

# WEST HOLLYWOOD



# THE MISSION OF THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

Shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

## About ULI Technical Assistance Panels

In keeping with the Urban Land Institute mission, Technical Assistance Panels are convened to provide pro-bono planning and development assistance to public officials and local stakeholders of communities and nonprofit organizations who have requested assistance in addressing their land use challenges.

A group of diverse professionals representing the full spectrum of land use and real estate disciplines typically spend one day visiting and analyzing the built environments, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a fashion consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives.

## TAP Sponsor

**City of West Hollywood**

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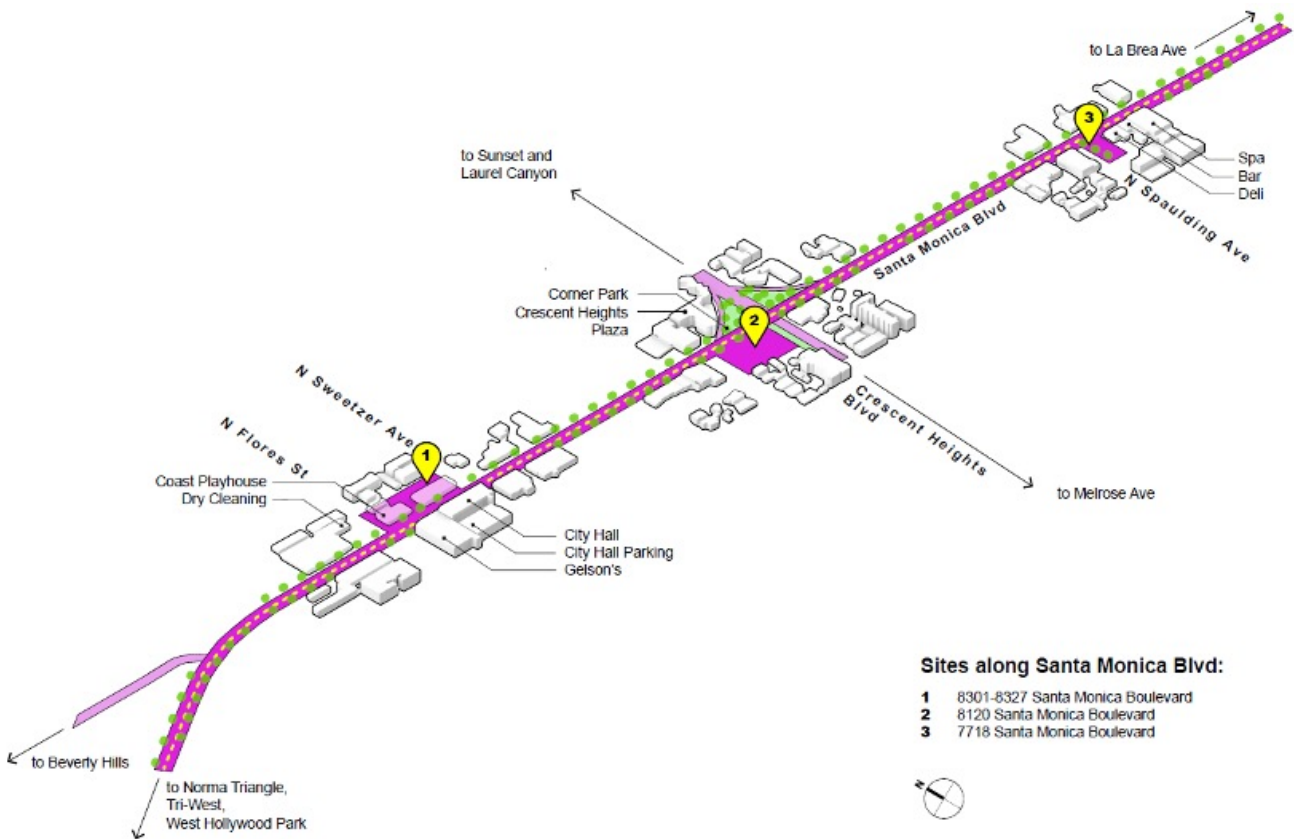
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Assignment

The city of West Hollywood is faced with a bounty of city-owned, but underutilized, parcels. Along with the bounty of development potential provided by these scattered sites comes an overabundance: numerous competing goals for how to make the most of these opportunities. In a city founded with the highest aspirations of inclusion and affordability, the desire to deliver ambitious results can become extremely complicated. Adding more complication: the realities of the housing affordability crisis gripping the entire region and the need for regenerative investments to recover from the shocks and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

West Hollywood is unlike the other cities in the Los Angeles region, having committed to the creation and maintenance of affordable housing from the moment of city's inception. West Hollywood embodies its progressive ideals with a suite of affordable housing programs, including a Rent Stabilization Ordinance (also known as rent control) and an inclusionary zoning program that requires new developments to include an affordable housing component.

The pace at which housing costs are rising, however, requires swift action, new implementation tools, and new financial resources to create and maintain affordable housing options for all income levels. The development of underutilized city-owned land must be included in this effort.

With these competing pressures and aspirations in mind, the city of West Hollywood reached out to the Los Angeles chapter of the Urban Land Institute to perform a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) that assesses the development potential of three underutilized, city-owned sites located along Santa Monica Boulevard. Each of the three city-owned properties studied by this TAP are located on Santa Monica Boulevard to the east of the center of cultural and economic gravity that coalesces on the boulevard around the Pacific Design Center.

### Site 1

- 8301-8315 Santa Monica Boulevard – 21,892 square feet, or half an acre. The location of Joey's Cafe, Crossroads Trading, and Peter's Cleaners.
- 8325 Santa Monica Blvd – 3,749 square feet, or 0.09 acres. The location of the Coast Playhouse.
- 8327 Santa Monica Blvd – 6,061 square feet, or 0.09 acres. The location of Basix Cafe.
- 1108 N Flores St – 4,022 square feet or 0.14 acres. The location of Marix Tex Mex Cafe.

### Site 2

- 8120 Santa Monica Blvd – the unoccupied Crescent Heights/Santa Monica Boulevard lot, totaling 40,140 square feet or 0.92 acres.

### Site 3

- 7718 Santa Monica Blvd - the current location of the Spaulding parking lot, totaling 9,781 square feet or 0.22 acres.

The TAP produced recommendations to help West Hollywood develop these sites in ways that achieve financial sustainability, deliver maximum social and public benefit, and address the prescriptions of the Surplus Land Act (AB 1486), a state law approved in 2019 that mandates local governments to develop underutilized city-owned properties with a priority on new affordable housing. That state law prescribes some of the detail for any potential development of these sites—but the values of the city of West Hollywood are totally in line with the intentions of the law. The city acquired these parcels over a 20-year period, anticipating that the parcels would be redeveloped to provide the public with a return for any capital investment that occurs on those properties—not just a financial return, but the kind of return that maximizes the social and public benefit of any development.

The TAP report that follows met many of the predetermined goals for the development of these sites while also expanding the benefit to the rest of the city with the creation of a new stream of revenue that can be used to identify and protect existing affordable housing resources around the city. The TAP also produced design and development recommendations that orient all developments to the public realm, ensuring that the economic and cultural benefits of these developments will spill onto the sidewalks and streets.

With these three, unique development sites, and the TAP's expansive vision for the benefits that can be achieved by thoughtful, community oriented development, West Hollywood can reconfirm and strengthen its role as an inclusive and diverse community for decades to come.





## Key Questions

The city of West Hollywood asked the TAP to consider the development of these parcels as an opportunity for the city of West Hollywood to accomplish the following potential goals:

- Provide additional market rate, workforce, and affordable housing to meet current demand and satisfy state-mandated Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) requirements.
- Provide additional city or social services to residents.
- Analyze and seek efficiencies in location and provision of city services (consolidate services in block across from City Hall).
- Recommendations for land uses to compliment a live theatre district with Coast Playhouse and Kings Road Park.
- Evaluate market conditions for additional storefront retail development.
- Through urban design and innovative architecture build upon the city's pedestrian orientation and strengthen the city's neighborhoods and entertainment districts.
- Explore opportunities for privately owned public open spaces (POPS).
- Support the city's entertainment and hospitality infrastructure through development of supporting infrastructure such as a conference center or other facilities.
- Provide a long-term revenue stream to the city's general fund to support on going and future city programs and services.
- Evaluate parking demand and requirements to support development scenarios. What is the demand for different types of housing product (i.e., work force, affordable, etc.)?
- Evaluate additional revenue opportunities such as digital signage.
- Evaluate streetscape and public right-of way opportunities to facilitate multi-modal connections to the regional mass-transit system and linkages to existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Evaluate potential to incorporate state-of-the art green building, climate resiliency concepts, and sustainable site options (e.g., net zero, all electric, distributed energy systems, low-carbon materials, native plant landscaping, bioswales, EV charging stations, etc.) distributed energy systems, low-carbon materials, native plant landscaping, bioswales, EV charging stations, etc.)



Additionally, the city does not wish to relinquish fee title to these parcels and prefers to explore development options, which might include the following:

- A ground lease.
- A participating ground lease.
- A public-private partnership (P3).
- A subdivision map, with the city retaining ownership of a portion or the ground lot of the property.
- The city retaining ownership of development and engaging a fee developer utilizing city financing (financing districts or bond).
- Affordability covenants.
- Identifying incentives available to local municipalities in addition to the state's density bonus program to promote the development of affordable housing.

With the challenge of the numerous goals in mind, the city asked the TAP to produce a framework or methodology to analyze these parcels for development. The framework provided by the TAP in the following report provides urban design and land use guidance for the development of each of these sites.



## Major Conclusions and Recommendations

Faced with numerous goals, objectives, and aspirations for these three very different development sites, the TAP focused on what makes West Hollywood unique and beloved among the many great cities of the region and how these sites can be developed to sustain the position of the city in the region.

The affordability of housing is fundamental to the long-term sustainability of the sense of community that makes West Hollywood so unique. The origin story of West Hollywood as a political reaction to rising rents and displacement further cements the role of housing affordability in the identity of the city. The three development sites under consideration in this study offer an opportunity to continue that legacy. Given the scale of the housing affordability challenges, it's a necessity—without addressing the challenge of affordable housing, West Hollywood will continue to evolve into something other than the city that people love and respect today.

