

Developing Standards: The Role of Community Benefits Agreements in Enhancing Job Quality

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This paper contributes to the nascent literature on the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), a contractual agreement between a community coalition and developer that specifies labor and employment standards for a proposed development project. The study presents three case studies on the "California model" of the CBA, emphasizing the conflicts that can arise between CBA coalitions and oppositional forces and how these tensions affect organizing strategies and outcomes of community benefits campaigns.

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Labor and community activists have long been concerned with the rise of the U.S. service economy and its implications for inner-city residents. On the one hand, the expansion of service sector jobs in the urban core creates employment opportunities for individuals with low levels of education and limited work experience. Still, depending on the type of employment being offered, inner-city residents can find themselves trapped in low-paying dead-end jobs, which, in turn, can compound other sources of urban economic inequality and disparity. The renewed emphasis on urban services and amenities designed to attract and retain 'creative talent,' seen in the proliferation of up-market downtown redevelopment projects, has only increased the chances of growing socioeconomic polarization between employees at these facilities and the users or consumers of these services (Stolarick, 2003; Florida, 2005; Peck, 2005; Donegan & Lowe, 2008).

But does the expansion of an urban service economy, and the related emphasis on downtown revitalization, need to come at the expense of inner-city workers and neighborhoods? Short of promoting alternative types of urban employment, such as light manufacturing or an expanded public sector, are there strategies for influencing the employment practices of service providers in ways that result in lasting, improved local

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job opportunities and (de facto) labor standards? And if so, what are the processes through which this can be achieved and sustained?

Motivated by these questions, activists and development practitioners have supported a number of innovative job creation and career development initiatives in recent years. Early efforts focused on more standard human capital goals and, specifically, training provisions targeting inner-city workers with the goal of preparing them for alternative, higher-paying service sector employment in financial or information technology customer relations (Chapple & Zook, 2002; Melendez, 2004). Others have expanded beyond vocational training support to create workforce partnerships between community-based organizations and business establishments. These partnerships not only increase the supply of qualified inner-city workers but also employer awareness of and demand for this workforce (Giloith, 1998; Lautsch & Osterman, 1998). In addition to working with prominent retailers and hospitality chains, these partnerships have targeted key institutional employers, such as health care and educational service providers. Often these arrangements are institutionalized through local hiring agreements that target inner-city populations (Schweke, 1999).

The most recent contribution to these initiatives seeks to link inner-city job creation goals to the development planning process itself. Driven by social justice concerns, these efforts enable progressive community coalitions to insert themselves into the planning process in order to shape the types of business establishments that develop and lease space in new or upgraded retail and commercial developments. At the center of this effort is the Community Benefit Agreement, a contractual agreement between a community coalition and commercial developer that specifies labor and employment standards for the project. Through this agreement, a commercial developer typically agrees to local hiring and wage-setting goals and uses their influence to also shape employment strategies of building contractors and retail and commercial tenants. Using public subsidies as a source of leverage, the Community Benefits Agreement helps ensure urban development projects result in greater income and employment security for traditionally underserved urban populations.

This paper contributes both to the nascent literature on the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) and to the literature on infrastructure planning. The research presents three brief case studies on the “California model” of the CBA, investigating proponents’ strategies and responses (or lack thereof) to significant opposition. Existing research on the CBA movement has focused on its role in engendering community empowerment through public participation (Baxamusa, 2008), as well as its conceptual linkage to established social justice initiatives, namely living wage campaigns (Saito, 2007). This study places greater emphasis on conflicts that can arise between CBA coalitions and oppositional forces and how these tensions affect organizing strategies and outcomes of community benefits campaigns. This paper develops a modest hypothesis about the implications of such conflict for the types of development that should be prioritized through a CBA campaign.

Three CBA case studies are presented in detail and were chosen because of their impact on local hiring and wage-setting decisions. These cases are all California-based and reflect the pioneering role of California organizations in the CBA movement. The goal in presenting these cases is not only to identify the common attributes that contribute to campaign success, but also to illustrate important differences which demonstrate the versatility of this strategy for different political and institutional climates. After describing the research design, summarizing the state of the practice for CBAs, and presenting the case studies, the paper will turn to an examination of the exigencies of the conflicts that developed in the campaigns and their implications for expanded use of CBAs.

