

**DRAFT MINUTES
EASTSIDE WORKING GROUP
CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD
MAY 24, 2016
6:30 P.M.**

**COMMUNITY CONFERENCE ROOM
WEST HOLLYWOOD CITY HALL
8300 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA 90069**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Bianca Siegl.

- A. Pledge of Allegiance
Garen Srabyan led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. Reminder to Speak Clearly Into Microphone and to Turn Off All Cellular Phones and Pagers

Working Group Members and public were reminded to speak clearly into their microphones to accommodate the public record tapes and the hearing-impaired.

- C. Roll Call

Working Group Members present:

Justine Block, Chad Blouin, Rose Disarno, Carlos Florez, Emily Gable, Tod Hallman, Brian Keith Holt, Steve Martin, Jared Miesler, Jesse Slansky, Agassi Topchian, Neal Zaslavsky

Working Group Members absent:

Marina Berkman, Dani Shaker

Staff present:

Bianca Siegl, Long Range and Mobility Planning Manager
Garen Srabyan, Associate Planner
Stephanie Reich, Urban Designer
Danny Casillas, Administrative Specialist III

- D. Approval of Minutes
Motion: Approve minutes, Working Group meeting of April 26, 2016 with the following change:

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Page 3: add "Traffic Circles and other traffic calming devices" as a discussion point.

Moved: Blouin Second: Zaslavsky
Aye: Blouin, Disarno, Florez, Gable, Hallman, Holt, Martin, Miesler, Slansky, Topchian,

Abstain: Block, Zaslavsky

Motion passed.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ruth Williams, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke about a lack of retail in new developments.

Cathy Blaivas, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke about funds from Casden's donation for a City Library.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Urban Design, Community Character and Public Space

Urban Design

Here Design presented background information about urban design on the Eastside and asked the EWG to weigh in our various topics through targeted discussion questions. Below is a summary of the discussion and findings:

District Character

- Expand the craftsman survey to include all R1 areas
- Create more areas for outdoor dining along Santa Monica
- Beach Nation is a great example of open space and outdoor dining
- Homeless is an issue, especially on trash days. Recommend a study to explore centralized and underground trash and recycling facilities to reduce incentive for individuals collecting trash
- Air conditioning units sticking out of apartment buildings is an issue
- Identify solutions for "fly fans" above store doors
- Explore other locations for new gas meters that do not impact the urban environment

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- Find opportunities for more public artwork on the Eastside; this includes murals and attractive billboards.
- Explore district-level signage as a way to differentiate the Eastside
- Need to identify the type of retail that should be on Santa Monica Blvd and use this as a way to differentiate the Eastside
 - o Should look at other areas with distinct retail characters
- EWG should do a walking tour of the Eastside to identify areas they like and don't like
- Promote hip boutiques retail stores
- Refurbish the facades on existing buildings; develop a program to provide incentives
- Want more of a SoHo feel to the Eastside
- Should there be a separate "brand" on the Eastside? There were varying opinions but most wanted a brand/identify for the Eastside that is part of the City but also unique such as the "West Hollywood Studio District" or the "West Hollywood Entertainment District".
- Need to develop the property where "Paris House" is
 - o Find incentives to encourage redevelopment of certain parcels
- Preserve urban village character – mom and pop orientation; don't want to create the same environment as there is on the Westside – lots of high end stores that no one can afford.
- Biggest problem on Santa Monica is transparency of buildings and attractiveness of buildings
 - o Recommend that public art funding be used for façade improvements
 - o Commission artists to paint murals or create other public art on blank walls and unattractive facades.
- New developments are "brutal" and create walls of uniform storefronts
 - o Need a character to the storefront
 - o Recommendation for City to create design guidelines for retail storefronts
- Concern that the design review board does not have the expertise to evaluate projects; recommend a new/different design review process with design/architectural expertise
- Identity of the areas should be drawn from studios and history of the area as a movie and arts district.
- Use zoning code to encourage more "al fresco dining" and expand the outdoor café and restaurant culture.
 - Recommendations were made to minimize the visual impact of The Lot on Santa Monica Boulevard; ideas included painting the wall or getting local artists to paint murals that depict the film history of the

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Eastside. Staff identified challenges with the building being an historic property and this limits options for changes to improve transparency.

