

Chamber of Commerce VS Hollywood Neighbors

The black text is the Chamber's creation. The red text is the response from People for Livable Communities. The red text rebuttal illustrates that there is no data to support the Chamber's claims. The facts contradict the Chamber. See Wendall Cox's article and "*If Smart Growth is So Smart, How Come No One Wants to Live There?*" 4-05-2012 by Ed Braddy attached to this document.

Original Hollywood Community Plan

Response to Issues Raised by Opponents

Time to Move Forward

- City Planning staff has worked for eight years on the proposed Hollywood Community Plan Update and held more than **150 meetings with the community**. There has been more than enough opportunity for input into the plan. It is time to move forward and to adopt the plan. **150 Meetings? This is greatly exaggerated. We need to see a list of each one.**
- Because we have been working with an outdated community plan that is now 23 years old, developers have had to seek numerous variances on proposed projects that have opened them up to legal challenges. A new plan will clearly detail the City's expectations and help guide proposed developments so that they do not need to face lawsuits for seeking changes from archaic requirements. It is time to take action to give the community a plan with clear, updated guidelines for development. **This Plan is to benefit developers – this is true.**
- The plan provides predictability for ALL constituents – residents, small business owners, property owners, developers and the businesses we want to attract to Hollywood. **The General Plan, the central organizing element of the Los Angeles General Plan, is Growth Neutral while the HCP Update is not. According to the General Plan Framework Element's Chapter 2, Growth and Capacity: "*The General Plan Framework Element is population growth neutral: it is not the intent of the Framework Element to cause any specific level of population growth to occur. It is a plan to accommodate whatever growth does occur in the future, which could include loss of population.*"** In contrast to this document, the Department of City Planning, has argued that they are promoting a plan which fosters growth because new residents and new high density apartments are needed to make sure transit and transit oriented development will succeed.

If Smart Growth is So Smart, How Come No One Wants to Live There?

04.05.2012

Ed Braddy



CITY PLANNING AND POLITICS - It's a given in our representative system that policies adopted into law should have popular support. However, there is a distinction to be made between adopting a policy consistent with what a majority of people want, and pushing a policy while making dubious claims that it harnesses "the will of the people."

The former is a valid exercise in democracy; the latter is a logical fallacy. [\[link\]](#) Smart Growth advocates are among the most effective practitioners of Argumentum ad Populum, urging everyone to get on the bandwagon of higher densities, compact mixed-uses, and transit orientation because all the "cool cities" are doing it. Smart Growth advocates also claim this is what people prefer, even if it is not how they currently live.

The two core features of Smart Growth land use — high densities and multi-family dwellings — are simply not preferred by most Americans in most places, despite the trendy push for Livability, New Urbanism, Resilient Cities, Smart Codes, Traditional Neighborhood Design, Transit Oriented Developments or any other euphemistic, clever name currently in fashion.

Survey Says!

In the internal data of the [2011 Community Preference Survey](#) commissioned by the National Association of Realtors, no specific question was asked about density, but 52 percent of respondents said, if given a choice, they would prefer to live in traditional suburbs, small towns or the rural countryside. Another 28 percent chose a suburban setting that allowed for some mixed uses (Question 5). Taken together, this shows an overwhelming preference for low densities. Only 8 percent of the respondents favored a central city environment.

As for vibrant urbanism, only 7 percent were "very interested" in living in a place "at the center of it all."

Most people wanted to live “away from it all” (Question 17). An astonishing 87 percent said “privacy from neighbors” was important to them in deciding where to live. One can reasonably infer that a majority of this majority would favor low density places with separated uses rather than crowded, noisy mixed use locations that blur the line between public and private.

When presented with a range of housing choices, 80 percent preferred the “single-family detached house” (Question 6). Only eight percent chose an apartment or condominium. Furthermore, 61 percent preferred a place where “houses are built far apart on larger lots and you have to drive to get to schools, stores, and restaurants” over 37 percent who wanted a place where “houses are built close together on small lots and it is easy to walk to schools, stores and restaurants” (Question 8).

So -- absent the loaded terms and buzzwords that are central to Smart Growth -- a large majority of randomly selected people from across the country showed a strong preference for the land use pattern derisively referred to as “sprawl.”

Yet the press release from the National Association of Realtors proclaimed that “Americans prefer smart growth communities.” This is because on Question 13, respondents were given a description of two communities:

Community A, a subdivision of only single family homes with nothing around them. Not even sidewalks!