Research Design

The materials for case studies were obtained using a multipart search strategy involving secondary materials, Internet search, Lexis-Nexis, and interviews with principals in CBA campaigns. The search for CBA agreements began in mid-2006 with the Community Benefits Agreement handbook published by Good Jobs First and the California Partnership for Working Families (Gross, 2005) and the CBA issue brief published by the Neighborhood Funders Group (LeRoy & Purinton, 2005). The Internet and Lexis-Nexis were also used to search for additional agreements. From the first Internet search, over 300 hits were obtained and examined. This search identified 16 signed and executed CBAs as of July 2006.¹ Additional CBAs have been approved since the initial search and, although not discussed here, the increase in agreements is a signal of the strategy's viability.

The next step included the completion of in-depth case studies of executed CBAs. Case study material was gathered from secondary sources, media accounts, legal documents, and through structured interviews with individuals who were active in the studied CBA campaigns. These case studies enabled the identification of the coalition members involved in the campaigns and their strategies for negotiating with key stakeholders, including developers and elected officials. The case studies were also designed to identify sticking points in the CBA campaign that resulted from tensions between coalition members and other interest groups.

Three CBA case studies are presented in detail in this paper and were chosen using the following criteria. First, only cases involving a CBA campaign that resulted in local hiring goals and living wage standards at retail or hospitality establishments were selected. Several successful CBA campaigns have targeted residential developments with the goal of increasing the share of affordable housing units. While these campaigns are important and typically result in local hiring and improved wage-setting standards for project construction work, they generate limited post-construction employment opportunities. As a result, only case studies involving commercial and mixed-use developments were chosen for inclusion. Second, cases that were distinct enough in campaign strategy and context to generate lessons for future CBA campaigns were chosen for the study. With this in mind, one case involving a public-sector developer is included. This allowed the researchers to demonstrate the role community benefits agreements play in augmenting conventional environmental assessment and mitigation phases of regional infrastructure developments. Finally, on a practical level, cases were selected that were well documented in the press and through scholarly writings, or that could be substantiated and clarified through accounts and interviews.

Community Benefits Agreements: State of the Practice

Community Benefits Agreements are legally-enforceable contracts between a private or public-sector developer² and a community coalition—usually made up of local non-profit organizations—that explicitly provide the developer, the nonprofits and their constituents, and the population at large with goods and services of direct and indirect value. The agreements typically obligate the developer to pay living wages and, in many cases, to establish 'first source' hiring and living wage goals for tenants and contract employers. They may also establish standards for health insurance coverage for low-income workers. In addition, CBAs are being used to increase the supply of affordable housing and to give the working poor access to key services that can improve their livelihoods through housing upgrades, subsidized parking, and even free membership at bulk/discount food stores. In exchange, developers typically receive the support of the community coalition when negotiating with elected officials and city planning agencies. In most cases, coalition support helps to expedite the development planning process.

CBAs belong to a larger family of development agreements designed to address local and regional socioeconomic concerns. Unions, for example, have long supported project labor agreements which commit the developer qua employer to hire all or almost all construction workers from designated union hiring halls and to pay specified wages and benefits (Siegel, 2001). Elected officials, for their part, also use Development Agreements (DAs) to guide the development planning process. City- or county-backed DAs essentially “freez[e] the existing zoning regulations applicable to a property in exchange for [developer financed] public benefits,” such as roads, sewers, schools, public parks, and open space (Schwartz, 2001, p. 720).

Given the availability of those other approaches to influencing development, why is a growing number of community coalitions promoting Community Benefits Agreements? CBAs are coalition-driven rather than labor-driven and therefore create opportunities for other types of organizations, in addition to pro-labor interests, to participate in the local planning process. While most CBAs do have strong support from a union labor council, their promotion by other partner organizations helps to broaden the definition of public accountability. As a result, locally-driven concerns, such as affordable housing, subsidized transportation and childcare, improved (post-construction) job opportunities, and small business assistance, often get added to the primary list of local demands, rather than being tacked on as secondary concerns. Therefore, given the broad-based nature of most CBA-supporting coalitions, agreements of this type are often designed to address a wider set of concerns for low-to-moderate income families, compared to more narrowly defined project labor agreements. Equally important, CBA campaigns create an alternative channel for community organizing in regions, especially the U.S. South, that have limited union representation and power.

