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cityLAB, Los Angeles

The culture and politics of urban space.

By: [Mimi Zeiger](#)



Credit: cityLAB

Dana Cuff and Roger Sherman founded cityLAB in 2006, with the support of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Cuff is a professor in the Department of Architecture and Urban Design and the School of Public Affairs' Department Urban Planning at UCLA, and Sherman heads his own architecture and urban design practice in Santa Monica. The think tank brings together architects, planners, and graduate researchers at UCLA to tackle the challenges facing the modern city. "How do you make it a better place without a utopian vision?" asks Cuff. The question is at the root of cityLAB's research. The collective looks at what is happening in Los Angeles neighborhoods and offers strategies to make a better city: zoning changes, housing solutions, or technological interventions. (Cuff's recent writing looks at tools, such as GPS and cell phones, that bring pervasive computing to urban space.)

CityLAB's efforts extend beyond the L.A. basin. In a recent project developed for the Flip a Strip design competition, the group transformed a Phoenix strip mall into an agricultural mecca (above). As a critique of an Arizona landscape consumed by sprawl, the renewed mall—one of many that would dot the landscape—sprouts

lettuces, vegetables, and algae alongside cars and shoppers. Look for a book to come out of the cityLAB headquarters soon: Based on a 2007 symposium that brought together some of the academy's top thinkers, *Fast Forward: Toward a Design and Politics for Metroburbia* theorizes ongoing changes in places like Los Angeles; Biloxi, Miss.; and Lower Manhattan.

citylab.aud.ucla.edu

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