By treating all three of these sites as a single development project, working as a cohesive and complimentary vision, the developments proposed in this report can achieve benefits beyond the affordable and workforce housing that can be developed on these sites. In one of its key recommendations, the TAP identified an opportunity to create a new fund for purchasing and preserving naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH)—with revenue generated by these three sites along with other sources in the city.

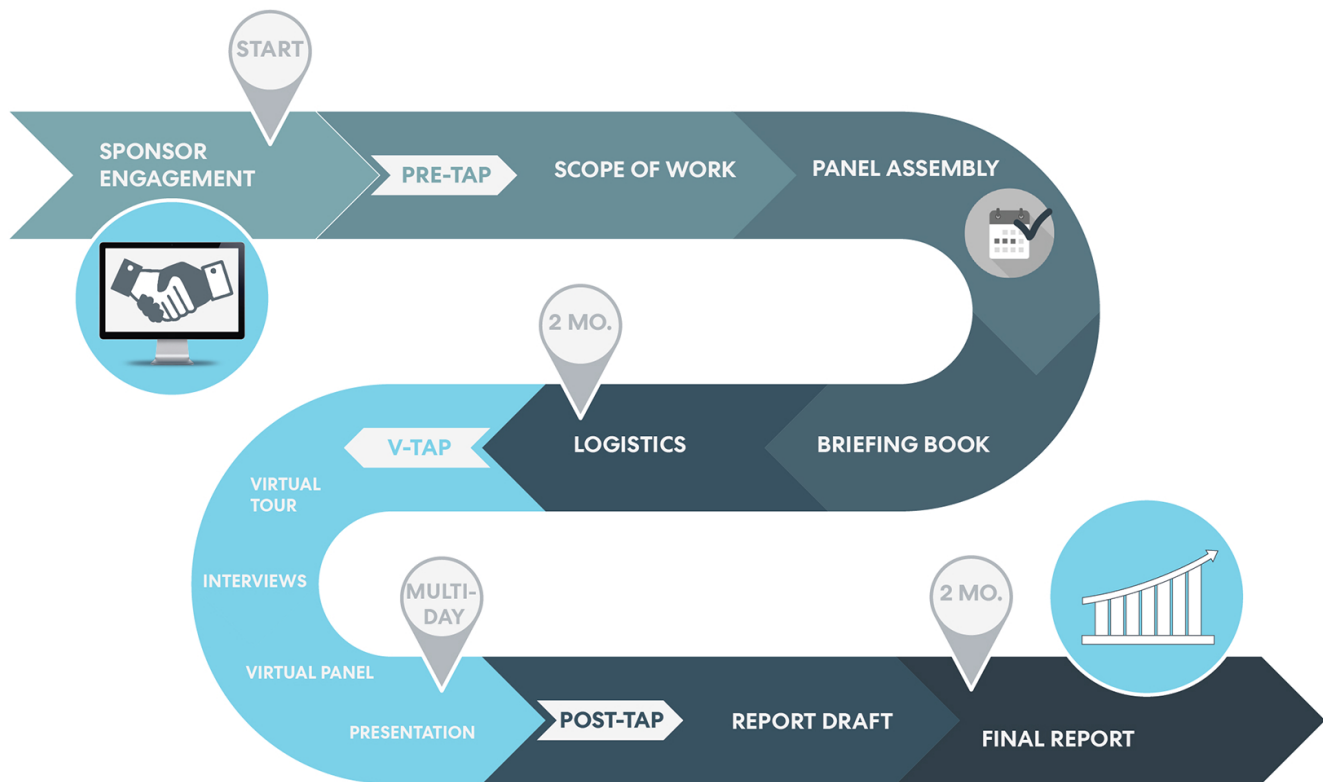


The TAP report also prioritizes a public orientation for the three sites, maximizing the social benefit of every aspect of these developments. The TAP proposes that these three sites can contribute improvements to the public realm along one of Southern California's most dynamic and vibrant boulevards, providing a catalyst for the east side of West Hollywood to take its place alongside the city's other cultural icons of the Sunset Strip and around the Pacific Design Center. By adhering to the most rigorous green building practices, opening each development to the sidewalk, providing a flexible mix of uses that can double as community and public event spaces, and generating revenue for affordable housing opportunities all over the city, the impact of these infill developments can spread far beyond the property lines of these three sites.

Developing these three parcels as a single project offers the additional benefit of faster project delivery, meaning these three sites are primed to immediately contribute to the city's recovery from the ongoing crisis of housing affordability as well as the economic crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic.







Process diagram for the virtual TAP



Given the public health constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, the West Hollywood TAP was conducted online with the assistance of Zoom

# ULI'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS

## Technical Assistance Panel Process

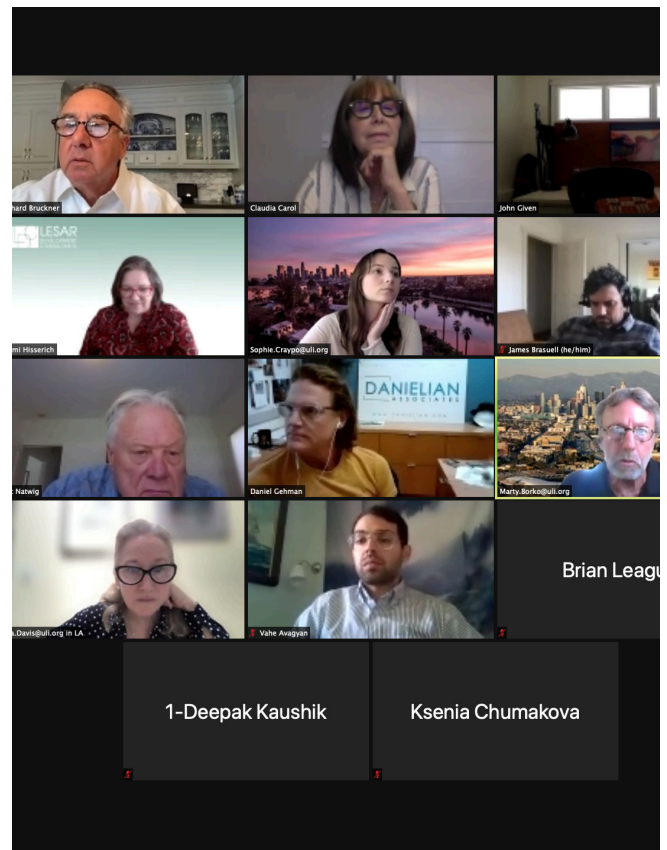
Prior to the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP), ULI members met with representatives from the city of West Hollywood to determine the scope of work for the TAP assignment. After establishing the scope of work, ULI selected panel members with professional expertise that address the stated objectives of the TAP. Prior to the TAP, panel members reviewed background materials, including housing market data, demographics, and the city's unique collection of local housing laws and programs, among other information.

Given the public health constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, the West Hollywood TAP was conducted online with the assistance of Zoom for meetings, Google Drive for collaboration, and photographic evidence and local knowledge for insights into the three city-owned development sites. Several TAP members are local—both living and working in the city—so they were able to tour the sites before convening online.

The typical duration of a TAP—two days—was also extended to a full week to accommodate the physically distanced nature of the exercise. On the first day of the TAP, panel members participated in a virtual tour of the study area and project sites with West Hollywood city staff. On day two, the TAP conducted interviews with city staff, residents, and business owners. On day three, the panelists continued its intensive analysis of the site and the surrounding area while beginning to generate policy, development, and implementation recommendations that were finalized on day four. The TAP panel presented their findings during a final Zoom meeting attended by city staff and community members on day five of the TAP.

## The Experts of the Technical Assistance Panel

ULI convened a panel of professionals representing a variety of disciplines connected to land use and real estate development, architecture and urban design, economic analysis, and affordable housing development financing. Collectively, TAP participants represent a significant gathering of professional expertise relevant to West Hollywood's objectives for the study area. All panel members volunteered to participate in the panel process and did not receive compensation for their work.





# WEST HOLLYWOOD

## Introduction

Located in the heart of metropolitan Los Angeles, the city of West Hollywood was incorporated in 1984 by a unique collaboration of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender activists; seniors; and advocates for affordable housing. In the present day, West Hollywood is a progressive leader among the communities in the Los Angeles region, with a diverse residential population and dynamic local economy. West Hollywood is imbued with idealism, creativity, and innovation.

Totaling only 1.9 square miles, West Hollywood achieves a cultural significance that vastly out measures its size. With iconic destinations, such as the Sunset Strip, Historic Route 66, an LGBTQ entertainment area, and the Pacific Design Center, West Hollywood is also host to visitors from all over the globe. The city's thriving entertainment communities set trends in design, dining, music, fashion, art, and architecture.

The city achieves its outsized influence by its commitment to strong core values: Respect and Support for People; Responsiveness to the Public; Idealism, Creativity, and Innovation; Quality of Residential Life; Promotion of Economic Development; Public Safety; and Responsibility for the Environment.

That spirit of community activism and civic pride thrives in West Hollywood for many of its approximately 37,255 residents. According to the city of West Hollywood's most recent Community Study, nearly 90 percent of respondents rated their quality of life as excellent or good, citing pedestrian orientation, a central location, safe and quiet neighborhoods, amenities, and well-kept infrastructure as the primary benefits of living in the city.

To the members of this Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel, it's clear that the people and the community put the "there there" in West Hollywood.

That doesn't mean West Hollywood is done living up to its ideals. A housing affordability crisis affecting the whole region is also driving up rents and housing costs in West Hollywood. Rents have risen especially quickly, painful effects for the large numbers of renters who call this small city home. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have left people out of work, falling behind on rent, and in need of effective government programs and services.

In the context of this mix of success and risk, the city is beginning to explore opportunities to develop some of the underutilized land it purchased over the past two decades in the hopes that new developments could improve the quality of life in the city by delivering new affordable housing among a long list of desired public benefits. Included among those development opportunities are three sites located on Santa Monica Boulevard—a stretch of the corridor that community members and city officials refer to as "West Hollywood East" or the "Eastside of West Hollywood." The corridor

is home to a diverse population, popular retail and restaurant establishments, and even City Hall, but it has yet to achieve some of the popularity and acclaim afforded other famous corners of West Hollywood.