As indicated above, city- and county-based development agreements can also be inclusionary in their initial design. This results when elected officials are willing to enter into negotiations with a developer on behalf of more marginalized socioeconomic groups. In cases where this does not occur, the CBA enables coalition members to influence the planning processes and negotiate directly with real estate developers and their prospective tenants. At the same time, a CBA campaign allows community coalitions to ‘educate’ elected officials—and, for that matter, the general public—about the pressing needs of low-income residents and working families.

Interestingly, several CBA campaigns have resulted in traditional development agreements or hybrid CBA-DAs, due in part to initial developer resistance (see CIM Project CBA case below). As one example, the Oak-to-Ninth CBA campaign in Oakland, California resulted in both a CBA that influenced the hiring and employment practices of the project developer and a city-backed DA that establishing affordable housing goals for the proposed residential development. While additional research is needed to understand the conditions under which proposed CBAs take on a more traditional DA format, it is important to recognize that these cases are viewed as local successes because they often result in widening city support and recognition for the CBA coalition and its broader economic justice mission. Member organizations, in turn, use their resources and regional networks to monitor exchanges between the developer and elected officials and use public and political events to enforce (and also praise) the move towards labor and housing standards compliance.

Hollywood & Highland, Los Angeles

By most accounts, the Hollywood and Highland CBA is considered to be the nation’s first. Executed in 1998, the agreement shaped the employment practices of prominent retail and entertainment-oriented tenants in a large-scale commercial development designed to

revitalize a world-renowned yet considerably dilapidated tourist destination in East Los Angeles. Valued at over \$600 million, the development included a new hotel, a Hollywood-themed mall for high-end retail, and a new multimillion dollar theater created to host the Academy Awards and other high profile media events.

The CBA was promoted by a diverse coalition of labor unions and community- and faith-based organizations. A key leadership role, however, was played by Los Angeles City Councilor, Jackie Goldberg. While active participation by an elected official distinguishes this CBA from the other cases in this paper, Goldberg's early involvement ultimately helped to increase the visibility of the CBA model and establish it as a legitimate tool for locally accountable development planning. In turn, the CBA model would eventually be adopted by other community coalitions as a means to hold city officials and agencies—and not just private developers—accountable to similar development standards. One example of the use of a coalition-backed CBA to promote greater public accountability involves the Los Angeles International Airport expansion, which is examined below.

Related to this, Goldberg, with coalition support, initially devised the Hollywood and Highland CBA as a mechanism for effectively broadening the scope of the City of Los Angeles' living wage ordinance. Until that time, the ordinance had been narrowly applied to government contractors and it was, furthermore, at considerable risk of being weakened (Goldin, 1998). Goldberg sought to use the CBA to strengthen the City's living wage ordinance through expanding the coverage of private sector employers and also by establishing targeted hiring goals to improve the employment opportunities of traditionally underserved Hollywood residents. In addition to this community development function, Goldberg embraced the CBA as a tool for economic revitalization and for attracting private investment to her impoverished district.

A key factor in the agreement's success was Goldberg's strong influence over the development approval process itself and her related role in securing public financing. Under the City's project approval process, a decisive voice in project approval is given to the local Council Member in whose district the proposed development would be built. As the ultimate gatekeeper for the Hollywood and Highland project, Goldberg was therefore able to exercise an unusual amount of political pressure on the developer to ensure that local labor standards and hiring goals were given serious consideration (Meyerson, 2006). Secondly, given the project's location in a designated redevelopment area, Goldberg was able to work closely with the City's Community Redevelopment Agency to secure \$90 million in property tax abatements, public subsidies, and other direct investments. For the developer, these incentives improved the financial feasibility of the project to the point that it could consider specific wage-setting goals laid down by Goldberg and other coalition members (Meyerson, 2006). Goldberg was able to use her political position not only to achieve particular economic development goals but also to establish clear requirements for how public incentives would be allocated and spent.

