

MEMO

Date: January 5, 2015

Re: West Hollywood Eastside Community Plan – Eastside Tour and Working Group Meeting #5 Summary (November 12, 2014)

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum summarizes the seventh meeting of the Eastside Working Group conducted by the City of West Hollywood. The City organized three presentations, given by:

- 1) West Hollywood Staff on arts in the City and Eastside,
- 2) two developer firms, CIM Group and Avalon Bay, and
- 3) two planners from the City of Los Angeles, Kevin Keller and Conni Pallini-Tipton.

Developer presentations were organized to give the public and Working Group members the opportunity to ask questions about the developers' perspective on economic trends and characteristics, which make West Hollywood attractive to developers. The planners from the City of Los Angeles spoke on their experience in developing the Hollywood Community Plan and work on recent large developments in Hollywood. Their experience with the Hollywood Community Plan was a good platform to learn from. This summary below describes the purpose and content of Working Group Meeting #7, discussion from the Q&A, and next steps.

OVERVIEW

The City of West Hollywood hosted and facilitated Working Group Meeting #7 on November 12, 2014 at the Plummer Park Community Center from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Eleven Working Group members were present. The meeting began with an announcement that Raimi and Associates and team were selected from the RFP process to be the Eastside's consultant on the Community Plan. The consultant team will meet the Working Group members in early 2015. Presenters from the City of West Hollywood at the meeting included Bianca Siegl, Long Range & Mobility Planning Manager, and Andrew Campbell, Cultural Affairs Administrator, who discussed WeHo East Arts.

The presentation by Avalon Bay provided an overview of the commercial prospects and strategic layout of Movietown. Avalon Bay also highlighted its incorporation of public art that is consistent with its film-industry theme. CIM Group discussed three of their projects: The Lot, Sunset La Cienega, and 7617 Santa Monica Blvd (adjacent to fire station). The Lot is intended to continue to attract the creative demographic whereas Sunset La Cienega and 7617 Santa Monica Blvd remain in concept-phase. Lastly, Hollywood city planners introduced their process in creating the Hollywood Community Plan, its goals, and its challenges.

MEETING AGENDA

- Call to order, pledge of allegiance, and roll call
- Public comment
- Welcome and introductions
- Approval of minutes
- WeHo East Arts presentation
- Developer discussions – by Avalon Bay and CIM Group
- Hollywood, City of Los Angeles discussion
- Schedule and next steps
- Comments and adjournment

WEHO EAST ARTS

Andrew Campbell discussed the abundance of art on the Eastside, discussing past and recent art activities in West Hollywood. A few events he recalled were the “Go to the Park” initiative involving Plummer Park and the On Route-66 Lights for West Hollywood’s 25th anniversary project. Recent events are the Winter Sounds and Summer Sounds, as well as Free Theatres in the Parks. Not only are there temporary arts events that come and go, but there are permanent structures such as the *Three Horned Beast* and *Baby Beast* that enhance the physical environment on the Eastside. Campbell also explained how temporary art installations are commissioned and the flexibility in the time frame based on the art piece’s popularity. He also referenced the Monarch projects’ incorporation of its “Stud Wall” and “Corner Glory” as recognizable examples of public art incorporated into new development.

DEVELOPER DISCUSSIONS

Avalon Bay - Mark Janda and Sam Pan discussed Avalon Bay’s mixed use project along Santa Monica Blvd, referred to as Movietown. Mark and Sam presented the commercial uses they envisioned were suitable for the neighborhood, and emphasized how their business plan heavily relies on the project’s ability to serve the community. For this reason, they are looking for high quality restaurants with integrity that will integrate into the fabric of the neighborhood. Mark and Sam explained that Movietown incorporates a public alley that leads to the center corridor, which will activate the two levels of commercial uses (one facing Santa Monica Blvd and the other fronting the alley). In terms of incorporating art, Movietown’s public art by Christian Moeller titled “M” ties the development to the movie history of that era. It also restored a movie camera that will be featured in the central corridor.