Community B: lots of amenities all “within a few blocks” of home. Of course, the description neglected to mention the population density and degree of residential stacking required to put all those dwellings in such close proximity to walkable retail. This was a significant omission, since the first housing option offered in Community B was “single family, detached,” on “various sized lots.”

Community B received 56 percent support.

So, with just one response to an unrealistic scenario, out of twenty answers that included many aversions to Smart Growth, the myth that people prefer Smart Growth was spread. The National League of Cities released a Municipal Action Guide to thousands of elected and appointed officials declaring the preference for Smart Growth, and the online network Planetizen, among others, uncritically helped spread the news.

Missing from the triumphalism was this important caveat in the 98-page analysis of the results by the consultants who conducted the survey:

“Ideally, most Americans would like to live in walkable communities where shops, restaurants, and local businesses are within an easy stroll from their homes and their jobs are a short commute away; as long as those communities can also provide privacy from neighbors and detached, single-family homes. If this ideal is not possible, most prioritize shorter commutes and single-family homes above other considerations.”

In addition to spinning the results of preference surveys, Smart Growthers also ignore them. Maryland is a case study in how to disregard what people want while claiming the opposite. In drafting a statewide growth management plan that anticipated “increased demand for housing, an aging population, and diverse communities,” Maryland officials ignored a robust 55+ Housing Preference Survey from Montgomery County that specifically addressed this concern.

The survey showed that most seniors planned to remain in their present homes upon retirement. Only 30 percent planned to move, and, of that group, only a small percentage would consider an apartment or condominium. This should have mattered to Maryland officials trying to gauge housing preferences for their senior population. Instead, the architects of PlanMaryland looked elsewhere to find studies that reinforced their assumptions.

There is an abundance of examples like these, and the key to understanding how they influence decision-makers lies in the conflation of specific amenities with the overarching concept of Smart Growth. For

example, Todd Litman's *Where We Want to Be*, published by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute, claims that "preference for smart growth is increasing due to demographic, economic and market trends such as aging population, rising future fuel prices, increasing traffic congestion, and increasing health and environmental concerns."

Does this mean most seniors – such as those in Maryland – want to live in high density, mixed use, transit-oriented apartments even when they say they don't? Hardly. Litman concedes that "most Americans prefer single-family homes," but finds "a growing portion want neighborhood amenities associated with Smart Growth including accessibility, walkability, nearby services, and improved public transport."

Those amenities are things like sidewalks, which evidently are now a Smart Growth invention, and shops that are close to (but not mixed into) residential areas. Litman's clever construction – e.g., sidewalks equal walkability equal Smart Growth policy – is convincing to officials who mistakenly conclude that their constituents must want Smart Growth when, in fact, they do not.

(Ed Braddy is the executive director of the American Dream Coalition, a non-profit organization promoting freedom, mobility and affordable homeownership. This article was posted first at newgeography.com) Photo by W. Cox: Rail station in Evry, a suburb of Paris

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Tags: Smart Growth, high density, transportation

CityWatch
Vol 10 Issue 28
Pub: Apr 6, 2012

But this turns the entire Framework on its head. It uses population growth to promote transit and transit oriented development work, when the purpose of transit is to meet the mobility needs of the populations, just like the purpose of housing is to meet their needs for shelter. The HCP needs to be growth neutral in order to be consistent with the General Plan Framework Element. See:
<http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cwd/framwk/chapters/02/02.htm>

The Plan PROTECTS Residential Neighborhoods

- The proposed plan is designed to protect Hollywood's residential neighborhoods. **By surrounding them with density and high rise developments with no infrastructure support?**
- The plan provides for enhanced protections for open spaces and maintains restrictions on hillside development. **Again, no sound mobility plan in the flats where density is planned means people will be stuck in the hills with little chance for speedy emergency response and no way to evacuate in an emergency.**
- The plan includes policies supporting additional open space and the creation of the Hollywood Central Park over the 101 Freeway. **This park is a dangerous proposition and focuses park funding on one area to the exclusion of the remaining community devoid of park space. The park raises more questions than it answers and has not been evaluated for long-term safety.**
- The plan directs development into the central area, adjacent to mass transit and away from residential neighborhoods. It preserves single-family residential neighborhoods, historic resources, theatre districts, post production, entertainment, and media district uses and directs future growth where there is the capacity and transportation infrastructure to support it. Hillside protections are strong, with new subdivision and slope density requirements. **Again, no sound mobility plan in the flats where density is planned means people will be stuck in the hills with little chance for speedy emergency response and no way to evacuate in an emergency. Also, the "transportation infrastructure" cannot support the basic mobility needs of any populace. In other words, the subway doesn't serve the broader community – "you can't get there from here."**