The outcome of this negotiated process was a legally binding contract between the coalition and the developer that established clear project-specific employment standards. The developer, San-Diego based TrizecHahn, agreed to pay living wages to its direct employees, including parking attendants, janitors, security guards, and landscapers. As part of the CBA's first-source hiring goals, TrizecHahn also agreed to recruit its direct employees from specified Hollywood zip codes. Moreover, the agreement resulted in a sizeable financial commitment by the developer to provide job training and career ladder support for these local hires.

Still, coverage was not limited to only TrizecHahn employees. "In an even stronger measure, the developer also agreed to favor the lease applications of prospective retail tenants who pledged to provide their sales clerks and other employees with health insurance and a

living wage” (Meyerson, 2006). Similar considerations were also made by TrizecHahn in awarding construction contracts. As one example of its influence on employment practices in the service sector, the CBA outlined wage standards for the development’s new hotel that were in line with established union contracts at neighboring establishments. Workers at the new boutique facility would eventually vote to institutionalize these standards through formal union affiliation. Union wage standards were also extended to employees of the development’s Kodak Theater and received strong support from key stakeholders in the project. As Goldberg noted, “nobody wanted a strike before an (Academy) awards show” (Meyerson, 2006).

When negotiations concluded in 1998, TrizecHahn had agreed to virtually all of the coalition’s employment-related demands, which included the promotion of tenant agreements. This would generate over 2,000 living-wage jobs. As a result, “working-class Hollywood would have a direct share in Hollywood’s revival” (Meyerson, 2006).

CIM Project CBA, San Jose, California³

As the previous case study illustrates, Los Angeles has been an important site for CBA development. In addition to their involvement in the Hollywood and Highland project and LAX expansion (presented below), community coalitions throughout the ‘City of Angels’ have helped negotiate numerous, successful CBAs, including ones involving the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District, Marlon Square Development, North Hollywood Commons, and the Hollywood and Vine project (Gross et al., 2005; Meyerson, 2006). Los Angeles now has the largest concentration of active CBAs of any single municipality in the United States. Building on the early success of the Hollywood and Highland CBA, most Los Angeles-based agreements include first source hiring goals and living wage stipulations, in addition to other project specific income supports such as subsidized parking for local residents, job-related transit assistance, childcare, and affordable housing.

The Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) has been an active partner in most of these campaigns, providing coalition members with research on local economic and labor market conditions, as well as strategic planning and community organizing assistance. LAANE’s influence on the CBA development process, however, has not been isolated to Southern California. In 2002, LAANE began working with similar organizations throughout California and in other states with the goal of using public development subsidies as leverage for improving job quality and labor market access for low income residents. One such organization, Working Partnerships USA, is based in downtown San Jose and was instrumental in launching Silicon Valley’s first community benefits campaign in 2002. LAANE provided technical assistance on the campaign and information on the developer.

The San Jose campaign focused on a \$140 million dollar downtown urban infill project financed by California developer CIM Group Incorporated. Several factors help to distinguish this campaign from its Los Angeles counterparts and are worth emphasizing given the importance of place-based and contextual differences. For starters, the community coalition forged by Working Partnerships USA in response to CIM involved both traditional and nontraditional allies. As with most community benefits campaigns, the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council and affiliated unions played a central role. Affordable housing advocates, childcare agencies, and neighborhood groups were also active. These organizations shared a common interest in improving the livelihood of San Jose’s low-income population through increased wages and additional affordable housing and by helping to offset its high cost of living.

An additional but unlikely voice came from within San Jose small business community

itself and specifically from minority entrepreneurs and small business owners. Motivating their decision to participate were concerns about market access and their fear that the CIM project—as initially proposed by the developer—would impact their businesses during construction and could result in their displacement from the downtown business district. The inclusion of small businesses in the coalition not only helped to illustrate differing perspectives within the San Jose business community, but, as a result, provided the coalition with a powerful mechanism for garnering support from initially skeptical City Council members. Generally speaking, some larger-sized downtown businesses in San Jose strongly opposed the community benefits campaign and used their political leverage to portray the CBA coalition in a negative light in local media accounts. Coalition members were able to respond by demonstrating the diverse set of interests backing their cause. For example, ethnic chambers of commerce went on record expressing their support for a CBA and also helped to strengthen the coalition and support from elected officials. Ultimately, this enabled the coalition to reframe the public debate as more than a clash between traditional business and labor interests; instead, it became a fight over the future of downtown San Jose and the need to establish inclusionary development standards for publicly subsidized construction and redevelopment projects.