In response to questions and comments, Avalon Bay representatives explained that when determining a project’s use, they consider the supply and demand factors, as well as jobs-housing balance to see who is moving in and out of the City. These factors drove them to provide housing in Movietown.

CIM Group – CIM Group was represented by Bradley Aaronson and Clyde Wood. Their discussion covered three different projects: The Lot, Sunset La Cienega, and 7617 Santa Monica Blvd (the car wash location). The two completed phases of the Lot were developed to attract to creative tenants such as Will Ferrell’s *Funny or Die* and Oprah Winfrey’s Network (*OWN*). CIM recognizes that there is an existing creative demographic that lives in the Eastside and believes its project will continue to attract nearby residents. The Sunset / La Cienega two-acre site is expected to provide 286 hotel rooms and 198 units within four towers. They hope this project will offer more night life to the Eastside. And for the third project, 7617 Santa Monica Blvd, Bradley and Clyde highlighted that they are still at the conceptualize planning stage, exploring the feasibility of a hotel on the site, as well as the opportunity to incorporate the existing fire station on the adjacent lot or build a new fire station across the street.

HOLLYWOOD, CITY OF LOS ANGELES DISCUSSION

Kevin Keller and Conni Pallini-Tipton are planners at the City of Los Angeles that oversaw the Hollywood Community Plan project and various applications for large development projects in Hollywood. It is important to note that community plans for Los Angeles are akin to the General Plan as guiding documents. The Hollywood Community Plan took several years to complete and was adopted in 2012. Though the Environmental Impact Report for the plan is being litigated, but the planners explained that the document still reflects the goals of the community. The Hollywood Community Plan designates Hollywood as a regional center and its policies work to activate its transit corridors such as Sunset, Santa Monica, and Vine with increased density, height, and FAR. The Plan also seeks to reinforce the identity of the Media District with new studio spaces and makes clear distinctions between appropriate and inappropriate locations for residential uses. One working group member asked how there could be better traffic mitigation measures and coordination with bordering cities. Kevin Keller responded that City of Los Angeles has had difficulty in detailed coordination due to its large size.

NEXT STEPS

The next Working Group Meetings is scheduled to be in early 2015. The meeting will introduce the chosen consultants Raimi and Associates to the Working Group and public.

EASTSIDE WORKING GROUP MEETING #7 TRANSCRIPTION NOTES

The following are notes from comments made by Working Group members.

WEHO EAST ARTS UPDATE

- First Eastside Arts Initiative called “Go To the Park” (2008-2009) in anticipation that the park would be closed due to renovation
- On Route – 66 Lights for the City of WeHo’s 25th Anniversary Project (2009)
- Three Horned Beast (and Baby Beast) (2011)
- Partnership with organizations – Sam Falls Sculpture
- Projects are meant to be on site for a year but if it’s popular, they will extend the time
- Find Your Roots – partnership with LARC(LARK?), had an exhibition in the past spring and early summer
- Urban Art Projects – the sphinx is a bridge between the youth and old
- New major developments on the Eastside are exciting because it brings opportunities to work with major artists
- Monarch projects incorporated art – Stud Wall and Corner Glory, Ball-Nogues studios (2014)
- Winter Sounds and Summer Sounds
- Free Theatre in the Parks
- One City One Pride – LGBT arts and culture
- In a New Land (2004)

AVALON BAY WITH MARK JANDA AND SAM PAN

- Mark - 371 homes, of that 77 are senior affordable homes that West Hollywood Community Development Department will own and manage
- It will take about 18 months to open up new apartments and retail will open up then as well
- Large retail space including the Trader Joes that will return on the top left (of site plan)
- Toward back of the site will be townhomes that have street access like brownstones one would see in Eastern cities
- 5 stories tall along Santa Monica and 7 stories near the back
- Movie camera will be restored (was in the parking lot before) incorporated into the “muse”
- Public Art – Christian Moeller “M” (professor at UCLA and done a lot of work internationally), ties to the movie history of that era. He is also responsible for the San Jose bit wall of Hands; he has planned a bit wall of a hand to a pique interest and draw people in
- This has been a collaborative effort with the City, long before Avalon Bay became involved to develop porous pathways so that it’s not a fortress on the street. A number of uses will be activated by the alleyways that will be open to the public
- Must respect the confidentiality of the retailers who have signed long-term strategy for attracting retail, to meet the needs of the neighborhood.
- They see that the neighborhood is food and drink driven so two of the retail spaces they expect will be high-quality restaurants with integrity.

