

# WHAT IS THE HIGHLAND PARK TRANSIT VILLAGE PROJECT?

It is a development project that will eliminate three City-owned street-level parking lots between Avenues 56 and 59 on the north side of Figueroa, adjacent to the Metro Gold Line, Highland Park Station. It will replace them with 80 residential units, spread over three sites, including underground parking garages for the residents and the public. The developer is McCormick Baron Salazar. Many Highland Park residents are concerned about this project and want to stop it, and the local Neighborhood Council has sent a letter to the city expressing its concerns.

## WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THIS?

❖ **The project will hurt local businesses by reducing parking.** During the period of construction (at least 3 years), there will be no parking for the businesses on the north side of Figueroa between 56 and 59, and customers will have to park blocks away. This will economically devastate these businesses and threaten their very survival. In addition, the loss of the street-level parking lots breaks faith with the property owners who gave up their land for the City parking lots in 1962. Highland Park's beloved Old L.A. Farmer's Market will not be able to continue operating, since the blueprints show the sole parking garage entrance on Avenue 58, right where the Market is now. The film crews that use Highland Park as a location will not be able to park their trucks in the parking garage.

❖ **The project violates state environmental laws.** The City Planning Department is required by the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] to state whether the project complies with an existing Environmental Impact Report [EIR], but they have not done this. They have also not responded to the Neighborhood Council's request for a narrowed EIR. There is concern that daily wetting of the construction site for dust abatement will create erosion and runoff into the Arroyo Seco, polluting the Los Angeles River watershed. There will also be an increase in greenhouse gases due to increased traffic.

❖ **The project will strain our already overburdened infrastructure.** Highland Park is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the City, meaning our water and sewer pipes are also old. Residents remember how long it took to restore power after the severe windstorm of December 2011. Highland Park is also the densest neighborhood in the City, according to the 2010 Census. The City's own Mitigated Neighborhood Declaration [MND] admits that there is "insufficient school capacity" for all the new children living in the project, and that the DWP may delay new water connections "until water supply capacity is adequate" [pp.5-6]. The extra fees paid by the developer for the strain on school and recreation resources will not necessarily come back to the community. In addition, the project blueprints show that the middle building on Site 2 will be over 150 feet from the nearest fire lane. **This project will be dangerous for the people who live in it.**

❖ **The project is destructive to the historic Route 66 corridor.** The structures and scenery along Route 66 are listed on the National Park Service's Register of Historic Places and are protected by a Federal law, Public Law 106-45. By building 3.5 story buildings that will obstruct hillside views, dwarf nearby single-family homes, and tower over the buildings along Figueroa Street, the project displays insensitivity to the unique character and cultural heritage of Highland Park.

❖ **The project will not help the cause of social justice.** It will not lower the cost of housing, or alleviate any housing shortage. According to Patch, most rentals in Highland Park are less than \$1,500 per month, and some can go as low as \$300. There are dozens of Section 8 units for rent at any one time. **This project will not ease economic disparities – it will make them worse by increasing demand for City services and causing business failures.**

## WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

**Please attend these crucial meetings and speak your mind!**

Tuesday, August 13, 2013, 2:30 p.m. City Council Planning Committee City Hall Room <b>350</b> , 200 N. Spring St	Wednesday, August 28, 2013, 10:00 a.m. Los Angeles City Council City Hall Room <b>340</b> , 200 N. Spring St
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## GET IN TOUCH WITH US!

[friendsofhighlandpark@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhighlandpark@gmail.com)

# Highland Park Transit Village

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## August 13, 2013 PLUM Hearing addressing the Friends of Highland Park Appeal

Good Afternoon – LD – Friends of Highland Park

*Councilmember Gil Cedillo- I heard you speak of your Fathers service with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne. My Father also served in the 511- 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne, Japan -1945-47, maybe they can get together.*

This from the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)

### **What is a Negative Declaration?**

When faced with a discretionary project which is not exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, a Lead Agency must prepare an "initial study" to determine whether the project may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. If such an effect may occur, the Lead Agency must prepare an environmental impact report.

*This community has voiced its substantial concerns since 2008. My letter one of many on record to MBS, and CD1 of 2008 raises the issues of: lack of community involvement, Housing and Population density, traffic congestion, the elimination of vistas or, 'viewsheds' which characterize Highland Park. Evidenced in the many historic writings on this area from the likes of Charles Lummis (1897), Founders of Occidental College (1898-1914), Founder of Judson Studios (1897), Great Modern Poet Robinson Jeffers (1898), (President) William Taft (1909). I also voiced concern over the impact or potential impact of a 'Heat Island Effect' by intense increase of large hardscape development- raising temperatures and reducing airflow.*

**It is now 2013** and this community continues to voice substantial concern and that is why we are here today with this appeal. We have included many more concerns of **Significant, or Potentially Significant Impacts to:**

**Air quality** – Toxic gases from intense construction to operation – California Air Resource Board identifies Diesel engine exhaust as toxic and carcinogenic, and Trucks as one of the largest sources of this toxic gas. Schools are a Sensitive Receptor of concern. - **NOT INCLUDED in INITIAL STUDY / MND**

**Water Quality**- Development is less than ½ mile downhill to the Arroyo Seco a Major Tributary of the Los Angeles River and Watershed.- **NOT INCLUDED in Initial Study** – No Appropriate Analysis on Water Hydrology- Highland Park is home to several Artesian Springs (White Rose Springs, Indian Head Water, Yosemite Water, Sparkletts Water)- **NOT INCLUDED IN INITIAL STUDY / MND** - *Lead Agency Recommendation June 13, 2013- Recommended Action#11.- ...a FISH AND GAME fee is now required to be submitted ..." on this project.*

**Historic Resources- Masonic Temple, and Federal Preservation Act of Route 66 Corridor and its public adjacent lands (period of significance 1929-1970)- NOT INCLUDED IN Initial Study / MND**

**Open Space and Parks-** National Recreation and Parks Association – Range of People and Parks is 6.2- 10.5 acres Per 1000 People. Trust for Public Lands Park Score for 90042 is 1.4 acres Per 1000. **INITIAL STUDY DOES NOT ADDRESS IN ANY QUALITATIVE OR QUANTITATIVE EVIDENCE OF ANALYSIS.**

**HOUSING AND POPULATION - The Health Atlas for City of Los Angeles (June 2013)**

The data underscores a key issue: **where Angelenos live often influences their health and well-being. Los Angeles is a city with great health disparities and the patterns of inequality are reflected in many of the indicators highlighted in the Health Atlas.**

**Sustainable Cities Program-** USC-Weiss (1987)- “Higher Density Housing Historically is constructed in low-income and Minority areas.- Protecting the affluent predominantly Anglo Westside from such uses.”

**Fair Argument**

The original determination made on the basis of the initial study whether to prepare either a Negative Declaration or an EIR is subject to the "fair argument" test (*Laurel Heights Improvement Assoc. v. U.C. Regents* (1993) 47 Cal.4th 376). In other words, if a fair argument can be raised on the basis of "substantial evidence" in the record that the project may have a significant adverse environmental impact - even if evidence also exists to the contrary - then an EIR is required.

**THIS IS WHAT THE COMMUNITY DEMANDS YESTERDAY AND TODAY.**

THANK YOU