

THE UPDATE OF THE HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN WILL FAIL

By Richard Platkin
East Hollywood Neighborhood Council Planning Committee
Address: 6400 W. 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048.

The proposed Update of the Hollywood Community Plan not deliver what its boosters claim: *the plan will produce successful transit oriented development, exactly what a car-oriented city like Los Angeles needs*

This is an admirable goal, and city planning professionals fully understand that sustainable cities are those in which most residents use mass transit and live in apartment houses.

This planning principle, however, needs to be applied to other cities correctly. Otherwise high-density schemes, like the Hollywood Plan, will be doomed to failure. Furthermore, when not executed correctly, it means that claims that a proposed plan has been prepared for environmental reasons are just window dressing for real estate speculation.

What then would be the correct application of the New York City high-density model to Hollywood? *High density must be paired with high amenities.*

The most important amenity is mass transit, primarily subways that have frequent trains, locate stations within several blocks of most residents, and offer destinations throughout an entire metropolitan area. While we all hope Los Angeles will eventually have such a transit system, high density housing without it will not succeed.

The second necessary amenity is a diversity of land uses that can be reached on foot. Owen argues that New York City's high density works because it is a walking city. Unlike Hollywood, parks, restaurants, stores, and services are within an easy walking distance of most apartments.

The third amenity is high quality sidewalks. This means sidewalks that are wide, well maintained, with a tree canopy and street furniture. Los Angeles not only gets extremely low marks for its beat-up sidewalks and piecemeal urban forest, but this plan also offers no public works program to address these obvious deficiencies.

My conclusion is that Hollywood needs a community plan that takes this comprehensive approach. It is not enough to green-light large buildings, but otherwise ignore the public and private amenities that allow high density living to succeed.