 a quarter; and suites and singles rent for \$1,829 a quarter. Residents pay a one-time membership fee of \$200 and a refundable security deposit of \$1,200. When compared to other housing options for UCLA students, including the low-cost 2-8s, the Co-op option is arguably the most affordable.

While Co-op living works for many of the students who live there, the lifestyle is certainly not for everyone. Some students would prefer not to work shifts or be tied to the meals at the Co-op. Several current tenants complained about general maintenance of the building, and said privacy was sometimes an issue. One interviewee mentioned the ongoing effort by the Co-op to shed its old reputation of being a "party place." Despite these criticisms, the Co-op provides a working high-density, low-cost alternative housing model, and is very much in demand; at the time of writing this report there were at least 25 people on the waitlist (Banfill, 2018).

Figure 7. Students 4 Students



Common Area



Volunteers



Bunk Room

The Bruin Shelter Model: Students 4 Students

Formerly known as Bruin Shelter, Students 4 Students (S4S) is the first shelter of its kind in the nation to exclusively serve homeless college students. The shelter was founded by Louis Tse, who was earning his doctorate in Mechanical Engineering at UCLA while living out of his car. Founded in 2016, Louis was able to leverage additional community resources to establish the shelter. He found legal assistance from Public Counsel's Community Development Project and was connected with pro bono attorneys at Latham & Watkins (Public Counsel, 2016). Folonis Architects also provided pro bono services to add extra density to the Mt. Olive Lutheran Church of Santa Monica and to secure the appropriate permitting with the Santa Monica Planning Commission. S4S is currently managed and staffed by UCLA students under the guidance and support of an Advisory Board.

The shelter run by S4S is open from September to June, and also offers housing to students from Santa Monica Community College and Loyola Marymount University. The shelter has capacity for up to 10 beds. S4S also partners with graduate students who provide case support for current tenants. Another goal of the S4S is to assist students find housing graduation as well.

The shelter's limited number of beds means that it cannot accept all students who apply. For example, several students who were not necessarily without a home but had very long commutes applied to stay at the shelter so they could have a place near campus to sleep a couple nights out of the week. S4S rejected these students because they had to prioritize students who have no housing at all. S4S is also not equipped to house students with serious mental health conditions (Talley, 2018).

S4S represents a bottom-up approach to providing high-density, low-cost housing for students. It came to fruition exactly because the university was unable to provide appropriate assistance for these students. While the university provides short-term, two-week emergency housing through its Economic Crisis Response Team, and is pursuing long-term permanent housing via apartment construction, the shelter provided by S4S provides beds for students who fall in the gap: those students who cannot afford nor wait for other housing to become available.

Analysis: Diverse Paths to Density

Students who elect to live in high-density, low-cost housing often sacrifice privacy in order to live more affordably. Alternative solutions should consider ways to accommodate individual privacy through programmatic functions like roommate screenings and flexible work programs, as well as through the design of living spaces. Issues of privacy and cost must be considered within the context of particular student groups, such as those who are undocumented. Programming, design, and outreach efforts should be tailored to these specific needs.

There is demand for Co-op style living. The Co-op waitlist and the fact that students are turned away from the S4S shelter speaks to students' desire for more housing that is more affordable than what is currently offered, has communal aspects like shared living spaces and work activities, and is dense and in close proximity to campus.

The best high-density housing options for students in terms of cost are those that were created via a bottom-up approach, with the support of the university at key points. In each of the three bottom-up cases—2-8s, the Co-op, and Students 4 Students—the university was solicited to provide some sort of support, whether it was the actual provision of units (2-8s), providing access to current students (Co-op), or staffing the advisory board with UCLA faculty (S4S). The university should not only consider what makes these approaches more affordable, but should continue to seek partnerships with ground-up efforts to create more affordable living situations.

Possible Alternatives: Redesigning High-Density

Based on our analysis of high-density, low-cost housing on campus, we present a set of possible alternatives for how to improve upon existing options and considerations for the future provision of High-Density Housing.

1. Redesign the 2-8s and associated spaces with their intense use in mind.

The 2-8s represent perhaps the greatest effort by the university to provide high-density housing at an extremely low cost. However, these standard units need to be designed more specifically for the intensified scenario of eight students living together. Redesigning spaces within as well as outside of the 2-8s could make them more effective and more attractive to students.

Custom furnishings like the dresser-desk and bunk beds currently play a major role in making the arrangement livable, but they can be better tailored to apartments. Studying how students use their limited space may also reveal further insights for design, such as a need for comparatively larger common areas within units in order to allow greater separation of sleep and study and to accommodate the schedules and habits of eight different roommates.

Outside of individual units, common areas within the building might also be reimagined. Entire units on residential floors may need to be dedicated as lounges to establish community outside of one's apartment, as kitchens to serve as a common canteen, or as studies to find a productive environment.

Conversely, the constant presence of roommates may call for small, temporary refuges throughout buildings.

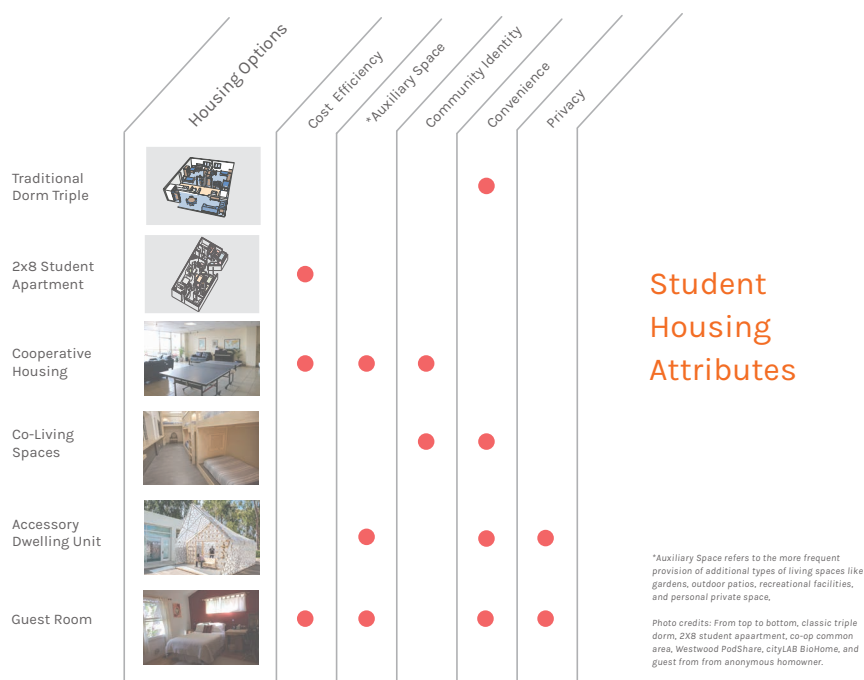
2. Create intentional communities in the programming and implementation of high-density housing.