"Manhattanization" of Hollywood

- Arguments that the Community Plan will lead to the "Manhattanization" of Hollywood don't match reality. **Shifting of FAR to 6:1 in the "Hollywood**

Corridor” of Vine, Hollywood, Cahuenga will allow for increased height with no basis in rationale to support this development. Facts about decreasing population point to DownZoning rather than UpZoning Hollywood. DownZoning the Hollywood Corridor and funding infrastructure improvements makes more sense and removes the Manhattanization argument.

- Under the current, 23-year-old zoning for central Hollywood, the allowed “Floor- Area Ratios” (FAR) range from 2:1 to a high of 6:1. Under the proposed new Community Plan, the allowed FARs range from 3:1 to a high of 6:1. The highest zoning that is allowed by right is 4.5:1. The majority of properties have a 3:1 FAR, with the 4.5:1 FAR close to transit stations. In order to get to the maximum allowed 6:1, a developer must go through the Planning Commission and City Council, with hearings to allow public input. If the zoning has changed to allow 6:1, the work for the community will be to fight against this. At present, the burden is on the developer to prove that the community NEEDS this kind of development. The community needs to have a level playing field with the developers and today this is a struggle. If the developers have a right to build at 6:1, the balance is in their favor to do so.
- By contrast, zoning in Downtown L.A. ranges from an FAR of 6:1 to a maximum of 13:1. When viewed in this context, it is easy to see how ridiculous the charges are that the new plan will result in Hollywood becoming another Manhattan. Hollywood becoming anything near Downtown L.A., is an insult to those who would like to maintain the Old Hollywood feel. It is also poor judgment to create another Downtown L.A. in a community like Hollywood without studying, supporting and funding infrastructure expansion and improvement. None of this is provided for within the Hollywood Community Plan Update.

Regional Center

- Hollywood has been recognized as an important regional center of Los Angeles since at least the 1920s. The First National Bank Building, at the corner of Hollywood and Highland, was the tallest building in Los Angeles when it was built in 1927. Hollywood Blvd. was known as the great white way of the West during the 1930s and 40s. There is no special funding or consideration for improving the infrastructure along this “great white way” at present so the idea of building 6:1 developments in that corridor is unwise and will no doubt attract lawsuits from community groups to stop it.
- The Regional Center designation dates back to 1970, and was adopted in

the 1974 Centers Concept Plan. It is a little late now to be calling for Hollywood to be deleted as a regional center. Since its designation in 1974, there has been a tremendous investment in the infrastructure of Hollywood to assist in its regional center role. **The infrastructure in this "Regional Center" is crumbling and so is the infrastructure in the small residential neighborhoods surrounding this "Regional Center" including the residential hillside neighborhoods. The "Regional Center" is not an island that can stand alone. The Hollywood area needs to have infrastructure monitoring conducted, funds secured, and improvements planned. This is not part of the current Hollywood Community Plan.**

- Other than Century City, there is no other community in the City that makes more sense to be considered a regional center. **The people who live in Hollywood do not agree that this should be a Regional Center. They feel that a more appropriate model than Century City or Downtown L.A., is Old Town Pasadena.**

Census Data Importance

- Arguments that because the 2010 census shows a decline in Hollywood's population, don't make sense, unless you are saying that we should not anticipate any growth in Hollywood or the region in the future. **Before a plan can be created with density and FAR of 6:1, there needs to be proof that there somehow is going to be an influx of people coming into the Hollywood Community to live and work. There is no data to support this projection. Rather, data exists proving that the opposite is true.**
- Of greater import is the question of how the new apartment buildings are leasing up that have been built in recent years in central Hollywood. In 2010, a total of 1,072 units were completed. As of March 2012, these were the occupancy rates for these complexes: 83%, 79%, 98%, 95%, 95%, 95%. (The one at 79% was the most recently completed.) These results show that the Hollywood market has been very healthy and that there is indeed demand to live in central Hollywood. **Show us where these figures come from. The W Hotel has had problems with occupancy and has had to shift from condo to apartment status due to difficulty of getting buyers. The Los Angeles Business Journal reported that there is currently a 25% vacancy rate of commercial space.**

Traffic/Jobs

- Much of the traffic occurring in Hollywood derives from commuters traveling through Hollywood to get to other areas, and from people attending special events. **The 2005 TIMP stated that the streets in**

Hollywood cannot be widened. Many major streets are already at a level of service that warrants a grade of F. The two freeways that were originally planned to handle the east-west and north-south commuter traffic through Hollywood were never completed. Increased density is unmitigatable.