The goal for the development of these sites is to deliver a bounty of affordable housing—specifically filling the needs of marginalized communities and the city's large population of seniors—while also raising the appeal of the built environment on this stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard.

Any development program for these sites will take place in the context of state housing law, which is becoming more aggressive with every passing year in its mandates for cities to develop new housing—of both the affordable and market rate varieties. One such law, the Surplus Land Act, requires cities to prioritize the development of surplus land as affordable housing. Specifically, the Surplus Land Act requires the city to offer the development opportunity to mission-driven housing partnerships to develop these sites 100% of the housing would need to be affordable with 75% at 80 AMI or lower. The city is also working to fulfill the requirements of the state's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process, which requires the city to aggressively plan for the next eight years of affordable housing development opportunities.

In this context, these development of the three sites under study in this report must produce both more market rate housing and more affordable housing, while also achieving numerous other benefits for the many diverse residents of West Hollywood.



### Community Diversity

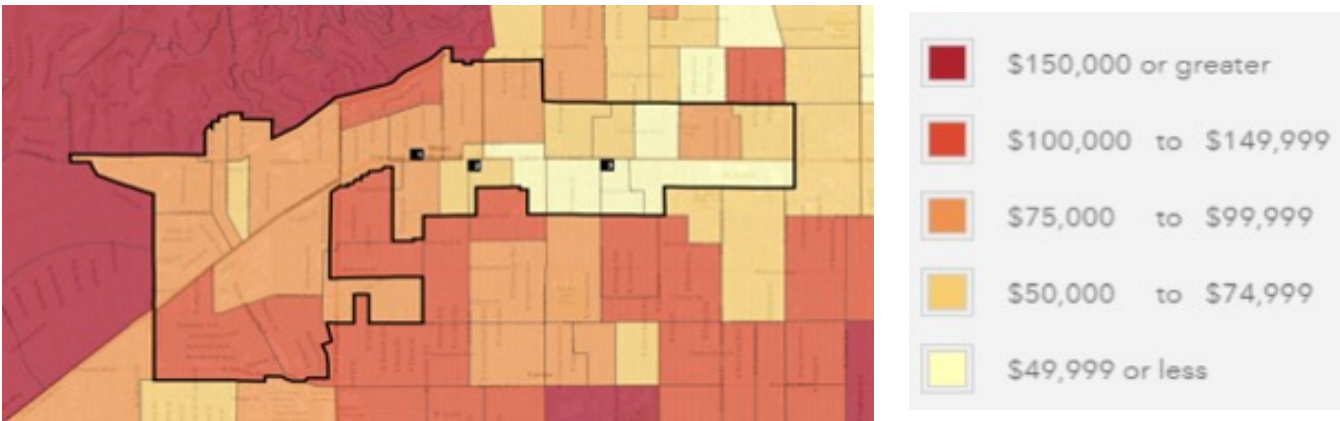
Compared to the surrounding region, West Hollywood is comprised of higher portions of seniors, LGBTQ residents, renters, single resident households, and immigrants from the former Soviet Union. This unique and diverse residential population lends West Hollywood its unmistakable vibrancy.

The city is also home to a broad array of households with different incomes and spending power. Households earning less than \$50,000 a year live throughout the city, as do households at the higher end of the income spectrum.

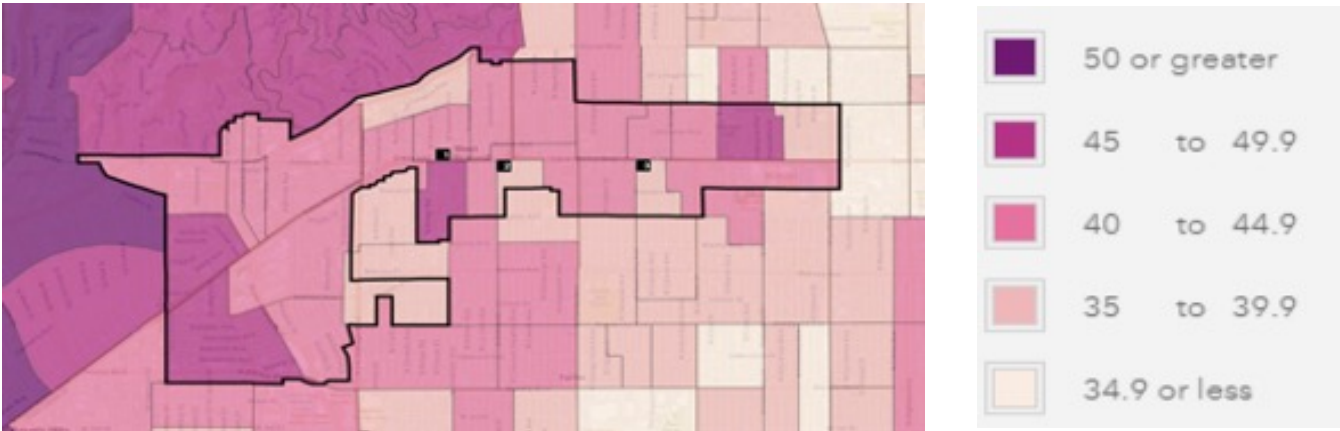
West Hollywood is also clearly a multi-generational city, and residents of different ages can be found all over the city.

The Diversity Index, a methodology created by geospatial technology company Esri, provides a snapshot of the racial and ethnic diversity of West Hollywood. The Diversity Index measures the likelihood that any two households chosen at random in the city will represent households of different racial or ethnic groups. There are multiple pockets of high diversity around the city, including in the blocks immediately adjacent to the lots under consideration in the current TAP study.

Another relevant demographic metric to consider is the high percentage of renter occupied households in the city, especially in the areas immediately adjacent to the three TAP sites. On some of the blocks around these three sites, 75 to 89.99 percent of the households are renter occupied units.

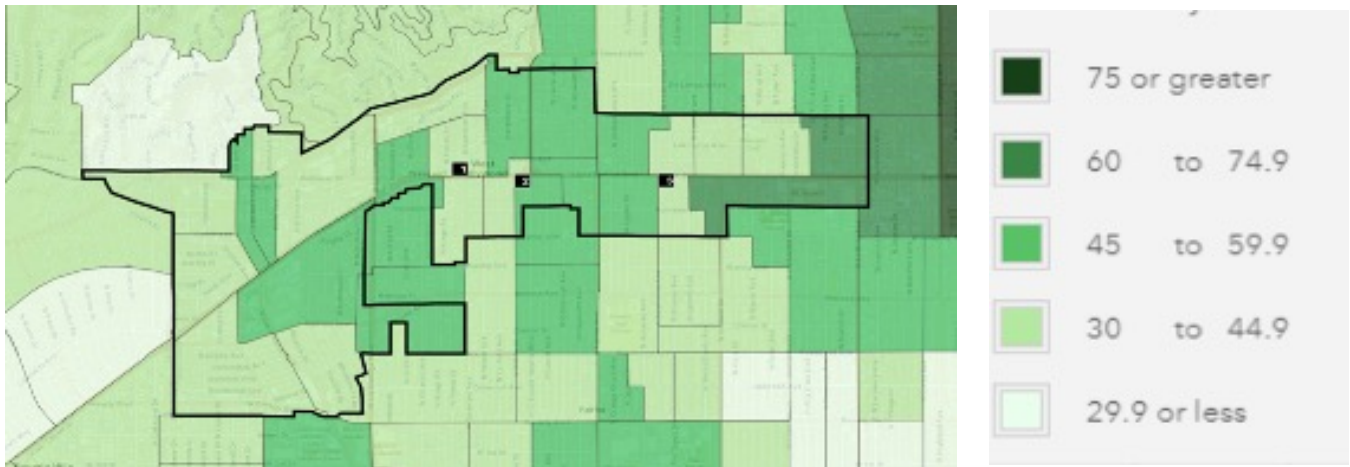


The Median Household Income heat map of West Hollywood shows a broad diversity of income across the city.

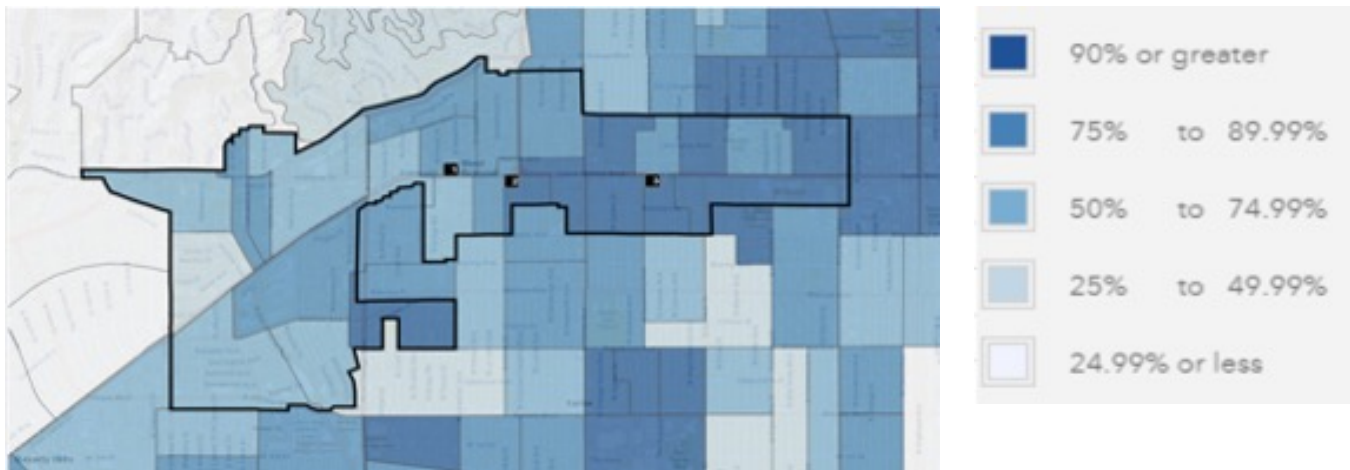


The heat map of Media Age also highlights the diversity of West Hollywood.





There are multiple pockets of high diversity around the city, including in the blocks immediately adjacent to the lots under consideration in the current TAP study.



Most of the city is defined by high numbers of renters, including a majority of renter households in much of the city.

## A Need for Affordable Rental Housing

The city's large population of renters is dealing with the realities of an increasingly expensive housing market. Nearly 53% of West Hollywood renters are rent burdened, meaning they pay 30% or more of their income for housing.