Intentional communities, comparable to the residence hall Living Learning Communities, should be paired with any high-density housing configurations. Comprehensive roommate matchmaking and screening, or allowing groups to self-select as roommates, should be implemented as a way to pair students with compatible others and to help them feel more comfortable in close proximity with one another. This is especially true for the 2-8 option which was designed in response to the deep needs of a specific student population, one that also had a strong sense of community understanding and cohesion previously.

3. Explore creating a university-owned Co-op.

The university should further explore establishing its own Co-op. Doing so would not only provide another approach to High-Density Housing, but, by our analysis, also be a highly cost-effective one. With a model similar to the UCHA Co-op, the university could provide students another way to secure room and board through their contributions of time and work that they might not afford otherwise. Collective operations and maintenance would support the idea of creating intentional communities wherever High-Density Housing is pursued. The alternative lifestyle and sense of community could appeal to a wide range of students and circumstances that traditional residence halls do not address.

Figure 8. Housing Attributes





Super Commuters

The second critical scenario that we present involves a relatively invisible but growing population rather than a tangible design problem. Super Commuters are the product of a housing market that continues to price out Los Angeles residents who can no longer afford to live near where they work and attend school.

In many ways, the condition of Super Commuters presents a new type of housing problem brought on by the fact that while the nature of work has become increasingly digital, the majority of universities still require students to be physically present. Although the response to this phenomenon in the workforce has been a shift in the nature of work itself and a trend towards telecommuting (Miller, 2017), universities like UCLA require that students attend class regularly or suffer academic consequences, and students are often expected to be available on nights and weekends to complete group assignments. Given what little research exists on the impact of extreme commutes on college students, the majority of cityLAB's findings come from conversations with UCLA students and from data gathered about student commuters from the UCLA Transportation Department.

UCLA student commuterse at-a-glance:

- 15,000 students reside on campus and are not counted as commuters, more than 30,000 students commute from their off-campus residences each school day.
- The "drive-alone" rate for UCLA students was 25 percent (compared to 74 percent for LA County commuters).
- Over 36 percent of commuting students used alternative transportation modes (walk, bike).
- 28 percent of students commute by public transit.

The university has principally taken service measures to make students' commutes less costly, with an emphasis on students who choose public transportation. UCLA subsidizes 50 percent of the cost of a Bruin Pass for commuters who use public transportation. Students who live in neighboring cities like Culver City and Santa Monica can also purchase reduced EZ Passes. However, these subsidies do not cover MetroLink, which services regional areas including Riverside, Orange County, and the Inland Empire. Students who commute from these areas have to cover the full cost of their transit pass. Students who instead choose to drive to campus can apply for a parking permit through the transportation department, which considers the length of a student's commute. On-campus parking spaces are limited and cost \$249 per quarter.

Visualizing Super Commuters

cityLAB contacted the UCLA Transportation department to obtain any relevant data relating to student commuters and attempted to map the location of Super Commuters based on the addresses of students with parking permits. While the data we received from the transportation department was helpful in drawing an initial picture (this initial study puts the number of Super Commuters at 497), it does not capture students who commute using public transportation or vanpool services. The map below is therefore an incomplete estimate of the number of students who commute over 90 minutes to campus.

