



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

There is a general sense among stakeholders in the HHWNC area that development in Hollywood is out of control. Both the number and size of proposed projects have created concern that developers and City agencies are pushing for higher density without proper planning. Stakeholders feel that the drive for higher density is causing negative impacts to infrastructure, services and quality of life. Legislation that was supposed to alleviate problems, such as SB 1818 and the Small-Lot Subdivision Ordinance, have in reality fueled a gold rush fever among developers. Instead of promoting projects that are consistent with zoning laws, we see the City handing out entitlements freely and avoiding the work necessary to real planning. The purpose of this position paper is to state the need for a clearly defined planning framework based on actual conditions in the community, with the intent of bringing about sustainable growth that will benefit all residents.

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

City Hall claims that transit-oriented density (TOD) will get people out of their cars and onto public transit. Yet while thousands of new units have been built near transit centers in recent years, it's clear to stakeholders that traffic is getting 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. Also, while the City boasts of Hollywood's importance as an entertainment hub, project EIRs routinely ignore the impacts caused by numerous local venues that draw thousands of visitors for special events.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

The drive for higher density has also led to a crippling loss of affordable housing. Rent-stabilized units are being demolished, and the City encourages the practice by granting entitlements that allow developers to maximize their profits. Recently constructed units are geared toward singles who can afford to pay a

minimum of \$2,000 a month, and low-income families that depend on public transit can no longer afford to live near transit hubs.

Emergency services are also a concern for our residential communities. 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. Emergency service personnel are currently struggling to meet goals for response times, and it seems certain that greater density will only aggravate the situation.

HILLSIDE COMMUNITIES

Large-scale developments are also making their way into hillside communities. And gridlock on major thoroughfares has driven commuters into the hills seeking any possible north/south route. Again, streets created to serve residential neighborhoods are carrying far more traffic than they were designed for.

In all of these areas, higher density is putting a greater strain on our crumbling infrastructure. 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:

- New development should be planned within the existing zoning framework. Entitlements should be granted only when a proven need exists, and not merely to enhance a project's value.
- The pressing need for affordable housing must be a primary consideration in planning for future residential development.
- 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 severely compromised, 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.