Interestingly, Working Partnerships' formal relationship with LAANE and other CBA-promoting organizations, including EBASE in Oakland (California), also played an important role in securing City Council support. In contrast to most other campaigns which have resulted in a standalone CBA, the CIM campaign resulted in a short, four page memorandum drafted by City Council members that was folded into the lengthy (200 pages) overall project development agreement. This enabled City Council members to also recognize the broader significance of the San Jose campaign and its potential role for improving the overall regional economy.

A second important difference in the CIM campaign relates to procedural sequencing and, specifically, the formal steps taken by the coalition to secure a commitment to community benefits from the developer. In contrast to most other campaigns which have resulted in a separate, legally binding benefits agreement between a developer and a coalition which predates the city-developer project development agreement, the CIM campaign resulted in a short, four page memorandum drafted by City Council members that was folded into the overall project development agreement (200 pages). In other words, when the City Council voted on the overall development agreement, it was also a deciding force in establishing community benefits. Once approved, the memorandum provided the basis for ongoing negotiations with the developer, in which coalition members worked closely through the City Council to specify living-wage requirements, local hiring goals, affordable housing set-asides, and tenant lease allocations. The decision to adopt a different strategy reflected the strength of opposition to a community benefits agreement within the San Jose business community and the development process itself, which, from the start, provided little room for community input and engagement. It is important to note that this stands in stark contrast to the Hollywood and Highland case, in which TrizecHahn scheduled community listening sessions that contributed to the project design process.

By incorporating community benefits into the development agreement negotiations, CIM Coalition members were able to focus their attention on sympathetic City Council members. Interestingly, this approach is now promoted by CBA supporters and legal experts, as it helps reduce the legal burden on community coalitions and also places greater responsibility for monitoring and compliance on existing public agencies that have more substantial staffing and financial resources. While most campaigns continue to produce a formal community benefits agreement prior to formal project approval by a city agency, CBAs are now getting incorporated into the city's development planning process, and therefore resulting in a transfer of implementation responsibility from nongovernmental

organizations to public agencies.

To conclude, the final arrangement between the City of San Jose and the CIM Group resulted in living-wage jobs for all parking attendants at the development site, a project labor agreement covering project construction work, a commitment by CIM to reserve a specified number of affordable housing units, guaranteed retail and commercial space and marketing assistance for small businesses, and a commitment to negotiating living-wage jobs with prospective hotel, grocery, or department store tenants. In exchange, the CIM project received \$40 million in incentives from San Jose's redevelopment agency. The CIM project is in its final stages of completion and is scheduled to open in 2009.⁴

Los Angeles International Airport

Next this paper turns to the case of a CBA executed in 2004 involving the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) expansion.⁵ The inclusion of the LAX expansion case here might initially seem out of place as it is not a typical urban commercial development per se, but rather a large-scale public infrastructure project. Closer inspection, however, does reveal a related contribution to the other cases: namely an agreement that tied public support for the project to well-paying jobs at airport shops and restaurants and baggage handling, security, and housekeeping firms. Still, despite this employment-related outcome, the scale and scope of the LAX expansion and its significance to multiple Los Angeles-based stakeholders did create unanticipated challenges for the CBA's campaigners. This was primarily due to additional land-use and environmental concerns that received limited attention from members of the CBA Coalition. As a result, some influential environmental and neighborhood groups worked outside the boundaries of the coalition to forestall certain proposed land use changes and to push for a regional approach to airport utilization. These concerns were not advanced through the CBA, which emphasized labor provisions for lower-income residents and was tacit with respect to important material interests of higher-income groups adversely affected by environmental damages. While opposition to the development did not negate the job-related achievements of the original CBA, it nonetheless raises important strategic and political questions about which community interests should be represented and advanced through a CBA campaign.

