

West Hollywood General Plan

Human Services and Education Background Report

This Human Services and Education Background Report defines 2008 baseline conditions as they relate to the following items to assist in the development of appropriate goals and policies for the General Plan. The topics covered in this report are:

- Human services
- Rent control
- Education
- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) community
- The Russian-speaking community
- Seniors
- Major festivals and events held in the City

The following resources were used in the compilation of this report:

- City of West Hollywood General Plan (1988)
- City of West Hollywood Technical Background Report – White paper by Strategic Economics (2008)
- City of West Hollywood Cultural Needs Assessment Study (2007)
- City of West Hollywood website (2008)
- State of California Department of Education website (2008)
- Los Angeles Unified School District website (2008)
- United States Census website (2008)
- City of West Hollywood R2, R3, R4 Multi-Family Survey Report
- Various other websites and documents

Human Services

One of West Hollywood's first priorities as a new city was the provision of social services for people in need in the community. The City was founded on a coalition of the LGBT community and seniors finding common ground around the issue of rent control and affordable housing. In September 1985, the Department of Human Services was formed and charged with creating a social services delivery system for City residents.

The City has taken an innovative, humanistic approach to human services, and takes an active role in identifying community needs and responding with service provision. The City's Human Services Commission makes recommendations on priorities for development of the City's efforts in Human Service. The program area of Human Services includes Leisure programs, Social programs, Human Rights, and Senior Citizen Affairs. On a regular basis, the City conducts a comprehensive survey of its residents to determine the areas of greatest need. For the most recent survey in 2006, four of the survey questions addressed community programs and services. The survey respondents assigned importance and satisfaction ratings to 21 programs and services, described the two most important social service needs of their household, responded to a list of potential household health issues, and listed needs of the household related to health issues. The programs that received the highest ratings of importance were public safety

related, such as disaster and emergency preparedness measures, law enforcement services, and neighborhood crime prevention programs. Following these in popularity were more traditional, health and socioeconomic based programs like HIV prevention, transmission information, low-cost transportation services, and rent control. Also popular was the revitalization of deteriorated commercial areas, in the sphere of economic development. The programs that received the highest ratings of satisfaction, above 85%, were:

- HIV prevention and transmission information
- Food or meals for residents with special need
- Law enforcement services
- After-school programs and summer day camp for children
- Park and recreation programs
- Special events, festivals, and community gatherings
- Low-cost transportation services, including taxi coupons, City Line Shuttle, and Dial-A-Ride

Seven other programs and services received between 75% and 85% satisfaction ratings. This information suggests not only do residents value the programs and services offered by the City, but they are well satisfied with the implementation of them.

In addition, in response to an open ended question asking what the most important social services to them were, the most frequent answers were legal services, medical services, and law enforcement/crime prevention.

The most frequently requested services related to health needs were:

- Affordable medical care
- Counseling
- Health insurance
- Transportation
- Environmental services
- Escorted transportation
- Fitness services
- Disabled access improvements
- In-home services

The Social Services Division within the Department of Human Services refers residents to many outside providers and offers resources in the following areas:

- HIV/AIDS, including case management and housing help for people with HIV/AIDS
- Breast cancer and breast health
- Children and youth services
- Crystal methamphetamine, drug and alcohol abuse treatment and information
- Disability Services, including a free transportation and errands service for seniors and disabled adults
- Domestic violence and partner abuse
- Employment resources, including education, training and job listings
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender targeted services

- Homeless – the City works closely with the Sherriffs Department and service providers to ensure that those who need help and are willing to accept it have a path off of the streets
- Youth Scholarship Program – awards \$1,500 scholarship to West Hollywood students who complete 150 hours of community service and continue their education beyond high school

The City's Disabilities Advisory Board addresses issues affecting people with disabilities, including ADA compliance, transportation, housing, access to City government and services for people with disabilities.

According to an analysis performed by Strategic Economics (2008), the City allocates about 24 percent of its annual budget to social services, a much higher percentage than the typical California city, which generally does not spend General Fund money on social programs.

Rent Control

Rent Control provisions in the City are the responsibility of the Rent Stabilization Division of the Department of Rent Stabilization and Housing. As a result this topic is more fully covered in the Housing Background Report. However, these provisions do constitute an indirect human service to the community. By providing more affordable housing, the City can protect vulnerable populations from being displaced by increased housing costs and provide new residents an opportunity to enter an otherwise high-cost market.