Since there were a lot of topics covered at the meeting, EWG members recommended that there be additional conversations on residential and commercial design guidelines.

Green Spaces

- There is a concern that the City's parks are being developed with public buildings; recommend creating a "green space" or "park" designation or zoning district to protect "green" space.
- Want more green spaces/open spaces as part of private development. This includes doing a better job of requiring that pocket parks are developed as part of development projects and that these parks are accessible to and welcoming of the public. Example: Formosa Park could have been designed in front of the building and not next to it, since the back of the Park is less-accessible and visible.
 - o Recommendation: create requirements to have green space in front of buildings.
- Identify ways that the relationship between public spaces and private property can be more transparent; develop design guidelines for better blending public and private spaces.
- Develop requirements for new development to provide green space and open spaces.
- Develop incentives to keep trees on private property; The City has a Heritage Tree program. The recommendations report should include a program to partner with property owners to provide incentives for preserving the existing tree canopy.

Streets

- Explore different street trees on Santa Monica Boulevard; the trees should provide more green and shade.
- Create more streets with a consistent tree canopy. Recommendation: update the tree palette for street trees and identify consistent tree species for individual streets.
 - o Note: The City's Facilities Division is updating street tree plan.
 - Tree maintenance occurs right when the trees start to provide shade; need better landscaping standards so that trees are not pruned when they are just starting to provide

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shade. EWG members requested more data and information on why tree trimming occurs before trees create a canopy over the street and sidewalk with shade.

- Explore using “red zones” on streets near corners for extending the landscaped parkway on the sidewalks.
- Find opportunities for planting street trees in front of “Dingbat”-style buildings. This could include the space between driveways, which currently are regulated so that they preclude trees being planted in between.
- Explore adding a parkway with trees along Fountain in certain locations where there is excess right-of-way.
- On Detroit, explore blocking off the street and making it a cul-de-sac; the area could get a large planting strip. (Note: multiple EWG members responded positively to this suggestion)

Ruth Williams, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke about lighting

Cathy Blaivas, WEST HOLLYWOOD, expressed gratitude for the working group

Stephanie Harker, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke about zoning

Michael Dolan, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke about Branding West Hollywood with specific districts

Michael Wojtkielewicz, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke about Dis[pleasing mixed use architecture and neglected Community Garden.

Opportunities for Community Input

City staff identified the need for additional community input on the Eastside Community Plan. During August and September, staff will attend community events to: 1) inform the community about the planning process; 2) solicit basic input on issues and recommendations; 3) inform the community about the Eastside Community Event scheduled for September 18, 2016.

B. Upcoming Eastside Working Group Meetings

City staff and Raimi + Associates provided a brief update on the content and structure of future meetings. The following was decided:

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- Future meetings will be from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Thus, meeting will be extended by 30 minutes since there is a lot of material to cover in each meeting.
- The July meeting may need to be extended to 9 pm. A decision will be made following the June meeting.
- There will be a walking tour of the Eastside during the summer. The date will be determined at a later date but EWG members requested that the tour occur in mid-summer. The walking tour will occur on a weekend day.
- Meetings in August will focus on specific recommendations developed by the EWG, with a focus on topics where there may not be consensus among EWG members.

4. WORKING GROUP MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

No item

6. ADJOURNMENT

Action: The Eastside Working Group adjourned at 8:40 p.m. until the next meeting on June 28, 2016, 6:30 p.m., West Hollywood City Hall, 8300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Community Conference Room West Hollywood, California 90069

APPROVED BY MOTION OF THE EASTSIDE WORKING GROUP THIS 28TH DAY OF JUNE 2016.

Bianca Siegl

ATTEST:

Staff Liaison