



DAVID E. RYU
COUNCILMEMBER, FOURTH DISTRICT

October 20, 2016

Councilmember Jose Huizar
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmember Huizar,

On August 21, 2014 Townscape Partners submitted applications for their proposed project at 8150 Sunset. From the moment those applications were filed, my constituents have consistently expressed serious concerns about the project's size and the impacts it would have on their neighborhoods.

Over the past year I have demanded that Townscape Partners reach out to affected residents and find common ground on height, density, traffic mitigation, and historic preservation. While some attempts were made, no significant concessions were made by the developers to scale back the project.

On 07/28/16 the City Planning Commission (CPC) approved the proposed project without meaningfully addressing the single most important community concern: height. Additionally, while the CPC added affordable housing, the Commission removed parking which continues to be a significant issue for the neighborhood.

As stated at the CPC, I believe that we are disproportionately incentivizing developers at the expense of achieving more affordable housing, and that this exchange is not equitable for our residents, current or future, who both deserve affordability.

Throughout this time I have attentively listened to the valid concerns that have come to the forefront. My office has pushed for changes to the project design and scope through persistent and direct conversations with City staff and the developers. I cannot support the CPC approved project when it comes before City Council. The following changes must be made in order for this project to proceed:

- Given the adjacent property height limits of 45 ft. the proposed height of the tallest 234 foot tower must be reduced by 20 to 30 percent.
- Reduce the FAR, or in the alternative, decrease the density of the residential units while maintaining the increased workforce and affordable units above Density Bonus requirements.
- Provide Community Benefits to the adjacent community. While I believe a Development Agreement should have been required for this project it was not. In order for the proposed project to proceed there must be a commitment by the Developers that the neighboring community will receive direct benefits.
- Increase affordability overall, with additional workforce housing units. Local low-income residents, those who are building and working in this project all must be included in the application process for these units through extensive and targeted outreach.
- The Lytton Savings Bank was evaluated as being possibly historically significant in the Environmental Impact Report. Subsequently, the Cultural Heritage Commission unanimously recommended that the bank be deemed a Historical Cultural Monument. I vigorously support the designation. I also suggest that the Committee discuss the alternatives within the EIR that factor into preservation.
- Increased parking to restore the parking spaces to those originally proposed by the developer of 494 spaces.
- Increased pedestrian access with 15 foot sidewalk widths on Sunset Blvd and relocating the current bus stop at the triangle to the west on the 8150 site rather than pushing it further to the east to an area without sufficient pedestrian access or safety.
- Traffic improvements and funding to make a safer, smarter intersection and follow the Bureau of Engineering and LADOT recommendations in terms of both process and implementation on this important city and neighborhood element of traffic infrastructure.

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Additionally, I have strongly requested that the developer work with the appellants in a good faith effort to address their specific concerns. These appellants include longstanding community groups and our neighbor, to the west, the City of West Hollywood. They have valid concerns regarding height, sewer hookup, and traffic impacts.

Finally, I have requested that the Planning Department revise their rules on how the City applies the State Density Bonus law (SB 1818). For a few affordable housing units here and there, we are providing developers large incentives, and thus profits, by claiming that the City can not reject their specific incentive requests and that the State is at fault. This is not true, as made clear in CA Code 65915.b.A where it says that the City does not, and should not, grant concessions if “the concession or incentive is not required in order to provide for affordable housing costs”. This has to stop and I believe that we can approach projects that include affordable units with common sense to achieve better results for the community.

Mr. Frank Gehry’s design is unique and has the potential to become a part of the architecturally significant fabric of this neighborhood. However, I want to be clear that I will not support a de facto revision to the Community Plan for this area. Zoning and the General Plan must be respected.

Let’s continue to work with the community and the developers in a transparent manner to achieve the best result possible.

Sincerely,



David E. Ryu
Councilmember, 4th District

CC: Vince Bertoni, Planning Director
Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council