Figure 9. Origins of UCLA Super Commuters

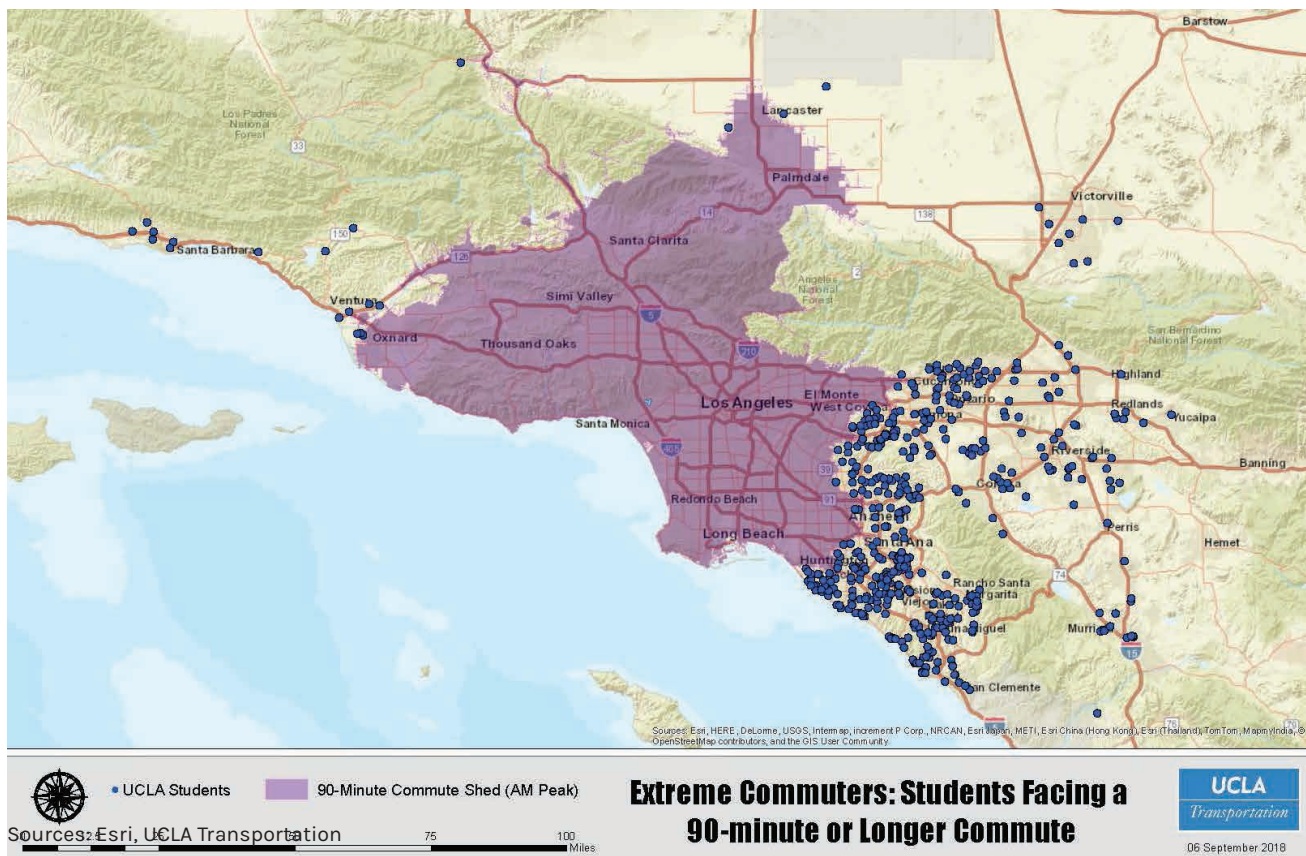
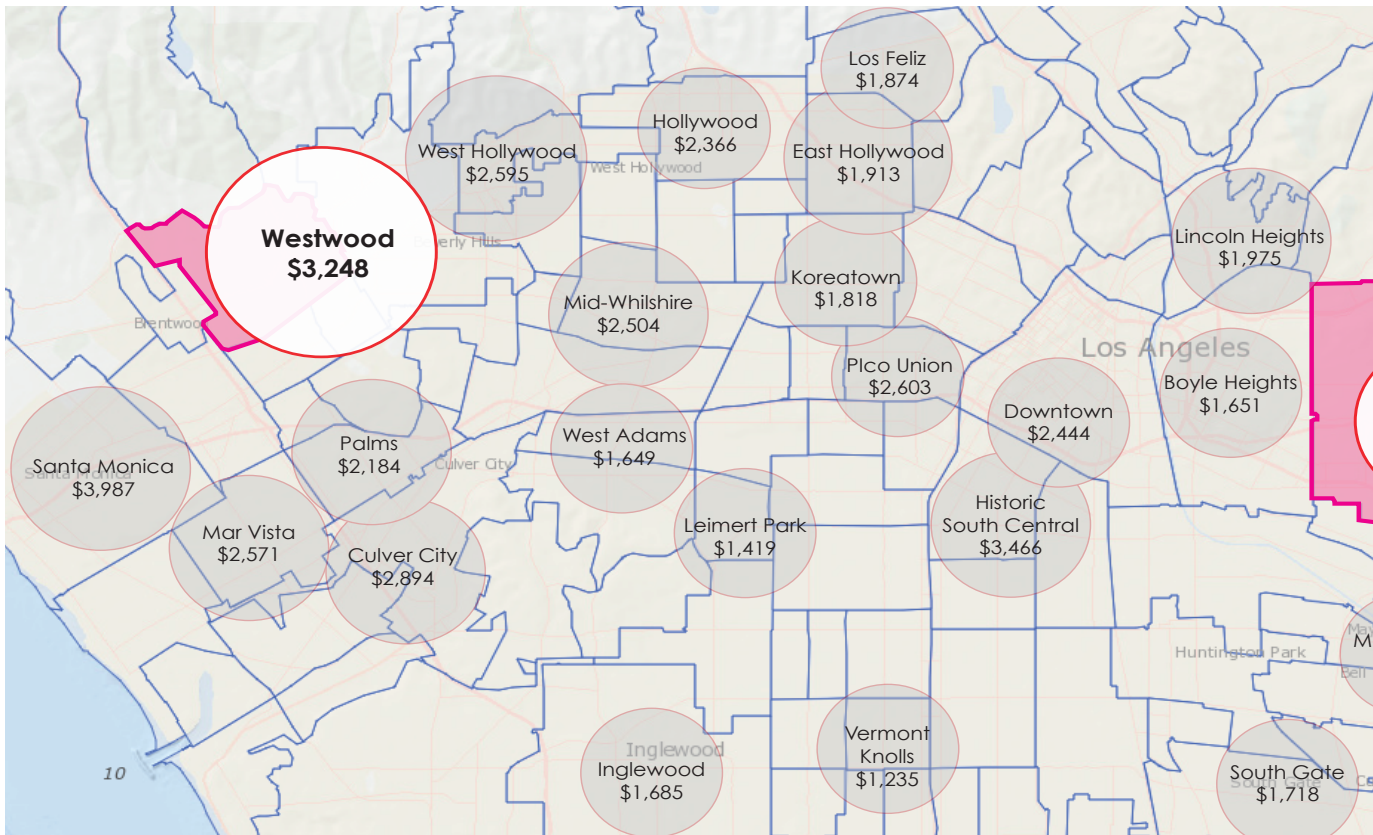


Figure 10: Average Rents by Los Angeles County Neighborhood



Sources: Rentcafe.com

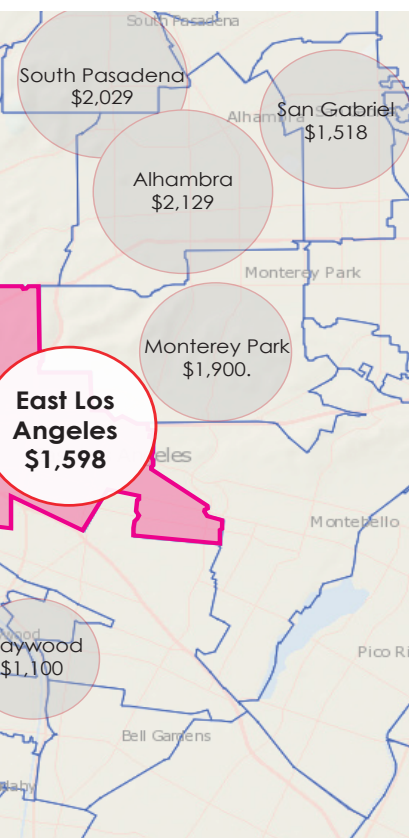
Research: Student Profiles

cityLAB consulted three Super Commuters to better understand the impact of their long-distances to campus. The following student profiles and diagrammatic drawings attempt to capture their experiences. The names of the participants have been changed to respect their privacy.

