CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: April 2, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Director of Community Development

Subject: Request by Mayor Mirisch to discuss ways to incorporate input from the Southeast Task Force on significant projects proposed in the Southeast Area of the City

Attachments: Southeast Task Force: Final Report and Southeast Area Map

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INTRODUCTION

This report is provided at the request of Mayor Mirisch to explore ways to incorporate input from the Southeast Task Force on significant projects proposed in the southeast area of the city (see attached map) prior to consideration by the Planning Commission.

BACKGROUND

In August 2011, the Southeast Task Force was established and chaired by then Vice Mayor Mirisch. The Task Force was comprised of a citizen committee including residents and area stakeholders that discussed, evaluated, and formed recommendations on the revitalization of the southeast area of the city. In addition to the chair, the Task Force included the following participants: Chris Biehl, Don Creamer, Brian Goldberg, Howard Goldstein, Andrea Grossman, Isabel Hacker, Noah Margo, Susan Mishler, Dick Seff, and AJ Wilmer.

The task force recommendations were presented to the City Council on August 7, 2012 and are attached to this report (Attachment A)

DISCUSSION

The Mayor is seeking an opportunity for the Southeast Task Force to provide input on development projects within the task force study area.

There are different approaches that can be used to structure this input process. With any review process, policy makers would want to balance the increased review time to get projects approved and increased uncertainty in obtaining approvals with the need to

ensure adequate opportunities for public engagement. Presently, any significant development in the southeast area would be subject to at least two of the city's four land use, design and cultural heritage commissions.

If the City Council is interested in extending additional opportunities for community involvement in the southeast area, staff requests time to explore various options and to identify possible approaches to advance the Southeast Task Force recommendations.

On April 11th Study Session, the City Council will visit the southeast area as part of its scheduled site visits for this day.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal or budget impact associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is provided at the request of a councilmember. Staff will proceed with this item based on direction from the City Council.

Teresa Revis on behalf of
Susan Healy Keene
Director of Community Development

Attachment 1

CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: August 7, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: David Lightner, Deputy City Manager

Subject: Southeast Task Force: Final Report

Attachments: Southeast Area Map

INTRODUCTION

In August of 2011, the Southeast Task Force was established as the third of four Mayor's Task Forces convened that year to address specific City Council priorities. Vice Mayor Mirisch chaired the Southeast Task Force with the purpose of coordinating a citizen committee of residents and area stakeholders to discuss, evaluate and form recommendations on the revitalization of the southeast area of Beverly Hills.

DISCUSSION

In addition to Vice Mayor Mirisch, participants on the Task Force included: Chris Biehl, Don Creamer, Brian Goldberg, Howard Goldstein, Andrea Grossman, Isabel Hacker, Noah Margo, Susan Mishler, Dick Seff, and AJ Wilmer.

The first task of the group was to define the Southeast neighborhood geographically. The clear consensus was: southeast of Wilshire Boulevard and Reeves Drive (including both sides of those boundary streets) and all of the area east of Robertson Boulevard within the City boundaries. A Southeast Area Map is attached. The existing strengths of the area were identified as: the neighborhood's young family demographic, high quality public and private schools, walkability, classic theaters, LaCienega restaurants and LaCienega Park.

The area's primary challenges were identified as: lack of destination businesses other than LaCienega restaurants; too many vacancies; a lack of parking in older buildings; shallow lots on Robertson and Olympic and a high water table which make parking garages expensive to build; a lack of grocery stores; too many nail salons and a need to be more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. Related challenges include a sense of missed opportunity to provide a Larchmont Boulevard flavor; attracting the types of boutiques that move onto the Los Angeles stretch of North Robertson; attracting a Trader Joe's type grocery; and attracting teen-oriented businesses.

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Outreach

The outreach effort was targeted to build on the area's strengths and to address the primary challenge of parking constraints.