The state of California defines affordability based on income relative to housing costs, separating affordability into three income brackets: very low, low, and moderate. In West Hollywood, very low incomes are set below \$33,099. Low incomes are set between \$33,100 and \$52,959. Moderate incomes are set between \$52,960 and \$66,198.

According to Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy data from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, an estimated 24.8 percent of households in West Hollywood qualified as very low income in 2018. Another 15.7 percent qualify as low income, and another 16.9 percent qualify as moderate income. In the aggregate, 13,209 households in the city, more than half of the city's total, are earning incomes that require housing defined as affordable.

As of 2018, the city had a total of 953 existing affordable units, with 22 additional units in the development pipeline. The city also had 322 inclusionary units, with 157 additional units in pipeline.

The ongoing housing burdens of the city's residents is occurring despite the intentions and the hard work of the city to protect and maintain a large supply of affordable housing. West Hollywood was established as a haven for housing affordability in the region. The city approved its Rent Stabilization Ordinance the year after the city's incorporation and followed up the next year with an Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. In addition to maintaining those two programs, the city currently operates an in-lieu fee program, a commercial impact fee program, and a public benefit payments program to generate revenue for the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The city also operates a partnership program with nonprofit housing providers. Rising housing costs in the city reflect the scale of the challenge of housing affordability in Los Angeles County and the rest of the state and country.

## Loss of Rent Stabilized Units

The West Hollywood Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO) applies to units built before 1979, which applies to 75 percent of the housing units in the city. Rent increases are capped by an Annual General Adjustment calculated based on inflation (i.e., 75 percent of the May Consumer Price Index). The RSO also includes a "just cause" eviction protection, so the affordability protections available to renters in West Hollywood are thoroughly layered, and far more complete than many other cities.

With 80% of households in the city renting their homes, and 75% of the rental housing in the city rent stabilized, the city's rent stabilization program is a primary means of ensuring a level of affordability in the city. That statement comes with a large caveat, however: The nature of rent stabilization allows for rents to reset at market rates whenever a new renter occupies a unit. As rents rise in the surrounding housing market, so too do average new rents. Since the Great Recession, the trend in rents has been rising, quickly, to crisis proportions around the state. In West Hollywood, the growth rate for new rents between 2013 and 2016 was 28%, or approximately 9.3% a year. Adding the following three years into account, the total increase in average rent was 35.4% between 2013 and 2018.

Adding to the legal and market forces working against the power of the RSO to maintain housing affordability in the city, the state of California's Ellis Act allows property owners to remove properties from the rental market, and, thus, from the protections of the RSO. In 2019, 18 properties with 72 units were removed from the rental market. In 2018, 21 buildings with 79 apartments were removed. In total, the Ellis Act has accounted for the removal of 252 properties and 964 units, or 5.3% of the city's previously rent stabilized units.

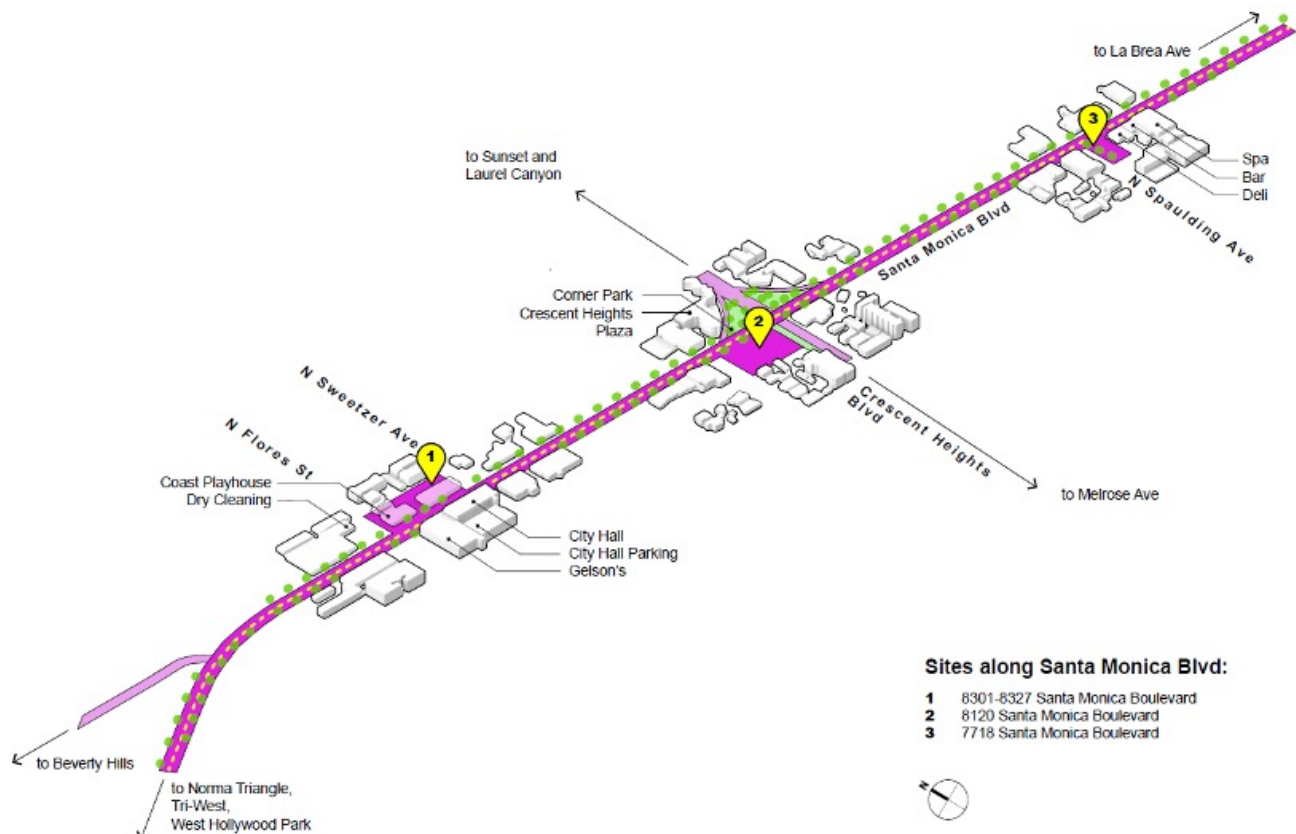
## Site Context

The three sites comprising the TAP study area are all located along Santa Monica Boulevard, one of a few major east-west thoroughfares in West Hollywood, along with Sunset Boulevard to the north and Melrose Avenue to the south. Each site represents a unique collection of opportunities and limits, with varying sizes, orientations, and existing conditions.

Each of the sites share a common zoning designation, however: Community Commercial (CC1), at a maximum of 2.5 floor-to-area ratio. The CC1 zoning designation allows a variety of commercial uses, including retail, professional offices, business support and personal services, entertainment, restaurants, specialty shops, short-term rental accommodations, cultural uses, and small-scale manufacturing uses related to design furnishings, galleries, motion pictures, television, music, or design-related uses. The CC1 zoning designation also allows mixed-use developments with residential and office uses above ground floor retail.

**Site 1**, the most complex of the three development opportunity sites, comprises multiple addresses and existing commercial uses, and is located at the cross street of Sweetzer Avenue, across the street from West Hollywood City Hall:

- 8301-8315 Santa Monica Boulevard – on 21,892 square feet, or half an acre. The location of Joey's Cafe, Crossroads Trading, and Peter's Cleaners.
- 8325 Santa Monica Blvd – on 3,749 square feet, or 0.09 acres. The location of the Coast Playhouse.
- 8327 Santa Monica Blvd – on 6,061 square feet, or 0.09 acres. The location of Basix Cafe.
- 1108 N Flores St – On 4,022 square feet or 0.14 acres. The location of Marix Tex Mex Cafe.





**Site 2** is located a few blocks to the east at 8120 Santa Monica Boulevard at the cross street of Crescent Heights Boulevard. The vacant lot is also the largest of the three development sites in this study, totaling 40,140 square feet or 0.92 acres.

**Site 3** is located at 7718 Santa Monica Boulevard at the cross street of Spaulding Avenue. This, the smallest of the three development opportunity sites, is currently a surface parking lot totaling 9,781 square feet or 0.22 acres.

Between each of these three development opportunity sites, Santa Monica Boulevard is a bustling commercial corridor, with frequent public transit service from the Los

Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and the West Hollywood CityLine Shuttle Bus service. Metro is also considering plans for a light rail route to be added along Santa Monica Boulevard as an extension of the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Project (the Metro K Line) currently under construction in the cities of Los Angeles and Inglewood.

Through this eastern stretch, starting from Site 1 and extending to east to the city's border with Los Angeles, Santa Monica Boulevard has not benefitted from the same investments in pedestrian infrastructure that have transformed the west end of the street near the Pacific Design Center and West Hollywood's border with the city of Beverly Hills.



# LAND USE, DESIGN, AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

## Vision and Key Recommendations

The opportunity for these three development sites is forged by both constraints and pressure.

In context of the limitations of the Surplus Land Act, these three relatively small infill development sites might not seem like the ideal opportunity to achieve the goals established by the city of West Hollywood for the TAP—as it is a constraining goal for the financial sustainability of these sites, especially if they were considered as three, discrete, independent projects.

At the same time, the city of West Hollywood is facing a significant Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) goal—planning for approximately 3,900 new housing units across the city. Aside from the RHNA goal, the most powerful pressure comes from a need for deep affordability in the city—specifically targeted to marginalized communities, people experiencing homelessness, and seniors—as well as a need for workforce housing in the city.

In this political and economic context, these sites present a rare and powerful opportunity as a catalyst for change in the city of West Hollywood and Santa Monica Boulevard. By considering each of these disparate development sites as a single, collective development project, each contributing a piece to the whole, the project can achieve the flexibility necessary for financial sustainability while maximizing the benefit of these sites for the public.

The resources of the three sites could potentially be pooled, if the state allows it, to achieve the 25 percent affordable housing allotment demanded by the state's Surplus Land Act, but the three sites will also include a variety of rental housing types. The goal is

to produce new affordable housing for a wide range of populations—from workforce to low-income. On the low end, the total for this project would add 250 units of unsubsidized, mixed-income housing. On the high end, this development proposal would add 470 unsubsidized, mixed-income housing.