Marissa

We spoke to Marissa, a fourth-year undergraduate student. Marissa lives with her husband, sister, mother, and daughter in a three-bedroom duplex in East Los Angeles, 20 miles east of campus. She commutes to campus at least three times a week. "It's super tiring sometimes, but it's what I have to do," she told us. As an architecture major, Marissa has a mandatory studio three times a week, in addition to her other courses that are spread throughout the week. She usually drives to campus four days a week.

Marissa's commute typically takes an hour with light traffic if she leaves before 7:00 am. If she leaves her house between 7:00 am and 9:00 am, when morning traffic peaks, it will take between one and a half to two hours to get to campus. Her evening commute tends to be worse and generally takes at least two hours. By the time she gets home, Marissa usually only gets about an hour of time with her daughter before bedtime: "Spending all this time



||

Part of the problem with on-campus housing is that, even when it's affordable, there's no guarantee that you'll find something comparable once you graduate.

driving means I have less time with my kid, it means I have less time to sleep, study, and take advantage of university life." She said her academic performance has suffered as a result of her long commute.

Marissa pays \$1,900 each month in a neighborhood that is "quickly gentrifying." She described her current rent as "comfortable" and "secure" and said it would not be financially feasible for her to move closer to campus (See figure 10 for a comparison of average rents by neighborhood). "Part of the problem with on-campus housing is that, even when it's affordable, there's no guarantee that you'll find something comparable once you graduate."

When making decisions about course schedules, Marissa said the school should consider students' schedules in addition to faculty schedules. She also thinks the school could offer more upper division course options to provide students with greater flexibility. Like many other students, Marissa has slept overnight in architecture studio on occasion. She thinks students in her position would take advantage of short-stay overnight options and services such as showers.

Marissa credited the university for incentivizing public transit via subsidies and for guaranteeing parking for parents, but said more could be done to specifically help student parents who also commute long distances. She recommended the university work more with student parents to find daycare for their kids while they attend class.

Christine

Doctoral student Christine lives with her parents in Anaheim, 50 miles south of campus. Christine must wake up no later than 4:20 am to arrive at UCLA between 6:30 am and 7:00 am. "If I get out of bed after 4:20, then it's going to be a hard day," she says.

||
Sometimes
I wonder if
[moving back
to Anaheim] is
worth it.

After living in student housing and then subleasing a less expensive room in Sawtelle, she decided to move back in with her parents to save money and because she anticipated being on campus less often. That prediction turned out to be incorrect. The demands of her graduate certificate program made scheduling time on campus, particularly group projects, more difficult. Christine formerly lived in Weyburn Terrace graduate student housing but describes the neighborhood of Westwood as "pricey and boring." This feeling was amplified by the fact that she didn't have a car at the time and felt trapped on campus.

Christine now commutes to campus using a vanpool service organized by the university. The vanpool has two drivers who alternate driving to and from campus. If both drivers happen to call out sick, the vanpool does not run. The drivers are extremely punctual and are not always willing to wait if Christine is running late. She has been using the vanpool service since March 2018 and is the newest rider on the roster. She says her vanpool is particularly in-demand because it leaves much earlier to avoid traffic.

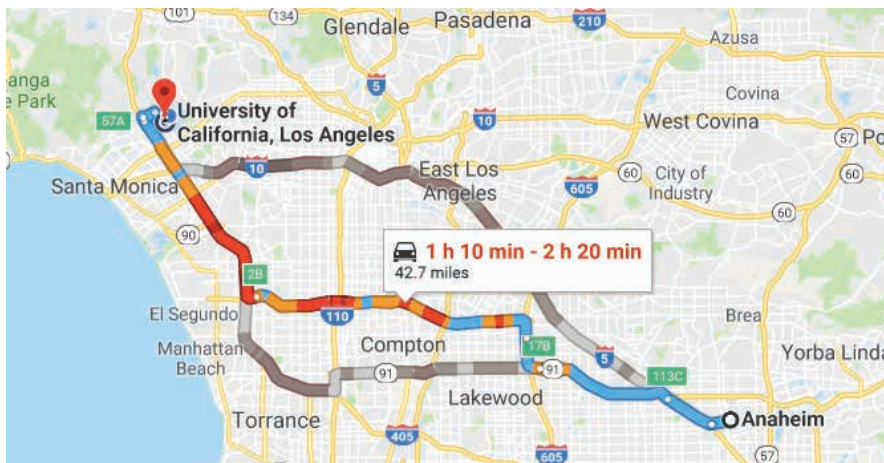
Christine pays \$161 each month, which includes gas, to maintain her spot in the vanpool. While she thinks this amount is overpriced compared to the cost of quarterly parking pass, which costs \$249 a quarter, she likes the convenience of the vanpool and the fact that she does not have to factor in the cost of gas and wear and tear to vehicle. Her spot in the vanpool may soon be in jeopardy, however, as she plans to pursue her research in the United Kingdom for a few months. She will need to continue paying the monthly fee if she wishes to keep her spot: "Sometimes I wonder if [moving back to Anaheim] is worth it."

Miguel

Graduate student Miguel has two high school aged children and lives with his wife and mother in law in a three-bedroom single family home in Perris, California. Miguel commutes to campus a minimum of three days a week and uses public transportation. He currently cannot afford to relocate his entire family. As a result, he wakes at 4:00 am on the days he needs to be campus in order to arrive around 9:30 am.

Miguel constantly feels the stress of having to commute four to six hours daily to pursue his post-graduate degree. "Imagine how much work you could get done if you could sit back and relax instead of running train to train." He tries to schedule all of his classes early in the day and on alternating days, because if he needs to be on campus two days in a row, he will have to carry an extra change of clothes and make accommodations to sleep on a

Figure 11. Christine’s Morning Commute



The above map does not factor additional time for vanpool pickups. Source: Google Maps

“ I don’t think I have felt a part of the UCLA community [because] I go to classes and have to get out of there as soon as possible to get home

friend’s couch. He avoids couchsurfing unless absolutely necessary, as he prefers not to inconvenience his reliable friend, who also has a family of his own. Consequently, Miguel feels that his academic life has suffered because his long commute reduces the amount of time he has to study and makes him feel less connected to campus life. "I don’t think I have felt a part of the UCLA community [because] I go to classes and have to get out of there as soon as possible to get home," he says.

