



HOLLYWOOD HILLS WEST NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

DENSITY

A POSITION PAPER

INTRODUCTION

Many HHWNC stakeholders have expressed concerns about the current wave of development taking place in the area. The purpose of this series of position papers is to draw attention to those concerns and to suggest a new direction for development which will contribute to the vibrance and prosperity of the area, while respecting its historic character and creating a sustainable community. The HHWNC held a series of open meetings to get input from stakeholders, and that input forms the basis for these papers. We welcome the opportunity to work together with developers as we all try to make Hollywood a better place to live.

DENSITY

While there is general agreement among stakeholders that increased density is creating unacceptable impacts, the specific problems vary from one neighborhood to the other. Residential neighborhoods are experiencing different problems than the commercial corridors. It's also important to note that we are impacted by projects in the surrounding area. The appearance of over 1,000 new residential units on LaBrea, the construction of the Sunset/LaCienega project, and the hotel boom will all affect the quality of life in the HHWNC area. In order to properly assess impacts we must look at the larger picture.

Concerns expressed by stakeholders, listed in order of importance.

Traffic, Emergency Services, Safety, Parking, Character, Street Closures, Pollution, Crime, Housing for Families, Loss of Community, Infrastructure

COMMERCIAL CENTERS

In recent years city planners (both in Los Angeles and elsewhere) have argued the need for creating transit-oriented density (TOD). While the benefits and drawbacks of TOD projects have been hotly debated, it's clear to HHWNC stakeholders that the creation of thousands of new residential units has made traffic steadily worse. Not only are major thoroughfares more congested than ever, but smaller streets are handling traffic loads far beyond the capacity they were designed for. With increased traffic comes more wear and tear on our roads, and the City has acknowledged that it can't keep up with the necessary maintenance.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

In addition to worsening traffic, residents in multi-family dwellings are finding that it's increasingly difficult to park in their neighborhood. Many of the older buildings in Hollywood were built without garages, so tenants must find space for their cars on the street. Developers are requesting reductions in the required number of parking spaces for their projects, adding to congestion on

the street.

Emergency services are also a concern. It's no secret that both the LAPD and LAFD are already understaffed given Hollywood's population, but the City continues to approve large projects that will stretch resources even further.

HILLSIDE COMMUNITIES

While no large-scale developments are currently planned for the hillside communities, these areas are still suffering impacts related to higher density elsewhere. Commuters looking to escape increasing congestion are taking advantage of any north/south route they can find through the hills. Again, streets created to serve residential neighborhoods are carrying far more traffic than they were designed for.

In all of these areas, the maintenance and improvement of infrastructure is crucial. The DWP has become increasingly vocal in stating the need for huge investment in our water and power systems. A reckless drive for higher density that does not take this into account will only further degrade existing infrastructure.

We recommend the following steps be taken to avoid compounding the problems discussed above:

- Existing zoning requirements regarding floor area ratio (FAR) be adhered to without exception.
- We recommend that the City gather data on actual vacancy rates and actual demand, taking into account the pressing need for affordable housing, and use this in planning for the area.
- Population increases that result from higher density will require increases in the number of police, fire and emergency personnel. Long-term planning must reference data showing that increased tax revenue will allow the hiring of more emergency service personnel.
- Undertake an inventory of the condition of the streets in the area, coupled with realistic assessments of traffic generated by future projects to minimize the further deterioration of already degraded roads.
- The Water Supply Assessments currently used by the DWP do not reflect our actual water resources or the severity of the current drought. In light of the fact that all water resources we've relied on in the past are either severely compromised or completely unavailable, the DWP must develop new assessments based on actual data. Long-term planning must be based on this data.

CONCLUSION

We do not want to stop development. We want to engage city officials and developers in creating a sustainable future. The Hollywood Community Plan Update was overturned in court, but development has surged ahead with no framework in place. This is unacceptable. We need a new plan, this time based on actual data and realistic assessments of our infrastructure and resources. We insist that planning for Hollywood's future start with the community so that we can ensure sustainable, responsible growth.