Not only can these three sites work in synergy with each other to maximize the number of affordable and workforce housing units that can be built, quickly, on these three sites, but in the TAP's vision, the potential benefit for these three sites extends to the rest of the city by creating a fund for the city to use to acquire naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) created by restrictive covenants in buildings that would otherwise, in time, convert to market-rate, likely expensive, housing.

Moreover, the TAP illustrates the benefits of developing these three sites with a thorough and creative orientation toward public and community uses, while also enhancing the public realm with urban design and infrastructure improvements that will complete, in a new way, similar work completed on Santa Monica Boulevard to the west. The development proposal would emphasize the "boulevard" in Santa Monica Boulevard. As the city moves away from a car-centric past and, hopefully, a transit corridor future, there will be a lot more pedestrians on the boulevard.

In short, the TAP is presenting a vision for this development project that will achieve public benefits and financial stability far greater than the sum of its parts—all while working within the bounds set by aggressive mandates for affordable housing set by state laws.

## Site 1: The Civic Hub

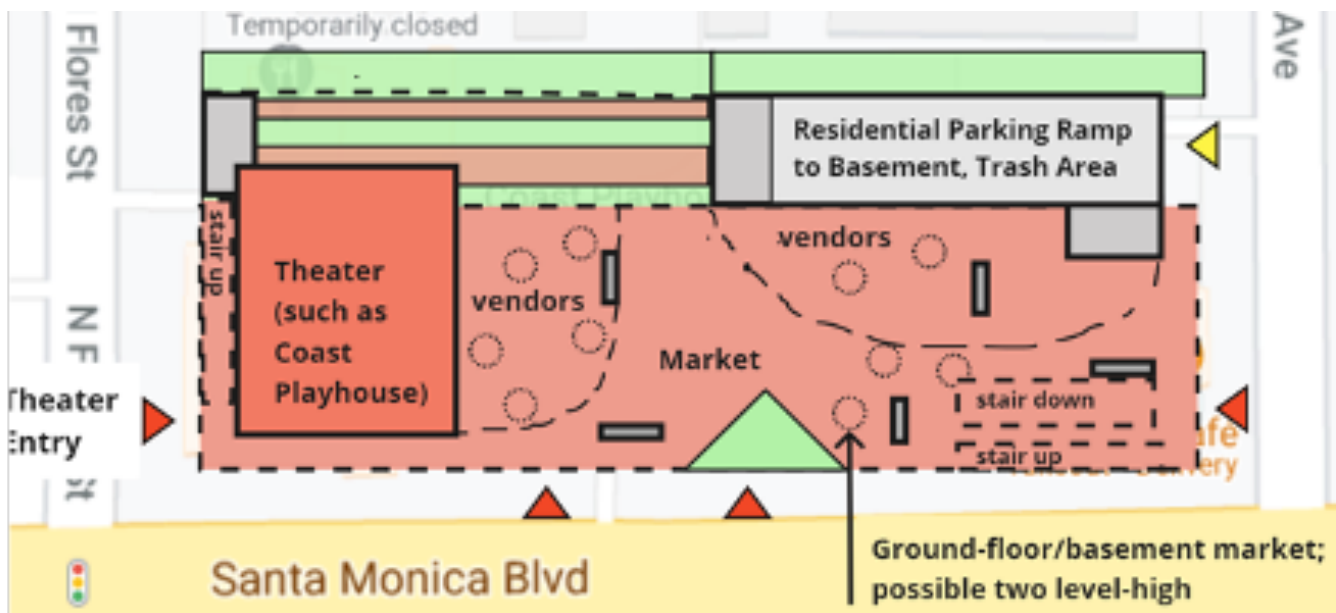
The TAP envisions Site 1 as the "Civic Hub"—both as a branding and promotional opportunity as well as an organizational principle for the proposed development. With its location across Santa Monica Boulevard from City Hall, this site is conveniently and centrally located in the city's cultural landscape. A branding identity like the Civic Hub would broadcast the thriving mix of small businesses, public uses, and open space that can be developed at this location.

The Civic Hub would be a mixed-use site, with mixed-income residential units located above a pocket plaza and community marketplace. The plaza and market would function as a community gathering place, showcasing West Hollywood artists, restaurants, artisans, retailers, and performers.

The plaza and market would orient to the public realm, with pedestrian access from Santa Monica Boulevard. The plaza would provide space for commercial uses like small retailers and incubator space at the street level, with a component also of businesses and public and community space in the plaza below the grade of the boulevard.

The Civic Hub would also enhance easy and safe connection to City Hall by creating a "scramble crossing" at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and Sweetzer Avenue. Scramble crossings (intersections where all vehicle traffic occasionally halts to allow pedestrians to cross in all directions, including diagonally) have grown more popular in the United States in recent years. The most famous example is in Tokyo, at Shibuya Crossing, but locations in Hollywood and MacArthur Park have also converted to scramble crossings in recent years.

The Civic Hub would hold a place for the existing Center Theater to reinhabit the same location but in a larger, upgraded facility. The theater space could be shared in a joint-use arrangement with City Hall or for other public uses, such as City Council or Planning Commission hearings. If the city were to finance the theater, a public-private partnership could also ensure financial stability and activities in the theater 365 days a year. The theater would provide an anchor attraction for the site, with benefits that could spread to the other theaters in the surrounding area.



This plan view of the proposed development shows the ground plane, with the pocket plaza and market in red. The theater is shown in a darker red. The entrance to the residential units above is shown in gray.





The Civic Hub's second level—accessible by pedestrians from Santa Monica Boulevard via stairways that touch down on either corner of the block—would provide shade for the plaza, market, and theater. Pedestrian circulation would flow down and up through the site, providing a choice of routes for exploring the Civic Hub.

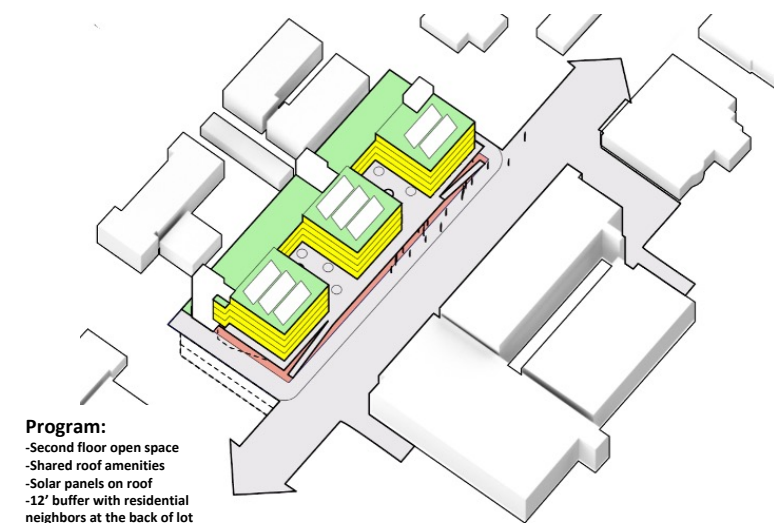
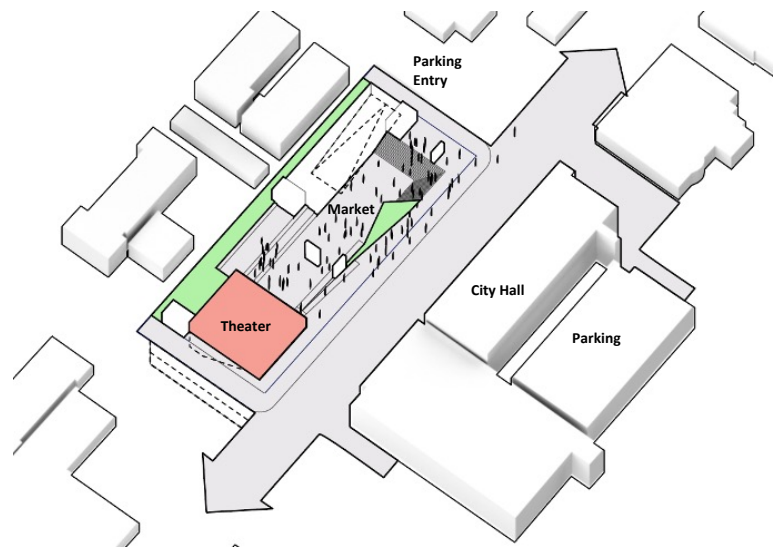
For the residential units at the upper levels of the development, the TAP envisions a building with either three, four, or four/five levels of residential development. The housing component of the proposed development would include a variety of unit-types, including micro-units, studios, family-friendly units, and more. A roof space could also provide shared amenity space for the residents as well as mechanical and solar power infrastructure.

To achieve the maximum number of affordable housing units while also maintaining space for the existing theater, businesses, and proposed public and community-oriented uses, the development will leverage the value of market rate units as well as the state's density bonus program. Additional flexibility would be created for affordable units if the city discounts the cost of the land in any ground lease.

The TAP generated conceptual renderings of three versions of the residential development, each with varying floor-to-area ratios (FARs). The current zoning

allows for an FAR of 2.25, which would allow three floors of residential, with 80 units at 750 square feet per unit—that's a large average unit size, so it could yield even more units at the current zoning.

The second concept is based on a 50 percent density bonus, with an FAR of 2.85, the development could include four floors of residential units. At the same average of 750 square feet a unit, the development would hold 102 units. A "max" concept would create four or five levels of residential at an FAR of 3, which would yield 115 units at 750 square feet a unit.



The densities proposed in the TAP's concept achieve development intensity commensurate to the city's need for housing and appropriate for high quality transit corridors like Santa Monica Boulevard. The height of the Civic Hub would also match the character of the surrounding neighborhood. City Hall across the street is 52 feet high. With three stories of residential above the plaza, a building would reach 51 feet, almost equal to the height of City Hall.



The pocket plaza proposed for the Civic Hub would achieve an effect similar to the example of Paley Park shown above. Paley Park in New York City is famous for activating public use with a relatively small amount of space.



The TAP also created a graphic created as a visual element of the EastWest brand, based on the visual appearance of the study area

## Site 2 – EastWest

The TAP envisions Site 2 as "EastWest" to leverage the prominence of a development on this site and generate excitement and visibility for the entire eastern stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard. EastWest would create a visible gateway between West Hollywood and Los Angeles.

