

May 24, 2016

MEMO: Urban Design

Welcome to the fourth meeting of the Eastside Working Group (EWG) for the Eastside Community Plan. This meeting will focus on urban design within the Eastside and will be led by Here Design, the urban design consultant for the project. The meeting will include a presentation about existing conditions, a summary of current programs or initiatives, and a discussion about future urban design opportunities.

In advance of the meeting, please take a moment to think about the following questions and come ready to discuss them. The goal is to talk about what makes the Eastside special in terms of its urban design character, what elements you like and want to extend, and what your public space and design goals are for the Eastside. These questions are intended to get you thinking about the urban design character of the Eastside

- Think about **two of your favorite residential streets to walk or bike on the Eastside**. What makes the streets special and memorable? Why do you choose to walk on them in lieu of using other modes of transportation (other than because they get you from point A to B)? What are the specific elements on the streets that make it pleasant to walk or bike? Do the activity centers, green spaces, tree canopy, streets, or other features (noted below) contribute to what makes certain streets special or memorable?
- On Santa Monica Boulevard there are areas that are livelier than others. **What urban design characteristics make the active areas feel welcoming** and what elements make the other areas feel less welcoming? Consider whether the building facades, windows, signage, entrances, sidewalk conditions, walls, colors, etc. vary between those areas that are more or less lively.

Please also take a moment to read through the Ground Floor *Visual Survey of Santa Monica Boulevard*, which is attached. The Visual Survey looks at the façades along Santa Monica Boulevard and categorizes them into four typologies. We will use this as a discussion tool in our meeting.

Existing Conditions/Key Issues

Urban Design in the Eastside presents a unique character with residential neighborhoods flanking the main commercial spine along Santa Monica Boulevard. The Eastside is home to many destinations, both locally and regional, with concentrations of activity at La Brea and Santa Monica and also at Fairfax and Santa Monica. The area is home to three green spaces with another right outside the City-boundary, including a neighborhood park, pocket park, and community garden. Most green space is concentrated in the eastern side of the study area, but still 53% of Eastside residents live within a short walk to a park or community green. Tree canopy coverage varies

Eastside Working Group Meeting – May 24, 2016

throughout the district with a denser canopy throughout the eastern areas. Most streets in the Eastside are ‘human-scaled’ and pleasant to walk along and Santa Monica Boulevard has several traffic calming and pedestrian improvements in place. Architectural styles range from Craftsman Bungalow, Courtyard, Post-war Courtyard, Mediterranean Revival, Spanish Revival, to Mid-Century Modern.

For our meeting, the discussion about urban design on the Eastside will be organized into the topic areas listed below.

- **Activity Concentration & Places to Go.** Includes regional and neighborhood destinations, hubs of activity, big picture characteristics, barriers, themes, and zoning.
- **Green Spaces.** Includes park typologies, amenities, and locations, along with areas of influence.
- **Tree Canopy.** Includes an analysis of tree canopy typologies and coverage for streets in the Eastside.
- **Streets.** Includes a presentation of street types, façade types for Santa Monica Boulevard, and existing and proposed sidewalk and street improvements. Also includes discussion about the façade design elements for commercial and residential buildings.

Current Programs or Initiatives

The discussion will include a summary of the plans and studies the City has already implemented, is currently working on, or will be working on in the future to address urban design in the Eastside, including but not limited to:

- 1) Ground Floor Visual Survey of Santa Monica Boulevard (attached)
- 2) Historic Survey of Craftsman Homes
- 3) Plummer Park Master Plan
- 4) Street Media Project
- 5) Neighborhood Traffic Management Study
- 6) City-wide Crosswalk Study (as part of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Plan Update)
- 7) Multi-Family Development Study

We would like to hear from the EWG members about whether you are aware of these studies or have heard feedback from others in the community - to better understand perceptions and effectiveness. This summary will provide a framework for understanding whether the existing City programs are adequately addressing the key urban design issues.

Future Opportunities

Finally, we will dive into a discussion to generate ideas to shape future programs, services, and projects the City could enact to enhance urban design on the Eastside.

Your feedback will be critical here. We would ask you to consider the following questions in advance of the meeting:

- 1) What is special about the Eastside in terms of its design aesthetic & character?
- 2) What makes the Eastside ‘beautiful’?
- 3) What urban design assets have you seen in other parts of the City (or in other places) that you like for the Eastside?
- 4) What are your public space goals for the Eastside? (e.g. do you want to see more parks? More open space? Nicer streets? Improved crossings? Preserved character & form?)
- 5) What park & green spaces typologies make sense for the Eastside?

Eastside Working Group Meeting – March 22, 2016

- 6) Which Eastside streets do you most like to walk on & why?
- 7) Do the streets appropriately support their uses?
- 8) What amenities are top on your list for the Eastside (e.g. public art, trees, seating, lighting, signage, wayfinding, dog park, fitness, sports, gardens)?
- 9) What building elements (commercial and residential) should have design guidance?

If you have any questions in advance of the meeting, please feel free to contact Garen Srapyan, Associate Planner, at 323.848.6827 or GSrapyan@weho.org.

We look forward to seeing you next week.

Upcoming Eastside Working Group Meetings

At the end of the meeting, we will discuss the schedule of future Working Group meetings. As part of this discussion, we can brainstorm on the idea of conducting a walking tour to discuss recommendations and potential changes to the physical environment. Additionally, if there are topics that you feel need to be covered by the EWG, please bring these up at this time.

Meeting Date	Proposed Topics
May 24, 2016	4. Urban Design/Community Character & Public Spaces (R+A, HereDesign)
June 28, 2016	5. Housing (R+A, RSG)
July 26, 2016	6. Review of recommendations; discussion of additional topics – potential walking tour of the Eastside
Aug 23, 2016	HOLD; No meeting currently scheduled
Sept 27, 2016	7. Evaluation & Prioritization (R+A, HereDesign, RSG, N/N)
Oct. 25, 2016	HOLD; No meeting currently scheduled
Nov 22, 2016	8. Presentation of Draft Plan (R+A)

Attachments

- A. Ground Floor Visual Survey of Santa Monica Boulevard (Eastside)