By including this case study, therefore, we hope to shed additional light on the issue of coalition formation and development uncertainty, especially in the face of complex and intertwined socioeconomic and land-use concerns. Given growing interest in sustainable development, and a related push towards improved environmental building and site-design standards, future CBA coalitions may need to more effectively balance income-based equity interests and environmental goals. This would require recognizing spatial variation in project-related environmental damages that, while disproportionately affecting lower-income communities, may also significantly affect higher-income residents. The LAX expansion case demonstrates some of the potential risks in failing to make this a campaign priority.

In December 2004, the city's airport authority, LAWA, signed an agreement with the LAX Coalition for Economic, Environmental, and Educational Justice (LAX CBA coalition) almost bringing to closure a 16-year struggle to expand the city's premier international airport. The LAX CBA coalition included 25 community organizations, labor unions, and environmental groups. It also included two school districts, Inglewood and Lennox (Gross, 2005, p. 17). As in other CBA campaigns in Los Angeles, LAANE played an instrumental role. The coalition's strategy involved drawing support for the expansion from constituencies whose opposition to previous expansion plans had been so strong as to be fatal:

The multi-racial coalition, formed after the LAX modernization plan was

announced [in mid-2002], aimed to ensure that the new airport plans went forward only if the community's ... concerns and other issues were addressed. Organizing in Inglewood and Lennox began immediately after the announcement of LAX's proposal....Through effective organizing, thousands of African-American and Latino community members became involved in the campaign, both directly and indirectly, via their churches, schools and organizations. (Gross, 2005, pp. 16-17)

The CBA committed LAWA to implementing several programs designed to improve the livelihood of airport workers and provide workforce development assistance to job applicants from targeted low-income neighborhoods. The agreement included living wage provisions for direct airport employees, for the employees of retail tenants, and for all airport contractors; a first-source hiring program that granted local residents preference in job interviews and referrals for all newly created airport jobs, including those at airport contractors; and a \$15 million, five-year training program for targeted workers, including an apprenticeship and work experience employment program, to be administered by the City of Los Angeles' Community Development Department and Workforce Investment Board. The CBA and the separate school district settlement agreements resulted in a \$500 million funding commitment by LAWA for noise abatement, emission reductions from ground service equipment, and a study of the long-term effects of airport noise and air pollution on nearby residents' health.⁶

LAWA officials and the LAX CBA coalition "hailed the agreement as a significant departure from the often confrontational and emotional relationship between low-income minority communities to the east of LAX and the 75-year old airport" (Oldham, 2004a, p. B.1). As part of their agreement with LAWA, the LAX CBA coalition promised not to oppose airport expansion efforts before the Los Angeles City Council, nor to sue the City or LAWA in connection with the proposed expansion plan.

However significantly some groups avoided confrontation, oppositional forces soon emerged outside the coalition's membership base. Less than a week after the CBA was announced, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to sue LAWA in order to stop the expansion plan because it did not attempt to reallocate the projected growth in air traffic to other airports. Supervisor Don Knabe, representing airport neighborhoods, was threatening: " 'We want to be part of the solution. But if we're not at the table, we're going to be your worst enemy' " (Oldham, 2004b, p. B.3). The cities of Inglewood, Culver City, and El Segundo and the grassroots Alliance for a Regional Solution to Airport Congestion (ARSAC) also took legal action against LAWA and the City of Los Angeles (Oldham, 2005a).

The 2004-2005 Los Angeles mayoral campaign, which pitted the incumbent James K. Hahn against LA City Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa, was another forum for revisiting the proposed LAX expansion. As a Council member, Villaraigosa had voted against the expansion plan. He identified the second phase of Hahn's expansion plan as the source of his adamant opposition, particularly its massive new remote check-in facility in the Westchester neighborhood (which adjoins the airport's northern boundary), long the cause of strong opposition on the part of local residents (Oldham, 2005b).⁷ He also opposed Hahn's approach to limiting growth in the number of flights at LAX. By publicly expressing strong opposition to the second phase, Villaraigosa signaled his intention, if elected mayor, to revisit major components of a plan which, despite the Los Angeles City Council's 12-3 vote (December 2004), local governments and residents in airport-area communities continued to assail.