In addition to the opportunity to raise the visibility of this stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard, EastWest has the highest potential as a primary revenue generator among the three sites examined for this report. Revenue would come from the fair market value for a ground lease of the site as well as revenue from graphics and digital signage and transient occupancy tax from proposed hotel and hospitality uses. EastWest is designed to be easily approved, permitted, and constructed, so that the site could immediately start to capture and generate value for the city and its residents.

The TAP is proposing a mixed-use development tailored to the workforce of the industries at the heart and soul of West Hollywood—like the fashion, makeup, and stylist communities. The residential component development would be geared toward those communities, and a collection of fun amenities would also cater to those same communities.



The two signs included in conceptual renderings created by the TAP contribute to the visibility and prominence of the site in addition to its revenue generating capacity. The TAP imagined these signs as "building jewelry"—the billboard at the corner of the building provides a nice tiara, for example, crowning the location as the gateway into the rest of the boulevard. The other billboard, located on the side of the building, provides space for rotating advertisements on what would otherwise essentially be a blank surface.

On special nights, the roof of the building would be further activated by a rooftop fashion show or other programming. The roof would include a runway as a space for events or collaborative space for the people who live, work, and play at EastWest. As a final piece of jewelry, solar photovoltaic infrastructure could also be included in the areas not activated for public use.

Similar to the Civic Hub, EastWest would orient to the street, prioritizing an active ground plane, busy with people on foot and a more European feeling. Pedestrian connectivity all the through the site would add to that European feel, in addition to the commercial uses at the

street level, like a café or other retail. Another possibility for the ground floor is a "makerspace"—a small space with small equipment like sewing machines and mirrors, open for collaboration and shared workspace. The sidewalk includes a generous plaza with direct access to the intersection, which would also be transformed as a scramble crosswalk, allowing pedestrians to quickly and safely move between EastWest and the parklets on the other side of the boulevard. A staircase between the two sides of the building would provide a Spanish Steps-style experience that allows residents to pour down into the plaza and back up again in addition to providing space for performances and socializing.

In the plaza at the corner of the development site, the TAP is recommending space for pop-up retail businesses, which would face out toward the sidewalk, attracting foot traffic and contributing to the action on and around EastWest. The pop-up retail would activate and expand the exterior plaza and the social atmosphere of the stairs. The rest of the retail proposed for the site would be backed away from Santa Monica Boulevard to create a sheltered pedestrian arcade.



For the residential components of EastWest, the TAP proposes a co-living concept that would be priced much lower than the typical price of a rental unit in West Hollywood—not necessarily qualifying as affordable but providing essential housing resources for the local workforce.

The co-living concept is a fundamentally metropolitan idea, and some co-living concepts are already operating in Los Angeles as well as other global cities like Hong Kong. Young people like living in these spaces—which provide space to share ideas and gather for social activities. The co-living concept includes communal and shared spaces, including, in some cases, beds in shared suites. The co-living concept suggested by the TAP would include a balance of both long-term and short-term rental units. The short-term units would qualify as a hospitality or hotel use, thus generating revenue through the city's transient occupancy tax.

The TAP examined a programming scenario for EastWest that would be built at a 2.0 floor-to-area ratio (FAR), yielding 31 units with five beds per unit (i.e., the equivalent of 155 units). A 2.0 FAR conforms with the base assumption of the zoning for the site. Increasing the FAR to 2.6 yields 235 beds, and 3.6 FAR yields 355 beds.

The TAP also explored several development scenarios to showcase the difference in massing for the site with various FARs. The TAP studied two different alternatives, one with a 2.6 FAR as the result of a 35 percent density bonus for the development of affordable units. A 2.6 FAR allows one more floor and results in a building with a more noticeable presence on Santa Monica Boulevard. The final scenario, which would require a zoning change, would develop the site to an FAR of 3.7. This kind of development intensity ensures real impact on the boulevard but retains cost efficiencies by fitting the scale of a Type V wood frame above two levels of concrete base. The 3.7 FAR is the maximum capacity for the cheaper costs of Type V wood construction. Going beyond that would begin to impede on the public and social goals intended for the development of the three sites.

The proposed development would also include two subterranean levels on flat plates, with one level of parking. That parking would be fully electrified on day one, with at least 20 percent of those spaces activated on day one and room to grow. Parking will be important for bringing business into the city and the area. The other subterranean level could also be used for a community space with music performances, theater, or other active uses.



## Site 3 – Community Affordable Housing

Though it's the smallest of the three sites, Site 3 nonetheless presents an opportunity for a significant, community-oriented affordable housing project. The TAP described the opportunity for high-quality affordable housing on this site as "nutrient dense." The development could accommodate 44 deeply affordable units, averaging 500 square feet, with a mix of studios and one- to two-bedroom units.

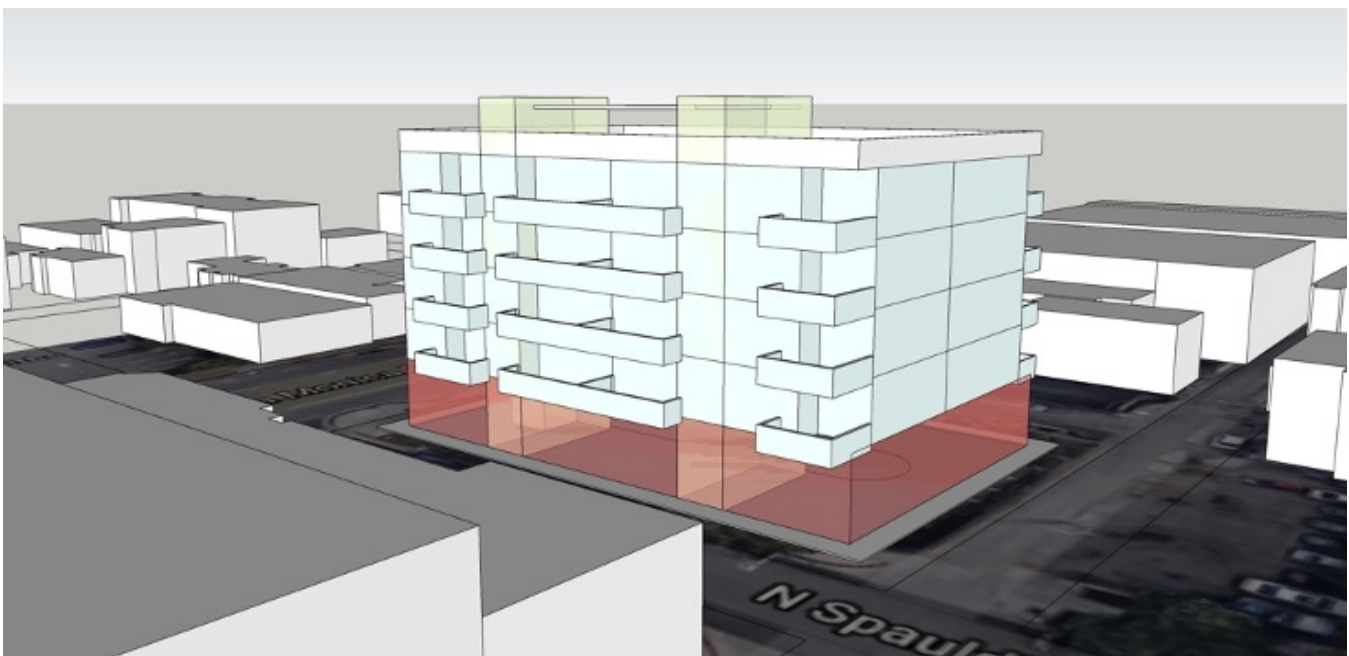
The development would also include personal open space as required in the zoning code. The full frontage of the east-facing side of the building would be an open balcony. The roof of the roof would also be used as a shared open space available for community gatherings. For people living and moving through the building, there's an emphasis on the benefits of fresh air and open space.

The ground floor of the building would offer 4,000 square feet for use by a community nonprofit. The best fit for this space would be a nonprofit with frequent programming—like education and arts—encouraging foot traffic and activity in and around the building. As community space, the ground floor can be completely

open and transparent. That transparency can wrap around from Santa Monica Boulevard onto Spaulding Avenue, generating more visual interest and pedestrian traffic. The ground floor lobby for the residents of the building would include the mail room and space for services and social functions.

The TAP's conceptual rendering for this development includes a graphic on the north-facing side of the building. With the windows of the proposed building orienting to the east and west, the wall facing Santa Monica Boulevard could offer space for an artful a graphic that creates character, joy, and warmth for the site and for the neighborhood.

Similar to the development proposals for the first two sites, the proposed community affordable housing development on Site 3 can be completed quickly and simply. Construction would be on a slab at the same grade as the street. The development could be completed with little or no parking, thus greatly reducing the cost of the development (a lack of off-street parking would also contribute to the transparency and permeability of the ground floor). Rents could



also be locked in at affordable levels with revenue from the EastWest development on Site 2. The land on Site 3 could be discounted in a ground lease to further contribute to the affordability of housing units. The building would total five stories of Type III wood construction. Lacking any elevated concrete, this building could still be constructed efficiently and cost effectively, maximizing the value of the site to produce affordable housing units. To expand the scope of the development opportunity on Site 3, the city could also explore the acquisition of the adjacent parking lot or a potential community amenity.

To further ensure that these units are accessible for marginalized community members, the TAP also recommends that the development of Site 3 be targeted to achieve additional goals of housing equity by targeting, for example, seniors, individuals identifying as members of the LGBTQ community, or people experiencing homelessness for residence here.



## Public Realm and Urban Design

Developing the three sites together provides a rare opportunity for improvement in the public realm of Santa Monica Boulevard—not just behind the property line of each of these development sites.

All of the proposed development projects can improve the public realm of the boulevard by balancing automobile and pedestrian space. Each of the development proposals above included a detailed concept for orienting the projects toward the street. Each of the projects would extend the sidewalk by opening community spaces and ground floor retail to the public. All developments could include new street trees for shade, and both the Civic Hub and EastWest could be the catalyst for scramble crosswalks to provide safe pedestrian and bike infrastructure and encourage people to move around without a car. Eliminating driveway access from Santa Monica Boulevard would further minimize conflict points between pedestrians and cars.