As a Chicano studies PhD candidate, Miguel anticipates that his program will take a total of six years to complete. He looks forward to his third year of study, when he will no longer be required to take mandatory classes and will have more control over his schedule.

We asked Miguel what UCLA could do to improve life for Super Commuters like himself. He said that while accommodations like lockers and showering facilities would be helpful, making housing more affordable to students overall would be the most constructive use of university resources.

See Figure 12 on next page. The 24-Hour Cycle of a Super Commuter

Figure 12. The 24-Hour Cycle of a Super-Commuter

Timing breakdown of 24-hour cycle:

- time spent in transit: 9.5 hours
- time spent on campus: 8 hours
- time spent at home: 6.5 hours

Money spent:

- metro link: \$20/ day
- bruin pass: \$60/quarter, based on using it 3 days a week (30 days) = \$2/day
- food: \$20 - \$30/day

Spending between: \$42-\$52 per day on transit and food

Based on coming to campus 3 days a week, and assuming a mean spending of \$47 per day, Miguel will spend around \$564 per month on transit and food.

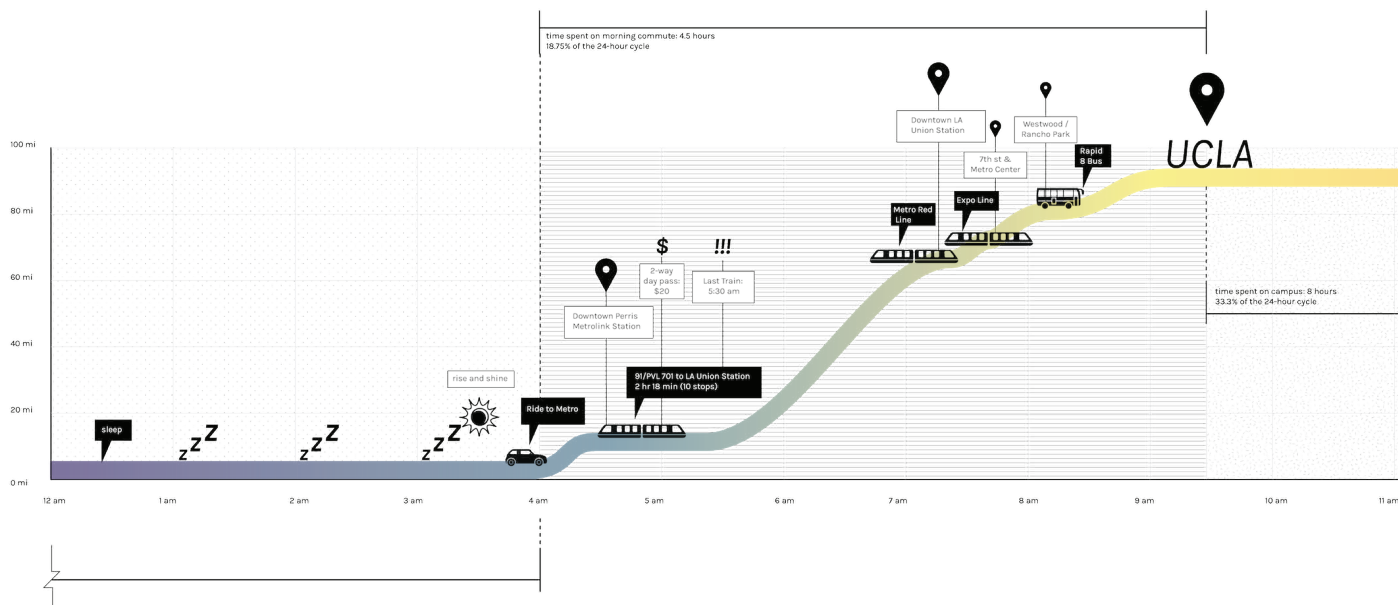
If he were visiting campus 2 days each week, he will spend around \$376 per month on transit and food.