Education

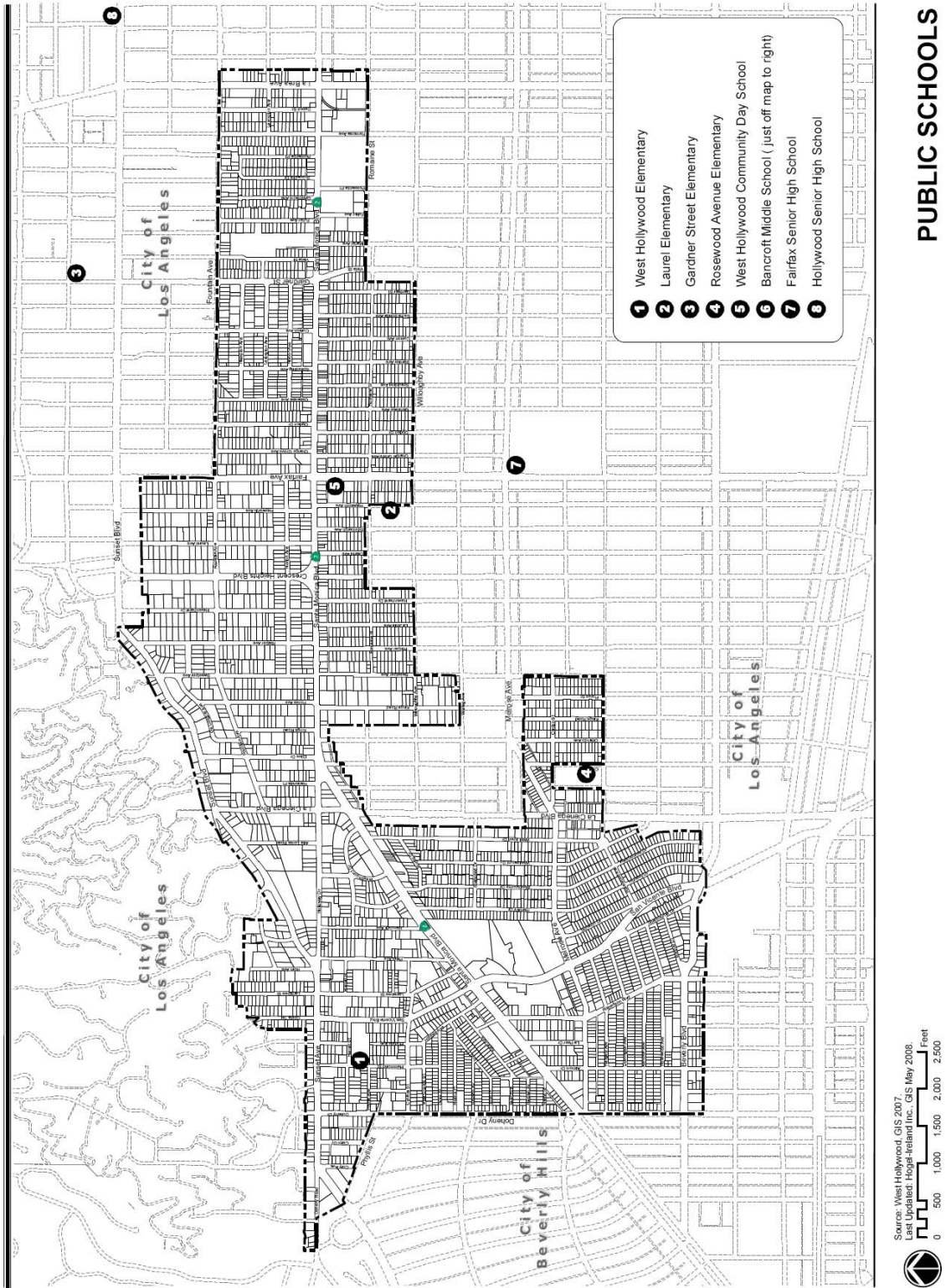
Public Schools

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) provides public school services to West Hollywood residents for grades kindergarten through 12. Only two public schools, West Hollywood Elementary, at 970 North Hammond Street, and West Hollywood Community Day School, a high school for students who have had difficulty in other schools, actually are within the City boundaries. Other elementary, middle, and high school students attend LAUSD schools at locations in the City of Los Angeles. These include three elementary schools (Laurel, Gardner and Rosewood), one middle school (Bancroft), and two high schools (Fairfax, Hollywood). In addition to these, residents have access to a pre-kindergarten family literacy program and many early education/daycare programs. All public school locations mentioned are shown on Figure HS-1.

Private Schools

There are a number of private schools in West Hollywood and in the surrounding area that offer alternative education options for City residents.

Figure HS-1



Public Library

The West Hollywood Public Library is located at West Hollywood Park on San Vicente Boulevard. It is a part of and is operated by the Los Angeles County Library system and principally services City residents, though its users are also drawn from adjacent Beverly Hills and Los Angeles areas.

