



Housing Continuum  
in the Gateway

less than **30%**  
**AMI**

This project serves the  
needs of residents in the  
Extremely Low Income  
(ELI) category.

## Connecting Housing and Public Transit

### Long Beach Transit Oriented Development

#### Key Stakeholders

- City of Long Beach
- Architect: Studio One Eleven
- Developer: Meta Housing Corporation

#### Project Timeline

Multi-Year Development,  
from Schematic Design  
through Construction,  
opened in 2012.

#### Project Budget

\$32,246,865

### Project Background

Located at Long Beach and Anaheim streets, the Long Beach Senior Arts Colony is an affordable senior community which catalyzed the surrounding neighborhood revitalization. The Senior Arts Colony (SAC) is a 161-unit senior **affordable housing** community which marks the northern gateway into downtown Long Beach. Considered a **Transit Oriented Development**, the project is located adjacent to light rail and bus transit stops that provide access to educational, medical, retail and employment centers.

Part of a transit-oriented master planned development, this thirty-nine unit very affordable housing project is the first phase of a mixed use, mixed-income, multi-generational development. Located in a pedestrian-active, dense, multifamily neighborhood, the ground and second floor parking is lined with amenity spaces along the sidewalks in order to create a lively and inviting storefront.

### Objectives/Goals

The design was meant to create a community conducive to “healthy aging” emphasizing creativity, wellness, lifelong learning, and independence. The space is intended to provide residents with means to recreate in a meaningful way. The resulting design, amenities, and programs of the SAC are geared toward active, income-qualified seniors aged 55 years and over with a passion for the arts.

#### Key Terms:

**Affordable Housing** – In the United States, “affordable housing” refers to housing, rent or a mortgage plus utility payments, totaling 30% or less of a household’s gross income. Affordable housing developments are often subject to a covenants or deed restrictions that preserve the property as affordable by creating rent limits and qualifying standards for residents, and restrictions on selling the property.

**Transit Oriented Development (TOD)** - urban development that maximizes the amount of residential, business and leisure space within walking distance of public transport

## Challenges

**Overview:** The Long Beach Senior Arts Colony sought to improve pedestrian activity and support public transit while providing high quality affordable housing to its community.

1

**Funding:** Securing funding for this project presented challenges for successful completion.

2

**Underutilized Transportation:** Existing public transportation opportunities in the city were not being taken advantage of to their fullest potentials.

3

**Controlling Costs:** The project needed to reduce construction costs to meet the budget.

## Solutions

**Overview:** Making the most of available funding to focus on ground floor solutions promoted greater overall walkability and public transportation use.

1

**Grants and Funds:** Transportation Grants and Funds were specifically leveraged to facilitate infill and infrastructure improvements around the site. The financial structure of the Long Beach Senior Arts Colony is complex and includes the following commitments from public and private sources:

- Long Beach Housing Development Company
- Housing and Community Development – Transit Oriented Development Program
- Housing and Community Development – Infill Infrastructure Grant Program
- Federal Home Loan Bank – Affordable Housing Program
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program – 9% Tax Credits (Phase Ib)
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program – 4% Tax Credits (Phase Ia)
- California Debt Limit Allocation Committee – 4% Tax Exempt Bonds
- Private Equity Investment
- Wells Fargo Bank

2

**Ground Floor Activation:** Ground floors and stairs were designed to promote a healthy lifestyle and active transportation usage by encouraging pedestrian activity. The housing incentivized density thus feeding public transportation use.

3

**Creative Parking:** Eliminating parking below ground reduced construction costs. Additional cost savings were realized by minimizing on-site parking due to the project's proximity to transit and surrounding amenities. Parking requirements were reduced to 1.1 stalls per unit, including guest parking, through negotiation with the City. With the project now fully occupied, only 55% of the stalls constructed are currently being utilized. All parking is carefully concealed from public view by storefronts and amenity spaces that display active uses at the ground and mezzanine levels.





## Results

Following completion, the SAC has become a catalyst for revitalizing the surrounding neighborhood. Several market-rate, mixed-use projects have begun construction nearby and the City has released a program to assist in renovating neighboring commercial storefronts. In addition, SAC residents have become community stakeholders, successfully petitioning the City to improve a park one block away.

The project managed to reduce parking requirements through state, local and federal guidelines. It also prioritized the provision of ample bicycle parking and bike kitchen to support first/last mile.

**100%**  
**OCCUPIED**

With a Waiting List

**5+**

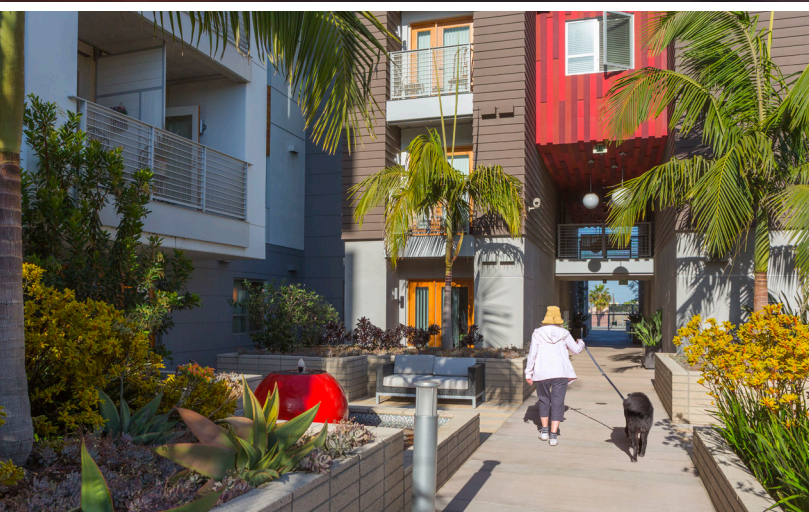
Adjacent New  
Developments

**200+**

New Neighborhood  
Residents







## Key Takeaways

With 200 new residents in the neighborhood, the Long Beach Police Department increased surveillance to the area and reported a reduction in crime.

The community was heralded in a local news article as contemporary, cool, vibrant, and artistic, providing an example of how affordable housing can add to the charm of a community. Inspired by its proximity to the beach the design employs playfully painted siding, large balconies, and a tower element inspired by lifeguard stations.

The ground floor has exposed burnished block for durability with anti-graffiti protection sealer. If the block were to be “tagged” it can be easily removed.

Building amenities include a community room, computer lab, convenient bicycle storage, barbecue area, and raised garden to grow vegetables and flowers. The creation of a variety of community building spaces such as these encouraged ground floor invigoration, ultimately leading to an improved use of existing public transportation in the city.

This development can serve as an example to cities with similarly underused transportation infrastructures. By providing inviting spaces through revitalization projects such as the Long Beach Senior Arts Colony, community members are more inclined to make the most of existing services.

The neighborhood has a walk score of 92 and a transit score of 70. The building owners frequently report inquiries from senior renters unaware of the building’s affordable status.