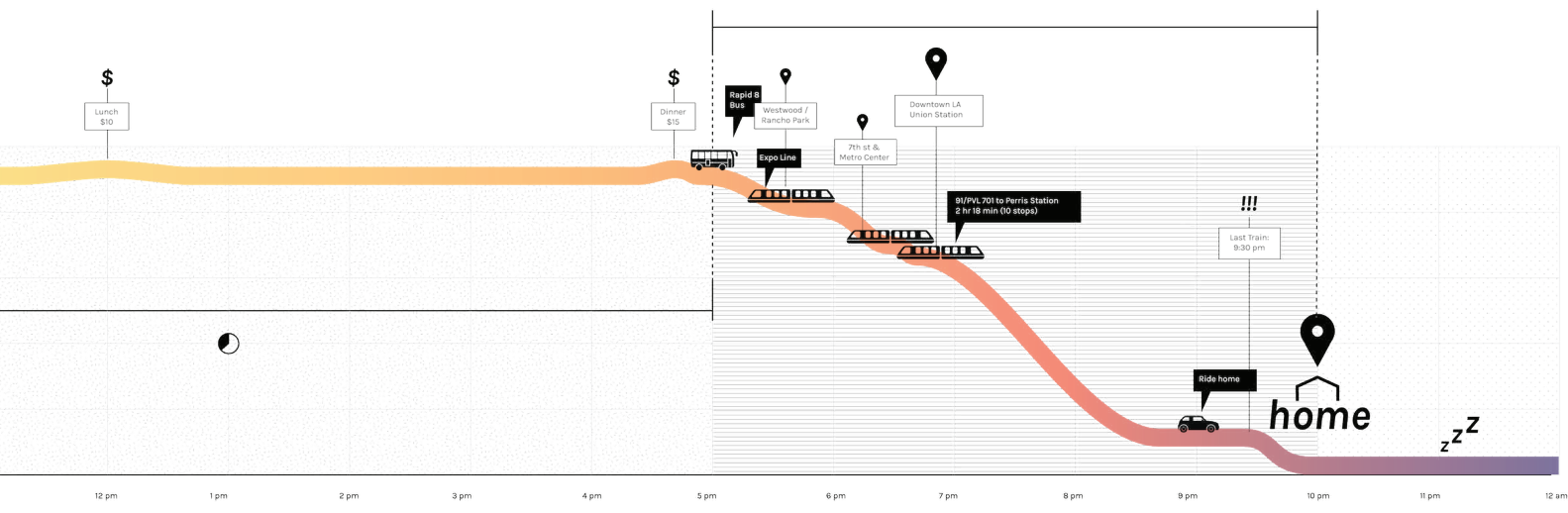
Cost of a night at podshare: \$50

Savings from not using metrolink for one commute period: \$20

Difference: \$30

Savings of hours from staying in westwood one night out of the week: ~8





remaining time spent at home (including sleep): 6 hr
25% of 24-hour cycle

Figure 13. Super Commuter Services



Charles E. Young Library photo Courtesy of UCLA Daily Bruin



Cal State

Analysis: Common Impacts

As with the High-Density Housing scenario, cost continues to be a primary determinant for Super Commuters to choose how they get to campus and where they can sleep. Whether it is preserving ownership of one's remote but affordable home, or avoiding payments on expensive rents in Westwood, reducing one's cost of living as well as saving money over the long term are primary motivations for students to commute to campus.

By choosing to commute over long periods of time to campus, students sacrifice their ability to thrive academically. Reducing the number of courses taken or showing up late to class, and sacrificing hours spent studying for exams in order to make it to school on time, are unique conditions facing Super Commuters. Students who commute long distances who are also parents, or have family members to take care of, have even more difficulty finding the time to study, much less the time to spend attending to their families.

While cost is a primary consideration for why students become super commuters, a lack of valid transportation alternatives and services is another. Subsidies for public transportation exists, as well as vanpool and car sharing, but these services are often inconvenient depending on where and how far one lives from campus. The university also offers emergency housing for up to two weeks for students who are experiencing personal and financial hardships, but this option is not intended for students who have intermittent housing needs caused by extreme commutes. In terms of services, there is very little, if any, infrastructure, such as sleeping pods, or programmatic support, such as overnight parking on campus for Super Commuters.

Possible Alternatives: Services & Short-Term Stays

As a particular subpopulation of the housing-insecure, Super Commuters at UCLA could benefit from two categories of interventions, those that provide transportation and services to improve their immediate circumstances, and those that provide options for flexible, short-term accommodations. The remedies available to Super Commuters range from temporary sleeping arrangements to conveniences like showers and storage space that reduce the impact of their commutes. Service interventions such as improved access to gym facilities, showers, and lockers build on the success established by Associated Students UCLA (ASUCLA) during a Social Justice Referendum in 2016. cityLAB predicts that the most prudent solutions going forward will be ones that combine micro design interventions with programmatic and service improvements.



UCLA Northridge Sleep Pods



credit: UCLA Transportation via Flickr

Service Interventions

Transportation Services

Like several universities throughout the country, UCLA runs its own vanpool service. While the service is available to students, the majority of riders are campus staff and availability remains very limited. For students who can manage to secure a spot in the vanpool, advantages include not having to cover gas, car maintenance, or insurance. One Super Commuter we spoke with said they enjoyed the convenience of the vanpool over driving for these reasons. The UCLA Transportation website does not list the cost of a monthly fare, presumably because fees differ depending on the distance of the commute, but Christine pays \$161 monthly to commute from Anaheim about four times a week, which is roughly \$200 more than she would pay for an quarterly parking pass. While the vanpool option offers convenience, seats are extremely limited, the majority of users are staff, and the cost could be prohibitive for some.

Micro Design Interventions

Basic services such as a convenient place to shower, easy access to lockers, 24-hour access to safe study spaces, and comfortable chairs to nap in, can make the life of a Super Commuter less uncertain, but these types of services do not offer a short-term housing solution. The University of California, Berkeley, has designated REST Zones where students can nap for up to 40 minutes and the use of laptops and phones is prohibited. The university website discourages students from monopolizing the space, stating the purpose of the rest zones is to allow students to unwind and recharge. When UCLA considered instituting its own sleep pods, it seemed to many a controversial use of university resources as it was predicted that students living in on-campus dorms might abuse the privilege. Like Berkeley's Rest Zones, the sleep pods were intended as a mental health measure, a holistic resource for students who were overworked, under-rested, and just needed a place to recharge (Rivera, 2015). If UCLA were to reconsider installing sleep pods in campus libraries, it would not be with the intention that students use the facilities overnight, despite the fact that commuter students might use the sleeping pods in this way.

Safe Parking Programs

Individuals who sleep in the cars need a safe place to park overnight. That is the logic behind Santa Barbara's 12-year old "safe parking" initiative, which takes 115 vehicles off the streets overnight and places them in designated spaces across 20 city, county, church, nonprofit-agency, and industrial lots in Santa Barbara and Goleta. The city has partnered

Figure 14. Short Stay Options



cityLAB bioHome



Westwood Podshare courtesy of Podshare Facebook



Guestroom

with New Beginnings Counseling Center, which runs the \$270,000 program and furnishes bathrooms and spot monitoring. The lots close at daybreak, sending the RV dwellers back into neighborhoods (Holland, 2016). The City of Los Angeles recently adopted its own safe place to park program that assigns parking spaces to veterans.

Super Commuters who drive to campus may occasionally sleep in their cars rather than commute back and forth to campus. The same applies to students with consistent housing need. While this sleeping arrangement is far from optimal, it can be a last resort when there are no other viable options available. The next section presents short-stay solutions that address intermittent housing need directly.