Almost exactly a year after approving Hahn's expansion plan, the Los Angeles City Council voted to shelve it and endorsed an alternative deal reached by Mayor Villaraigosa with Los Angeles County, several airport-area cities, and the residents group ARSAC,

all of which had sued to block the previous mayor's plan. The plaintiffs agreed to end their lawsuits in return for, among other things, a reinvigorated regional effort to provide increased airport capacity at other Los Angeles Basin airports and a refashioned expansion plan that would not include a remote check-in facility. The deal left intact the benefits agreement. The revised expansion plan included additional efforts to mitigate traffic congestion in and around the airport, accelerate noise abatement expenditures in areas not covered by the CBA, and fund research on a light-rail Metro Green Line extension to LAX (Oldham, 2005c). The parties' settlement also contained a unique "passenger gate provision:" if airline traffic reached the level of 75 million passengers by 2010, LAWA would temper growth in traffic by reducing the number of passenger aircraft gates (Final Judgment, 2006). It also provided \$2½ million for an additional job training program to be administered by Inglewood's Workforce Investment Board.

The LAX expansion CBA contains substantial labor provisions and extensive mitigation of noise and air pollution, but it was also enmeshed in infrastructure politics in which motivated groups not belonging to the CBA coalition affected the expansion planning processes and thus the stability of the agreement. The LAX CBA coalition was broad but not encompassing and tacitly endorsed, or at least did not publicly challenge, proposed provisions that strongly motivated opposition by potent constituencies outside the coalition. Excluded but not neutralized community voices, while not directly threatening this particular CBA, posed a sufficient enough risk to airport expansion that it could have left the agreement no more than a paper victory.⁸

Campaigning Around Conflict

In recent years, community groups have joined forces to improve the quality of jobs available to low-income inner-city residents. In response to rising income inequality and weak Federal and state support for minimum wage reform, these groups have used grassroots organizing tactics to advocate improved labor standards and job access at the local level. They have been especially effective at using municipal-level public funding as a source of leverage for shaping private-sector employment practices.

Initially, these efforts focused on establishing living wage standards at companies under contract with government agencies to provide municipal services, such as sanitation, maintenance, landscaping, and housekeeping. More recently, these campaigns have been extended to also cover residential and commercial developments that receive government-financed subsidies or development assistance. At the heart of these campaigns is the Community Benefits Agreement, a contractual arrangement between a developer and community coalition that enhances the livelihood of low income residents through living wage requirements, local hiring goals and additional income supports, such as affordable housing and transportation and parking allowances.

Research on successful CBA campaigns has emphasized their contribution to empowered deliberation. Through these campaigns, community groups are not only participating in the city planning process, but, through this participation, have altered the tone of traditional planning negotiations in what Murtaza Baxamusa describes as a move from an "antagonistic relationship between public and private interests" to a well-reasoned process based on public education, knowledge sharing and face-to-face deliberation (Baxamusa, 2008, p. 263). The result is a mutually-supportive arrangement, whereby coalition members, in exchange for the developer agreeing to specific community benefits, lend political support to a project in order to help expedite the planning process.

The Hollywood and Highland case described above is emblematic of this process of empowered deliberation. The scale and scope of this development represented a significant departure from standard planning practice at the time, which promoted incremental

upgrading of dilapidated Hollywood buildings (Goldin, 1998). By putting their support behind this mega-project, coalition members, in collaboration with City Councilor Jackie Goldberg, ultimately helped to minimize political opposition to this large-scale mixed-use development. This is not to say that criticism of the project disappeared altogether. As *LA Weekly* writer Greg Goldin (1998) points out, some critics remained doubtful the development would meet its projected revenue target. Still, by closely working with the developer to establish local hiring goals, living wage jobs and vocational training programs, the Hollywood and Highland community benefits campaign addressed many of the concerns of city council members by offering a more inclusionary and locally accountable model of commercial development. As such, councilors were more willing to vote in favor of the project.

But not all CBA campaigns have run as smoothly as this one. Some campaigns, despite similar reciprocal arrangements between a coalition and developer, have been stymied or significantly weakened by well-organized and vocal oppositional forces. These external challenges are not easily resolved by the coalition's adoption of a less "antagonistic" style of deliberation. Rather, they reflect the larger socio-political context that gives shape and meaning to the development for multiple interests groups and thus, require greater awareness of this contextual backdrop by coalition members.