The West Hollywood Library began service to the area (then unincorporated) in 1913. The present library was dedicated in 1960. The library was previously located at Sherman School, a cottage on Clark Street, a building on Westbourne Drive, and a building near the present site. The Library has an active "Friends of the Library" group. The library collection includes over 95,310 books; 45 magazine and newspaper subscriptions and over 18,000 audiovisual titles. Special materials include local history materials, Spanish and Russian books, the Ron Shipton HIV Information Center, and a Gay and Lesbian materials collection.

The City has planned for some time for a new library to be built as a part of the redevelopment of West Hollywood Park. The West Hollywood Park Master Plan, approved by the City Council in 2004, calls for a three-story, 42,000 square-foot building, or more than eight times larger than the existing library. Construction of the new library is a key element of the City's 25th Anniversary Capital Campaign. The new library will function as a community and civic center for the City, with public meeting rooms and space for cultural programs. Construction of the new facility will begin in 2009.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community

The City's LGBT community is a fundamental part of its identity. In the 1970s, West Hollywood, then an unincorporated corner of Los Angeles County, became a haven for a newly vocal and out-of-the-closet gay community seeking refuge from a homophobic Los Angeles Police Department. By the early 1980s, gays and lesbians were among the key leaders of the incorporation movement, and the founding City Council was the first in the nation to have an openly gay majority. Today, most estimates put West Hollywood's LGBT community at over 40 percent of the City's population.

Each June during Pride Month, the City hosts the annual Christopher Street West Pride Parade and Festival. The Lesbian and Gay Advisory Board provides analysis and recommendations to City Council on issues related to the lesbian and gay community in the City. In addition, the City's many clubs and bars continue to make it a major destination for gays and lesbians from around Southern California, as well as a tourist spot for the worldwide LGBT community. In recent years, however, the City has faced increased competition for LGBT tourist dollars from San Francisco, Miami, Palm Springs, Hollywood, Silver Lake, and elsewhere.

Russian-speaking Community

The City's Russian-speaking community is a mix of ethnic Russians, Jews, and Ukrainians. Russian speakers, both elderly and young couples with children, are concentrated in the east side of West Hollywood, particularly in the area around Plummer Park. Many businesses along Santa Monica Boulevard, from Crescent Heights Boulevard east to the

edge of the City at La Brea Avenue, cater to a Russian-speaking population. At the time of the 2000 Census, 18.6 percent of the population reported their ancestry as either Russian or Ukrainian.

The Russian Advisory Board consists of 11 Russian-speaking members who provide information and recommendations to the City Council on issues relating to the Russian-speaking community. Members are either West Hollywood residents or business owners in the City.

June is recognized as Russian Cultural Month within the City. During this month the City presents a Russian Community Awards Ceremony and a Russian Cultural Festival. The City also holds other Russian themed activities throughout the year in Plummer Park.

Seniors

Seniors are a significant portion of the population (about 17 percent according to the 2000 Census), attracted and retained, no doubt, by rent control and the numerous senior services offered by the City.

The Senior Advisory Board, which meets monthly, consists of 11 members who provide information and guidance for all matters relating to the planning, development and coordination of services for older residents.

The City offers a wide range of senior-oriented recreational and entertainment activities administered primarily by the West Hollywood Comprehensive Service Center. Some activities include tai chi, bridge, scrabble, field trips, writing clubs, and conversation clubs. The City also provides information and connections to outside senior support organizations and programs.

A free transportation service called CONNECT is offered to City residents 55 or older. The service provides residents the ability to run errands and attend medical appointments that they normally would not be capable of accomplishing on their own. This program is a volunteer service provided through the combined efforts of public transportation, dial a ride, and subsidized taxis.

Major City Festivals

West Hollywood publicly celebrates many events, using these events to promote awareness of critical issues, to provide public education, to recognize unique events and cultures, and generally to bring the community together. Key events that occur regularly include:

- Christopher Street West – One of the largest gay pride events in the county, celebrating its 38th year in 2008
- West Hollywood Book Fair
- Annual Summer Sounds Concert Series
- Halloween Carnival
- West Hollywood Kids Fair
- West Hollywood International Film Festival
- Russian Style Festival

- Russian Advisory Board Art Exhibit – A yearly visual arts exhibition with over 60 artists represented
- Outfest – Although the film festival itself takes place mostly in Los Angeles and Santa Monica, many parties and other celebrations occur in West Hollywood in conjunction with the event.
- Sunset Strip Music Festival – This three-day festival commemorates the music history of the Sunset Strip. The first year of the festival, which is scheduled to be held annually, occurred in 2008.