Short-Term Stays

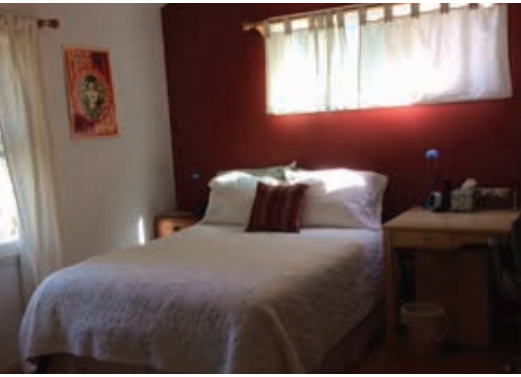
PodShare/WeLive

The private market itself is shifting to accommodate the deep need for affordability and varied options for housing. These models represent the emerging context that university-owned housing exists within, providing new possibilities but also a convergence towards the advantages the university already possesses and provides. The PodShare/WeLive model is a housing approach characterized by a sharing economy and short-term accommodations, where the flexibility and proximity of the housing makes it a convenient, lower-cost housing option.

The rising cost of housing throughout the country has led to a proliferation of co-living spaces that appeal to young professionals. The popularity of companies such as PodShare and WeLive reflect a market shift away from classic lease agreements and towards a housing model that emphasizes utility and flexibility. In contrast to dorm-style communities created by companies like Starcity in San Francisco, which caters to young professional demographics making between \$40,000 to \$90,000 a year, PodShare operates in five locations throughout Los Angeles, including Westwood, and offers room for rent starting at \$50 a night. Tenants pay reduced rents if they book by the week or month. Tenants share a kitchen, communal bathroom, and common areas and sleep in bunk beds that are four people to a room. The simple accommodations do not offer much in the way of privacy but do have ample work space. The flexibility of co-living might appeal to Super Commuters that only require a place to sleep a few times per week, but the price could be cost prohibitive for some.

Student Hostels

California State University, Chico offers hotel vouchers to students experiencing housing



for rent courtesy anonymous homeowner

emergencies, while UCLA offers emergency housing for up to two weeks. While co-living and PodShare housing models can also accommodate short-term stays, these market rate options can be less affordable for students who need intermittent housing on a weekly basis. The student hostel alternative that we propose differs from both of these options because eligibility would be based on class scheduling and commute time rather than sudden financial hardship. Student hostels can be partnered with existing residential buildings such as dorms, local hotels and motel, and Co-ops, to give students the ability to rent a vacant room a few times a week at a highly discounted rate.

Expanding on the above housing alternative, the following solutions might potentially address the need for high-density and deeply affordable housing as well as satisfy the need for short-stay housing for Super Commuters.

Community Housing and Home Shares

In response to the housing crisis nationwide, several universities have turned to private home shares and room rentals to meet student need. While home shares are a useful means to moderately increase density, they serve better as a resource for students with immediate housing needs, such as those on the brink of homelessness or those with intermittent housing need such as Super Commuters.

The idea behind home host programs on other campuses is that elderly homeowners, or "empty-nesters," benefit from having a roommate that can offer companionships and assist with household chores, while students benefit from living in a secure home environment. The empty nesters that reside in UCLA-adjacent Holmby Hills could potentially benefit from a similar arrangement. cityLAB spoke with several homeowners to gauge their interest and willingness to host students with intermittent housing need versus students with consistent housing need. We received a broad range of responses, but determined that certain incentives, particularly a tax incentive, might motivate these homeowners to house a student in need (Anonymous Homeowners, 2018).

Accessory Dwelling Units

Accessory Dwelling Units, also called granny flats and backyard units, are a means for homeowners to generate added income and add moderate density to areas zoned single-family. cityLAB director, Dana Cuff, and cityLAB fellow, Jane Blumenfeld, co-authored Assembly Bill 2299 for Assemblyman Richard Bloom, which authorizes accessory dwelling units in California. Adding ADUs to one's property is now more convenient than ever, and the City of Los Angeles even offers incentives to homeowners who rent these units to veterans and the homeless. ADUs can also be a viable option to accommodate students with intermittent housing need, and are potentially less intrusive to the homeowners because they offer separate access, private bathrooms, and private kitchens.

Conclusion

The research that cityLAB presents in this report is an initial step towards understanding the scope of student housing insecurity on the UCLA campus. In both instances, alternative solutions that combine micro design interventions with programmatic and service changes offer holistic solutions to the specific challenges that students face. cityLAB is prepared to bring its design expertise to bear on these issues, but we need the programmatic support of the Student Affairs Department and other campus entities to help inform best practices for the university. We conclude this report with a summary of our recommendations, which are divided into two sections: the first are "Next Steps" that cityLAB stands ready to lead and undertake if given the support of the university; the second are "Broader Recommendations" that the university should consider and that will require large-scale collaboration to explore and implement.

Next Steps & Short-Term Recommendations

We recommend a set of short-term recommendations to address the gaps in the existing provision of housing options for students. Micro design and programmatic interventions can improve the quality and appeal of existing High-Density Housing, such as the low-cost two-bedroom, eight-person apartments. Micro interventions can also ameliorate the hardship faced by Super Commuters by providing services like lockers and showers, sleeping pods in the library, or a safe place to sleep in one's car overnight. cityLAB's expertise lies in its ability to create large-scale change through small-scale interventions that are replicable and testable. With the support of our campus partners, we stand poised and ready to implement the following three short-term recommendations over the next twelve months.

- 1. Data Collection: Convene focus groups of housing-insecure students to better understand their needs and evaluate the appeal of shorty-stay and long-term housing alternatives.**

Focus groups paired with a potential survey instrument can both help us learn more about the specific needs of housing-insecure students as well as determine which combination of design intervention and programming that we identify in our research appeal to students with intermittent and consistent housing need. For example, what types of micro design interventions to the 2-8 housing model would convince students who might otherwise live in more expensive on-campus apartments to choose this high-density alternative? Likewise, would a focus group made up of Super Commuters be interested in short-stay housing solutions like home shares and private room rentals, or would they prefer services such as campus storage and sleeping pods? The answer to these questions will help cityLAB narrow its focus to housing alternatives that best meet the needs of Super Commuters and students with consistent housing need.

2. Acquire and analyze quantitative data on Super Commuters to address intermittent housing need at the appropriate scale.