- Potential for a craft-coffee user in one of the retail spaces, other retail space has a potential use as screening-room, spaces not directly abutting the street are not as easy to attract so looking for more corky and stand-alone

CIM GROUP WITH BRADLEY AARONSON AND CLYDE WOOD

- Brad – CIM has a developer, investor, and community member for over 10 years already (Hancock Lofts, the Lot, Sunset La Cienega, 7617 Santa Monica Blvd)
- The Lot, CIM acquired in 2007 – the project has evolved to keep historic fabric integrated. Formosa South Building is specifically attractive to creative tenants (Will Ferrell’s Funny or Die and Oprah Winfrey’s Network from Wilshire), the first phase of a 3 phase program
- The 2nd phase is a similar entertainment style office building (5 story building) constructed in the central plaza
 - Porous movement throughout the site
 - Believe it is a great opportunity for the Eastside in attracting the existing creative demographic that lives on the Eastside of West Hollywood, feeding off the new development of retail (such as Avalon Bay)
- Sunset La Cienega project has also been on the books with the City for a significant amount of time
- 2-acre parcel with 286 hotel rooms and the west side with 198 units, a total of 4 towers
- Filling the hole of the donut of hotels/bars and the eastside night life
- 7617 Santa Monica Blvd, east of Spaulding (car wash location) – acquired this year
 - The 7/11 is not involved in the project at the moment
 - Hotel concept, they believe is a great opportunity because there are not as many hotel uses on the Eastside
 - Neighborhood serving retail
 - Very early on the process, here to listen and gather ideas
 - Is there an opportunity to incorporate the fire station? Building a new fire station could be a community benefit

HOLLYWOOD CITY PLANNERS CONNI PALLINI-TIPTON AND KEVIN KELLER

- Conni – planned population was about 200,000 from the river all the way to Griffith Park, includes major corridors of Sunset Blvd and Hollywood Blvd (highlighted in red in presentation)
 - The Hollywood Community Plan was adopted in 2012
 - Took several years to complete the plan
 - The EIR was litigated so they must redo the environmental portion but the plan still reflects the future goals of the community
- Kevin – was a recent Senior Planner in Hollywood and now Director
 - Hollywood Community Plan – subject of great debate
 - Worked with 13 neighborhood groups
 - Each neighborhood supported what plans for their own neighborhood but disconnect between what happened in others’ neighbors. Ex. Neighborhood with Millennium in support but not the neighborhoods around it

- What is the core of Hollywood?
- Hollywood is a designated regional center
- Directing Growth to Transit Corridors – Santa Monica Blvd is much more activated in West Hollywood compared with Hollywood
 - Hollywood had very suburban zoning along Santa Monica Blvd (0.5-1 FAR zoning)
- Where did they want to see high-rise development happening? High-rise development considered 6-8 stories.
- FARs 3:1 to 4.5
- Restoring R4 Density to match development that would be coming in
- Used SurveyLA to which sites should be historically preserved
- How to reinforce the Media District? Designated south of Santa Monica Blvd and east of La Brea as an area that prohibits residential uses (want to make it clear where Hollywood hopes to reinforce existing character and encourage new characters)
- New studio spaces
- Lots of surface parking tried to be moved back
- Different feels along streets: Sunset, Santa Monica, Vine, etc
- La Brea and Santa Monica – identity
- LA “community plan” operate more like General Plans do for WeHo