These tensions represent what Scott Campbell (1996) has described as property, development, and resource conflicts. While property and resource conflicts entail more traditional struggles between business interests and social or environmental activists (i.e., a conflict between profit motives and social or environmental goals), the development conflict reflects competing environmental and social equity concerns. Conflict resolution here is not likely to be achieved through a deepened dialogue involving just the developer and coalition, but rather requires coalition members to become more aware of deep-seated animosities and power struggles between multiple interests. These conflicts can reignite during the planning process and, if unresolved, can impede the progress of the community benefits campaign.

Both the San Jose and LAX expansion cases outlined in this paper demonstrate this possibility. In San Jose, long standing tensions between local business and labor interests not only influenced the level of support CIM CBA campaigners received from San Jose's traditionally business-friendly city council, they ultimately affected the channels available to coalition members for promoting community benefits. As this campaign also helps illustrate, CBA coalitions can work to overcome such oppositional forces by taking advantage of competing logics within seemingly homogeneous interest groups, in this case, the local business community. This creates opportunities for CBA coalitions to reach out to and ally with sympathetic subgroups that share similar concerns and can provide the coalition with additional political support and credibility.

In the LAX expansion case, vocal opposition arose from an established neighborhood group and local elected officials who had long-standing concerns about the impact of the proposed expansion. By failing to involve these groups in the CBA negotiations, the LAX CBA coalition opened itself up to possible failure resulting from legal action against LAWA and the City of Los Angeles. In addition to the LAX expansion case, environmental and social equity concerns were at odds in the 2005 Oak-to-Ninth CBA campaign in Oakland California. The push by environmental groups for additional open space at Oakland's port redevelopment project conflicted with social equity demands for additional affordable housing. In the end, housing needs were prioritized, forcing some environmental activists to withdraw from the coalition and pursue a different course of action.

By drawing attention to these conflicts, this research is not suggesting CBA coalitions simply broaden their scope in an attempt to include all interested parties. After all, coalition management can become unwieldy with an ever-expanding agenda. What these cases do

suggest, however, is the need for coalitions to be mindful of these competing interests as they organize, plan, and implement their campaigns. As most community benefits advocates acknowledge, CBA campaigns are designed to lend support for a development project in order to influence and shape local employment practices (Baxamusa, 2008). Competing interests can undermine this goal by stalling or halting a proposed development. CBA coalitions, therefore, may need to consider whether, in the face of opposition to their own goals or to the development itself, they can generate sufficient political support, or whether their resources and political capital are best used to support other, less contentious projects.

Notes

1 An Internet search remains the optimal method for identifying CBAs because they are the result of grassroots groups' efforts, and those groups very frequently use Internet sites to publicize current and successfully-completed CBA campaigns.

2 Public developers are city, county or federal organizations or agencies that are involved in large-scale development projects. One example from our case studies is the Los Angeles World Airlines Group, an independent City agency which owns and operates the Los Angeles International Airport.

3 The information presented in this case study was gathered through an in-depth interview conducted in July 2006 by the paper's authors and staff at Working Partnerships.

4 Source, The Partnership for Working Families, CIM Project CBA - San Jose, 2003: <http://www.communitybenefits.org/article.php?id=568>; accessed January 31, 2008.

5 Steven P. Erie's *Globalizing L.A.* (2004) summarizes the history of the airport's expansion plans between 1993 and 2002, beginning with Mayor Richard Riordan's first administration and ending with the first months of Mayor James K. Hahn's administration. This study uses a more recent history, drawing primarily on the *Los Angeles Times* for news accounts. Jennifer Oldham's frequent articles provide close coverage.

6 The agreement is available on LAWA's Web site: <http://www.laxmasterplan.org/>.

7 Asphalt streets buried under sand dunes on the airport's western edge are the remnants of the area in Westchester in which 4,500 houses were razed and 14,000 residents were displaced in the 1970s on behalf of the airport (Oldham, 2007).

8 We also draw a conclusion pertaining to the methodology for historical inquiry into the contribution of community benefits agreements to achieving socially equitable urban development: interest groups excluded from a community benefits coalition may be as significant as the coalition itself. Attention to such excluded groups contrasts this study with Baxamusa's (2008) study of the LAX Expansion CBA.

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