A campus-wide survey to determine the number of Super Commuters as a percentage of the entire student body is a key step towards addressing the intermittent housing needs of this demographic. The map that cityLAB produced to show the number of student drivers who commute more than 90 minutes to and from school could be improved by more accurate survey data and by enlisting a technology services expert to create a more precise 90-minute commuter boundary. cityLAB can partner with UCLA Transportation to administer a campus-wide survey to all undergraduate and graduate students in order to get a more accurate sense of the percentage of students who commute using both public and private transportation. Even if only 10 percent of students responded to the survey, the data could be used to form an estimate of the number of students with transit-induced housing need. An accurate estimate is needed to determine which short-stay housing alternatives would be most appropriate for the university.

3. Prototype upgrades and micro-interventions to existing spaces and programs.

The redesigning of existing high-density housing options takes as its primary object the following: quantity, affordability, and privacy/comfort. To achieve this set of conditions, we consider design, programming, and services. Programmatic changes include creating intentional communities such as the existing Living Learning Communities, which should be paired with any new high-density housing configurations. This is especially true for the 2-8 option, which was designed in response to the needs of specific student population. Comprehensive roommate matchmaking or screening should be implemented as a way to pair students with compatible roommates and feel more comfortable at home.

We also recommend redesigning the 2-8 spaces. Micro design interventions within the existing 2-8 configurations could drastically improve the quality of life within them. For example, the redesign of room furniture and furnishings within units would not only create more comfortable living arrangements, but also help students be more productive working at home. Redesign of shared spaces within the 2-8s could make more efficient use of such spaces as the living room, restrooms, and storage units, making it easier and more desirable to spend time within these spaces.



Long-Term Recommendations

Our long-term recommendations for the university fall into three categories. First, there is an urgent need for better data collection to measure housing insecurity among students and a need to establish more accurate cost-of-living metrics. Collecting this data will require statistical and survey expertise with long-term research investment, yet it will ultimately help the university make better policies to assist ill-housed students and its own challenges.

Second, there is a need to think creatively about how the university develops its housing and real estate resources. The range of scenarios faced by students demonstrate a need to create a variety of low-cost housing options, especially those who may have unconventional needs, such as a bed to sleep in only a few nights of the week. Creative approaches to student housing might include drawing upon resources in the greater Westwood community and nearby areas as well.

Finally, the university can foster a proactive and supportive campus climate regarding the housing insecurity affecting its students. It should work towards destigmatizing students faced with this hardship while striving for academic achievement, support student-led initiatives where it can, and provide space for affected students to be heard by both their peers and university administrators. Our long-term recommendations are:

- 1. Support bottom-up, student-led solutions for their housing needs.**

The ongoing legacy of Pamilya House in the university's 2-8 model, and the continuing work of Students 4 Students demonstrates that students are using an entrepreneurial spirit to address their needs even as the university attempts to fill gaps in securing housing. Students are able to move quickly to leverage resources and social capital in ways that the university may not be able to, therefore supporting their efforts is crucial to their success and sense of self-empowerment.

- 2. Design and administer a basic needs questionnaire that accurately measures housing insecurity.**

The University of California Global Food Initiative released a 2017 Basic Needs Report to identify the scope of food and housing insecurity on UC campuses. The majority of the report focuses on food insecurity and measures that UC schools have undertaken to alleviate hunger through food pantries and food vouchers. By the UC administration's own admission, there is an apparent lack of data regarding students who suffer from housing insecurity. The report reads: "UC intends to improve upon this preliminary finding with additional research, including using housing-related questions that have been validated to accurately measure housing security." It is our hope that cityLAB's research into intermittent and consistent housing need can help inform the metrics for this questionnaire.

3. Engage in further research to develop updated cost of living metrics.


One way to more accurately assess students' ability to afford university housing options would be to develop new metrics of affordability for students. This would provide an alternative to using the market rate as the baseline from which to make decisions about on and off-campus housing fees, and would clarify what "affordable" truly means for students. Doing so would require a broad survey and would benefit from a third-party administrator. The survey could be incorporated into the aforementioned basic needs questionnaire.

4. Host an event to destigmatize and raise awareness of students with housing need.

cityLAB met with two members of the Underground Scholars student group to discuss the extent to which housing insecurity affects students who have been formerly incarcerated. The conversation revealed that while several members of Underground Scholars are experiencing housing insecurity, it is not a topic that the group regularly discusses. The students we spoke with suggested that cityLAB organize an event to raise awareness of housing insecurity on campus. They suggested that we invite members of Underground Scholars and other partnering student groups to speak on a panel and candidly discuss how intermittent and consistent housing insecurity impacts their lives. In addition to gathering quantitative and qualitative data on the scope of housing need, cityLAB believes that it is equally critical to undertake efforts to dismantle the stigma associated with housing insecurity.

5. Reinstitute the Community Housing Office and engage community resources.

A university-operated website that connects students to renters can act as a screening tool and make homeowners who are considering opening their homes to students feel more secure. cityLAB spoke with several local homeowners who indicated they would only feel comfortable renting to a student if the university, or someone affiliated with the university, acted as an intermediary. They would not feel comfortable advertising on an open portal such as Craigslist. One of the homeowners who currently rents a room to a UCLA undergraduate student said they approached several professors at UCLA to inquire whether they knew any students in need of housing. University affiliation made the homeowners feel more secure and gave them the impression that the students had been properly screened. UCLA recently discontinued its decades-old Community Housing Office due to lack of funds. UCLA should look at other on-campus offices that might



be better suited to maintain these online listings, such as the Transfer Resource Center, which shares office space with the Veterans Resource Office in Kerckhoff Hall.

6. Investigate creative models for housing and real estate development.

Our findings show that there are possibilities in creative approaches to housing and real estate development by the university that would address the needs identified in the two critical housing scenarios of High-Density and for Super Commuters. These approaches provide an approach to density that expands the traditional notions of on-campus living lifestyles, and create greater options for those facing complex circumstances and housing insecurity.

The current report is a necessary yet preliminary step in understanding and addressing the full spectrum of housing insecurity for students at UCLA. While cityLAB has focused on two critical housing scenarios through its research, they demonstrate the complexity of establishing a residential campus and learning community that prepares a diverse body of students for academic success. Throughout our work, we recognize the initiative taken by the university, gaps and barriers that remain for students, and opportunities for further action. Caring for the needs of the campus and its broader community is a mission-critical agenda for the public university. cityLAB stands ready to continue its work and its collaboration with university partners on this important issue.

Conclusion

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