A lack of available space will challenge all these improvements in the public right of way, potentially requiring setbacks for these tight infill sites. But as some of the conceptual renderings created by the TAP have shown, it is possible to achieve a lot of benefit by granting just a little extra consideration to the interaction between buildings and the sidewalk.

To summarize: These three sites can make a significant and catalytic contribution to a more cohesive pedestrian feel for Santa Monica Boulevard, stitching this eastern stretch of street into the world class pedestrian infrastructure and public realm that can be found in other parts of West Hollywood.

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Affordable Approach

The TAP proposals also choose an agile response to the mandate from the Surplus Land Act (SLA) to achieve affordable housing as a primary goal of these projects, by avoiding the cumbersome Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) process for the development of affordable housing on these sites. Treating all three sites as a single project allows the development team to potentially address the SLA mandate for 25 percent affordable across the project at a minimum, but with a degree of flexibility that allows each development to contribute in different ways and in different contexts.

A consistent theme among all the proposals here is speed—speed of delivery and speed of results. The timeframe of the affordable housing development process and the timeframe by which rent stabilized housing is being eroded are very different, so the TAP also prioritized development concepts that could quickly work through the approvals and permitting process and begin construction immediately. Financial feasibility

would vanish if the projects instead committed to the decades required to clear all the hurdles necessary for a LIHTC project. A preservation fund for naturally occurring housing (NOAH) would also provide a tool for achieving affordable housing goals sooner than the LIHTC development process can.

The TAP sees the three sites together as an opportunity to bring some creativity to the creation of affordable housing, while staying true to the mission of delivering deep affordability to the residents of West Hollywood. The development would include co-living units, micro units, mixed income rents, and formats that could be comfortable for multi-generational households. The overall project would also include deeply affordable housing, and the revenue generated for the NOAH fund would provide resources to address the need for housing affordability in the city.

The financial feasibility of these projects would come from returns on the ground leases as well as some signage revenue. Other opportunities to leverage and expand the financial returns of the development opportunity include implementing a Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA), which gives the city or community organizations the first right to sale (San Francisco can provide a model for this kind of ordinance), and well as the creation of a West Hollywood Land Trust. As a regional example of the land trust concept, the city of Irvine created a land trust to partner on all its affordable housing projects.

## West Hollywood NOAH Preservation Fund

Much of the housing benefit from these three development sites will occur offsite, with the dedication of a portion of the revenue from sites to a naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) fund, which could be funded by ground leases set at the fair market value of the sites. A NOAH fund can be used to preserve existing housing affordable housing and rent stabilized housing all over the city, in addition to buying and preserving market rate apartments at prices accessible to lower and medium incomes. Developers could partner with the city's NOAH fund program to covenant affordable rents—voluntarily restricting rents in exchange for upfront or ongoing subsidy. The NOAH fund could buy both rent controlled units and market rate units not subject to the annual cap on rent increases. By investing in units that are already affordable, long-duration affordability covenants set by the city can preserve the affordability on these sites.

A NOAH fund would allow the flexibility to target specific area median incomes—whether it's 80 percent, 120, or 30 percent—for new housing resources. Thus, West Hollywood and its development partners could target multi-family buildings based on the specific needs of the city's residents, rather than the affordability thresholds determined by the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. The city would also achieve an incredible amount of financial efficiency for the creation of affordable units. At \$100,000 per unit for naturally occurring affordable housing units, compared to the \$700,000 to cover the cost of a LIHTC unit, the city of West Hollywood would be able to make a much broader impact on the city's housing supply. Finally, a

NOAH fund, managed by a local nonprofit organization of the city's choosing, could start adding and preserving affordable and workforce housing units much faster than the longer timeline of permits, construction, and occupancy required of new construction, not to mention the even longer timeline required of the LIHTC program.

Rents in West Hollywood—like the rest of the region—have significantly increased over the last decade and are likely to continue to rise in the near- and mid-term future. Even with the protections of its Rent Stabilization Ordinance, West Hollywood's existing affordable rents are evaporating, and tenants and households are left with fewer options for housing. A NOAH fund could quickly begin to respond to those pressures in the housing market.



## Sustainability

Buildings contribute at least 40 percent of the total carbon footprint of most cities. The three development sites also offer an opportunity amplify and showcase the city of West Hollywood's commitment to best practices of environmental planning and green building. These projects can achieve the next step in the evolution of urban environmentalism by going beyond base-level industry standards for the following considerations:

**All-Electric:** All three development sites should be all-electric, rather than using natural gas for heating, cooking, or cooling.

**Refrigerants:** The buildings should also use better-than-required refrigerants (one kilogram of the refrigerant R410a has the same climate impact as two tons of carbon dioxide—or the equivalent of running a car for six months).

**Solar:** The building envelope of all the proposed developments offer opportunities for solar photovoltaic (PV) systems.

**Materials:** Construction materials that reduce embodied carbon (embodied carbon is typically more abundant than carbon emissions for operations for the first 30 years of a building's life) can be cost-effectively prioritized, achieving cost-neutrality over the life of the building. Requirement for recycled materials, regionally sourced materials, and materials with an Environmental Product Declaration and a Health Product Declaration would also ensure best practices throughout the building process.

**Water:** The TAP recommends requiring low-flow fixtures and drip irrigation for drought tolerant and pollinator-friendly landscaping. The buildings should also provide recycling and access to compost to all residents.

**Soundproofing:** The TAP also suggests strong acoustic performance for residents and best practices of air quality mitigation during construction.

In addition to the design and construction details of the projects, the accessibility of alternative transportation modes will also determine the sustainability of these sites within the larger context of the city. West Hollywood should continue to embrace the potential for a light rail line to be built along Santa Monica Boulevard, in addition to implementing an ambitious series of design interventions in the public realm to encourage walkability, as described in several instances earlier in this report.

The city and these developments should also unbundle parking (i.e., separating the cost of parking from the cost of rent) for these sites which would allow for cheaper rents and reduce the number of automobile trips generated by these three sites. The city should also implement a parking district, which would make it easy to vary the use of existing on-street and off-street parking by time of day. Any subterranean parking proposed on these three sites should be fully electric-ready, with 25 percent of the stations ready on day one. Bike racks should be widely available both on-street and off-street.

## Community Engagement

In so many communities and so many development projects, a robust community engagement is a key ingredient of success. These three development sites will be no different.

Stakeholders should be engaged in decision-making at the outset of the development approval process. The city should support transparency in every detail—the mission, objective, timeline, team, channels of communication, and more—of the development of these public assets.

One example of an early step in this kind of fully realized community engagement process would be to work with the West Hollywood Social Justice Task Force to complete an analysis of the needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and other marginalized communities in the development, programming, and maintenance of these development sites.

## CONCLUSION

The decision to combine these three projects into a single development project allows a variety of benefits, ticking a lot of the boxes listed as goals by the city of West Hollywood for these sites. Among those many goals, the TAP has demonstrated how the development of these sites can maximize the opportunity to achieve the city's primary goal: the creation and preservation of a variety of housing types for a variety of income levels, including deeply affordable housing units.

The TAP has also responded to the needs of small businesses and the workforce of West Hollywood navigating a stressful and tenuous economic downturn. By focusing on designs and plans that make space for street front retail and generate vibrancy on the street with pedestrian infrastructure, urban design improvements, and the foot traffic generated by residential populations, these

projects offer an opportunity for substantial economic development, thoroughly rooted in the needs of local communities and accessible to all. The developments proposed by the TAP will also provide new revenue to the city through the transient occupancy tax generated by hospitality uses; revenue from new, prominent signs; and revenue from ground leases on the sites.

The public would further benefit from the proposed developments with the addition of new facilities and amenities on the block across from City Hall. New public uses could include flexible conference spaces, performance spaces, civic spaces, and a new market and plaza. The TAP has also emphasized the sustainability of all the building and development work on all three of these sites.

Reaching even further beyond the physical boundaries of these three sites, the development proposal would generate funding for a new naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) fund to preserve existing affordable units around the city—because the city isn't going to build its way out of the deep affordability challenge any time soon.

Diversity and a range of incomes are what make West Hollywood great. Without protecting and prioritizing affordability, West Hollywood will lose its fundamental qualities and character. To keep and strengthen the values of West Hollywood, the city must adopt the kind of "all of the above" approach suggested here to address housing affordability and economic development.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## Special Thanks

The TAP is thankful for the commitment and participation of stakeholders. The following is a list of individuals who were interviewed or provided valuable information and perspective during the TAP process:

### City of West Hollywood

Alicen Bartel, Project Development Administrator

John Keho AICP, Director of Planning and Development Services

Steve Campbell, Director of Facilities and Recreational Services

Tara Worden AICP, Business Development Analyst

Paul Arevalo, City Manager

Brian League, Property Development Manager

Ric Abramson FAIA, Urban Design + Architectural Studio Manager

John Leonard, Community and Legislative Affairs Manager

Jennifer Alkire AICP, Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager

Jackie Rocco, Director of Public Works

Robyn Eason AICP, Long Range Planning Manager

Bryan Eck AICP, Senior Planner

### Community

Nick Rimedio, Chair WEHO Chamber of Commerce



## ABOUT THE PANEL



**Richard Bruckner, Panel Chair**  
Senior Land Use Specialist, Mayer Brown

Richard Bruckner is a senior land use specialist in Mayer Brown's Los Angeles office. Richard advises investors and developers involved in residential, commercial and industrial real estate projects on complex land use laws, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, state and local government interactions, and other strategic considerations to bring projects through to successful completion.

Prior to joining Mayer Brown, Richard was director of Los Angeles County's Department of Regional Planning, which provides advance planning, current planning and land use regulation enforcement for the unincorporated area of the county, which has a population of approximately one million. Prior to that, he was the director of planning and development for the City of Pasadena for more than a decade, with responsibilities in citywide economic development, planning, building, code enforcement, cultural affairs, real estate and the management of eight redevelopment projects areas. Previous to his work for Pasadena, he served as the deputy executive director of the Community Development Department for the City of Anaheim, California. Richard's background also includes serving as vice chair of the Oversight Board of the Successor Agency to the Culver City Redevelopment Agency; serving on the City of Arcadia Planning Commission, and helping to develop the current Hollywood Community Plan and Hollywood Community Redevelopment Plan during his time with the Community Redevelopment Agency.