- To address traffic impacts, we must address the jobs/housing balance. There is no shortage of housing. Development does not provide local jobs. Any peripheral employment derived from development is gone when the development is complete.
- There are fewer jobs in Hollywood today than there were 25 years ago. It is important for us to attract jobs so residents aren't forced to commute outside of the community. Development does not provide local jobs. Any peripheral employment derived from development is gone when the development is complete.
- Like the rest of the country, the recession has hit Hollywood hard. We need more jobs, and we need more investment. The community plan update provides a blueprint for that growth in a prudent way, calling for increased density and development where it can be accommodated, so that we can continue to make progress in Hollywood without sacrificing the community's unique character. There is no shortage of commercial space. With a 25% current vacancy rate of commercial space and an 8.4% decrease in population in the last 20 years, no additional development is needed. The idea that an equal number of jobs and housing in Hollywood could resolve traffic issues assumes that people should or could be made to live near their employment. This goes against the idea of basic human liberty. According to the America Communities Survey of the US Census, 79% of Americans prefer detached housing away from commercial centers. Simply increasing the density of residential and commercial space does not alter the one to one ratio of persons to jobs or to consumer activity. Additionally, development does not provide local jobs. Any temporary employment derived from development is mostly performed by contractors and specialized workers who would not be living in the area and is gone when the development is completed. A 6:1 FAR sacrifices the "community's unique character".
- With excellent mass transit options, central Hollywood is the logical place for combined residential/commercial development. The mass transit options are not excellent. They fail to take people to multiple destinations. There are no comprehensive east/west subways and no plans for them. Hence the growing traffic issues on the surface streets in current Hollywood.

- The plan supports FAR (floor area ratio) incentives for new job-producing office and media development in central Hollywood. The jobs-housing balance cannot be achieved without commercial offices needed to support the modernization of the entertainment industry. **The bulk of the entertainment industry has fled Hollywood due to the high cost of running a business here (business taxes). Office space will not lure them back in.**
- The plan update will help create a sustainable community here in Hollywood where the car is no longer king, people have choices for getting around, and the streets are more inviting and walkable. **Hollywood will always be car-centric. New York has a tight web of public transit, which Hollywood will never have.**

Crime

- The revitalization of Hollywood over the past 15 years has had a positive impact and has led to an impressive reduction in crime. For the last 10 years since 2000, overall crime has decreased 46 percent, and since 2003, there has been a decrease of 58.9-percent when compared to other LAPD bureaus. **Examine the fact that there are fewer people in Hollywood since 2000, and the lower crime rate makes sense. If density is forced upon this small community, crime will increase to correspond with the greater population.**

Quality of Life

- The revitalization of Hollywood has been positive for the entire community – and especially for residents. Property values are up substantially, there are now safe and attractive places to dine and shop – such as the Arlight Cinemas, Trader Joe’s, Hollywood & Highland and Urban Outfitters. **These amenities are good for this small community and should be encouraged. They are not evidence that more development is needed. This reinforces the point that businesses should serve the residential community’s interests and we welcome them but it is not an argument for additional density.**
- New development in central Hollywood is attracting new, committed stakeholders to Hollywood. Of more than 1,500 housing units completed since 2010, rents (other than for affordable units) start at \$1,800 a month. The new units are bringing residents to the community with discretionary income to support a higher quality of life. **Where does this data exist? If true, then it sounds like an effort to drive out lower income residents from Hollywood and to deplete the supply of affordable housing.**

- The Plan aims to make Hollywood the most vibrant walkable community in Los Angeles – with policies that: preserve wider sidewalks, support comprehensive streetscape plans and boulevard improvement plans, and enhance protections of open space. Wider sidewalks are only possible when there is space to do that widening but there are historic and other established buildings that cannot be moved to provide these wide sidewalks. Few streets can enjoy this sidewalk widening so these are empty promises which, again, lack funding or responsible plans to make them happen.