Richard serves on the boards of several non-profit organizations, including the Local Advisory Board of the Urban Land Institute, the Advisory Board of the USC Lusk Center for Real Estate, and serving as Vice President of Heritage Housing Partners.



**Vahe Avagyan**  
Vice President, RCLCO

Vahe Avagyan is a Vice President within RCLCO's Real Estate Economics Practice Group, based in Los Angeles. Since joining RCLCO in 2016, Vahe has served as project manager for consulting engagements spanning a wide range of geographies and product types. Vahe's work focuses on providing private and public sector clients with strategic guidance and insights relating to market and financial feasibility, highest-and-best use, and fiscal and economic impacts for complex real estate projects. In particular, Vahe specializes in large-scale, high-density, urban mixed-use projects as well as resort residential and hospitality projects. Vahe also plays a leading role in RCLCO's growing thought leadership in mobility and technology, helping clients understand and leverage changing consumer and industry trends to add value to their real estate.

Vahe serves as part of the leadership group responsible for RCLCO's firm-wide training program. Through this role, Vahe has helped develop the firm's new team member training program and onboarding initiatives, and he continues to educate and mentor new team members.

Vahe graduated from Columbia University with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Psychology. His coursework focused on urban history, social psychology, and real estate economics, including a senior thesis analyzing the politics of suburbanization and homeownership in postwar Los Angeles.

**Claudia Carol****Architect, Master Planner and Urbanist**

Claudia Carol, Architect, Master Planner and Urbanist, has over thirty years of professional experience giving her exceptional perspective on the interface of the natural and built environment. Her leadership on a wide range of projects - from urban revitalization and community engagement to academic campuses to entertainment destinations and healthcare centers - gives her a unique insight in addressing complex issues. Claudia's passion is using urban design strategies for social good, particularly as it relates to health and wellness. She has won numerous accolades for her work, including awards from the American Institute of Architecture and the American Planning Association, and has spoken and authored articles and reports on critical issues facing the urban environment. She is currently a Principal with Triumph Architecture + Urban Design. Previously, she was a global urban design and planning leader for Gensler, a global design firm. Claudia earned a Masters in Architecture degree from UCLA's School of Architecture and Urban Design, a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree from California Institute of the Arts, and attended the Architectural Association, London.

**Ksenia Chumakova****Architect, Perkins + Will**

Ksenia Chumakova is an architect and urban designer at Perkins&Will intent on creating a more livable future for the city. Her focus has been on designing public and open space as well as public programs such as Los Angeles Bridge Housing. After graduating from Cornell University, Ksenia worked as an architect in four cities: Washington, DC, Moscow, Russia, Los Angeles, CA and Portland, OR. Learning from her experience in professional practice, working on international competitions, and assisting in teaching design studios, Ksenia has fueled her constant curiosity about how we can improve the built environment. Working on this TAP proposal for West Hollywood, she aimed to tie the three sites and programs together into a single story about the boulevard as a vital framework for the city.



**Daniel Gehman, AIA**  
**Principal, Danielian Associates**

As Principal at Danielian Associates, Daniel champions the firm's multifamily studio and focuses on higher density, multifamily, mixed-use developments and infill. He encourages enhanced levels of creativity, delivers unrivaled client experience, and continuously identifies disruptive ways to more efficiently design and build housing. Daniel has successfully built teams, led studios, and continuously strives for design excellence. Daniel received his bachelor's degree in architecture from Cornell University and is an adjunct professor for the USC Master of Real Estate Development program. He is a dynamic and sought-after industry speaker, contributing thought leader, a full member of ULI, and sits on the Multifamily Council at NAHB.



**John Given**  
**Principal, CityBuild Advisors**

John Given is a city planner and developer whose chosen path has focused on reversing patterns of urban disinvestment and building cities that are more just and sustainable. Good choices and opportunities have led to leadership roles as a manager and principal in a variety of public and private enterprises during expansive and creative periods across five decades. These affiliations have included CIM Group, METRO (LACMTA), the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency, and the City of Greeley Colorado, as well as many civic and advisory appointments. John currently serves on and is a past chair of the LINC Housing board and is an active member of the Urban Land Institute Los Angeles District Council. He earned a BA in Urban Planning at the University of Washington (1973), and Master in Regional Planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design (1976).



**Helmi Hisserich**

**Senior Principal, LaSar Development Consulting**

Helmi Hisserich is a distinguished leader in affordable housing policy, finance and development. Over the arc of her career Helmi has worked with a wide range of civic, community and elected leaders to advance affordable housing and economic development policies and programs in within the City of Los Angeles. She brings deep commitment to ensuring public sector investments serve those most affected by poverty racism and discrimination.

From 2009-2021 Helmi worked at the Housing & Community Investment Department of Los Angeles (HCIDLA) where she served as Assistant General Manager and Director of Housing Strategies. Under her leadership, the department financed over 8,000 units of affordable housing and made over 500 loans to first time homebuyers and managed a \$1.9 Billion loan portfolio. She led the city's effort to create a more predictable public financing process through the creation of a managed pipeline for affordable housing and she launched the city's effort to develop housing in surplus public land. Prior to joining HCIDLA, Helmi served as Deputy Mayor for Housing & Homelessness in the Administration of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the director of Redevelopment in Hollywood and as a Senior Business Development Representative on Mayor Riordan's Business Team.

Ms. Hisserich earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Comparative Literature from the University of Southern California and a Master of Business Administration from Cornell University. In 2011, Helmi attended Harvard Kennedy School of Government program for Senior Officials in State and Local Government. In 2016 she was awarded a Stanton Fellowship for her thought leadership on Affordable Housing, which enabled her to begin developing new scalable solutions to the housing affordability crisis. Helmi and her wife Tori live in the Silverlake Neighborhood of Los Angeles.



**Jan Karl**

**Vice President, Morley Builders**

Jan Karl spearheads Morley's project development initiatives and marketing team bringing over 25 years of experience in real estate, development, and construction. Her focus is on guiding the company to its next era of successful high-performance building through smart, strategic growth.

Jan holds an MBA from Villanova University and a Bachelor of Science from Iowa State University. She has a Masters of Corporate Real Estate through CoreNet Global, is a California Real Estate Licensed Professional and is a LEED AP BD+C from the USGBC.

Jan has been involved with ULI for over 15 years. She is Past President Los Angeles Headquarters Association Board. She is a board member of the Los Angeles Business Council and serves as Co-Chair of the LABC Architectural Awards. She serves on the Habitat for Humanity Executive Board, is Co-Chair of the Builders Ball and VP of Habitat's Development Committee. She is a Board Member of City of Hope and is a supporter and contributor to Women on Boards 2050.

Jan frequently participates on panels and as a guest lecturer at UCLA's Construction Management course.





**Sandra Kulli**  
President, Kulli Marketing

Sandra Kulli consults with builders, MPCs, mixed-use developers, and cities on marketing strategy, working with over 100 companies on 183 communities with a sales volume exceeding \$5 billion throughout the US and in Japan, Dubai, New Zealand, Sweden, England, and Mexico. She's passionate about collaboration with great teams, loves her native city of Los Angeles, lived in Silver Lake and Echo Park in the 1970s and taught in LAUSD in Watts, Glassell Park and El Sereno.

Sandra has served on ULI national advisory panels including the Memphis Riverfront Development, Philadelphia Main Street in Ardmore, and Malden/Everett Revitalization in Boston. She chaired The Sears/Boyle Heights Technical Advisory Panel. She was on the ULI teams that wrote "Ten Principles for Successful Development Around Transit" and "Ten Principles for Rethinking the Mall" and

"Ten Principles for Building Healthy Places." And Kulli contributed to ULI's 2016 "Cultivating Development: Trends and Opportunities at the Intersection of Food and Real Estate." She also contributed to the "Building Healthy Places Toolkit: strategies for Enhancing Health in the Built Environment."

With an office in the Arts District at the Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator (LACI), Sandra is surrounded by entrepreneurs, inventors, scientists and policymakers working on LA's green economy.

Sandra's a graduate of Wellesley College and holds a Master's degree from Boston University. She has served on the boards of KCRW, The Vine, ULI-Los Angeles, Abode Communities, and CicLAvia. She's an ardent city bike rider, traveler, and remains endlessly curious about how we can create ever-better new communities within our urban fabric.



**Eric Natwig**  
President, New West Partners

Eric is developing a real estate joint venture to integrate renewable energy, energy storage, and electric vehicle charging infrastructure at a network of buildings in the West Los Angeles grid, connected to electric home-to-work shuttles for tenants. Southern California Edison, LA Metro, and UCLA Health are signatories to a LOI for the grid reliability, transit-oriented community, and public health benefits.

He was engaged by the Jicarilla Apache Tribe to form and manage a team including a national engineering company to master plan a 1,450 acre ranch that was formerly a Spanish land grant the tribe acquired to develop a new town adjacent to tribal lands. As financial advisor to a multi-tribe organization of energy owning tribes, Eric was a co-principal organizer of a de novo national bank, the Blackfeet National Bank. He recruited and participated in a team with McKinsey & Company to develop a business plan for an oil and gas company in the San Juan Basin. As a development director for the Navajo Nation, he structured a sale-leaseback-lease to design-build a distribution warehouse on Navajo land with a national real estate company. He developed a plan for National Park concessioners to develop employer-assisted housing on private land with a multi-jurisdiction financing vehicle.

His project advisory experience includes a terminal wharf financing structure for the Port of Seattle, and an entertainment joint venture in New York.

Eric has been a member of ULI since 1996 and is active in the LA District Council. He holds a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Economics from Brown, where he co-founded and managed a student-led corporation.



### **Sara Neff**

Head of ESG, Lendlease

Sara Neff is the Head of ESG, Lendlease Americas, where she provides leadership and management oversight in developing, implementing and driving Lendlease's corporate sustainability framework in the Americas region. Prior to that role, she served as Senior Vice President, Sustainability at Kilroy Realty Corporation. Ms. Neff was instrumental in the architecture, initiation and execution of Kilroy's sustainability program. Under her leadership, Kilroy has been recognized as a leader among publicly traded real estate companies on sustainability in the Americas by GRESB for seven of the last eight years as well as being recognized by NAREIT. She is a LEED Fellow and holds a BS from Stanford and an MBA from Columbia Business School.

### **Deepak Kaushik**

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