Dick Rosenzweig, who was then Vice-President of Playboy Enterprises, was consulted to explore the connections between the Southeast area and the entertainment industry. One of the fundamental assets of the area is the existence of the Saban Theater, the Fine Arts Theater, the Music Hall Theater, the headquarters of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, the Beverly Hills Playhouse, the Writers Guild Theater and the Horace Mann Auditorium (which pre-dates the school). The idea of creating an Arts District around this historic core is full of potential and was suggested as an identity for the whole area. The history of discussions about a Beverly Hills Film Festival was reviewed and that too could be a powerful tool to weave the area's assets together in an annual destination event, particularly when the private commercial screening rooms in the district are added to the theater resources. A strong partnership with the Annenberg Center was recommended even though that resource is outside the district.

In order to bring the business owners' perspective to the Task Force, the outreach effort included identifying two area businesses run by civic-minded owners who were happy to meet with the group to discuss business opportunities and challenges and to develop ideas. Jay Navas of Toppings Yogurt on Robertson and Lupe Prado Sanchez of Cocina Primavera on Olympic were both invaluable resources for the group as their recommendations were being formed. Toppings exemplifies the non-chain, family-friendly, destination business model that the Task Force recommends. The members of the Prado family behind Cocina Primavera are long-time restaurateurs on Larchmont Boulevard providing key perspectives on opportunities for small business success in Beverly Hills and they similarly provide a "local destination" as supported by the Task Force.

The outreach effort included a specific focus on parking, which emerged as one of the key challenges associated with revitalization of the area. The Task Force recommendations include pursuing several approaches to address the parking constraints simultaneously, including increasing on-street parking, expanding the in-lieu parking program, maximizing the usefulness of parking in existing buildings, working with developers to find creative parking solutions such as encroachments beneath the right-of-way and City development of parking garages in targeted locations. One of the key recommended goals is to leverage partnership opportunities as they arise.

Focusing on this goal and the unique opportunity presented by the School District's plan for major reconstruction at the Horace Mann campus on Robertson, an outreach effort with the District was initiated to see if there was potential to create subterranean public parking in a manner that would not interfere with school operations. This exploration included discussion with District design staff and consultants, with the Board of Education at a Board study session, and with Horace Mann parents at a very well attended Horace Mann PTA meeting. Ultimately it became clear that no design solution was going to address the concerns of the stakeholders and the focus was shifted to a search for other sites on Robertson for public parking.

Additional outreach to area real estate brokers was conducted so that the City can stay informed about opportunities to purchase appropriate public parking sites.

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Previous Studies

The Task Force reviewed prior studies related to the southeast including:

- Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Report: "Energizing Wilshire Boulevard – Rexford to LaCienega" prepared by the Urban Land Institute
- Beverly Hills General Plan Topic Committee Reports
- Small Business Task Force Report of Findings

Task Force Recommendations

The Task Force, after meeting over a 9-month period, reviewing prior related studies and extensive discussion, proposed the following recommendations. The primary themes that developed include *parking* constraints, the need for *business attraction and retention* efforts, the need for *programming* of events and activities to enliven the area and the need to enhance *mobility*.

Parking

1. Designate investment funds for the revitalization of the Southeast, including the development of parking facilities.

2. Develop a Southeast In-Lieu Parking District.

Business Attraction and Retention

3. Target the remaining vacancies, including the former BMW, International House of Pancakes (IHOP), Blockbuster, Collateral Lender and other sites.

4. Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce and the Conference & Visitors Bureau (CVB) to brand and market the area as an Arts and Entertainment District including theaters, galleries, museums and related businesses.

5. Convene property owners and brokers to share recommendations on types of businesses recommended by the Task Force.

6. Reinvigorate Restaurant Row with art galleries and a marketing program.

7. Attract a neighborhood "Trader Joe's type" market

8. Attract a destination indoor farmers market to one of the available sites on Olympic. This concept has been successful on a larger scale at the Ferry Building in San Francisco and Oxbow in Napa.

9. Attract local-serving, family-friendly, neighborhood restaurants.

10. Conduct business retention efforts both for strong existing businesses such as O'Gara Coach on Olympic and Restaurant Row and for unique neighborhood destinations such as Toppings and Cocina Primavera.

Programming

11. Coordinate with the School District to incorporate school site events into the neighborhood.

12. Encourage outdoor dining and make sure all blocks have enough trash cans.

13. Introduce events such as a film festival, an art fair or food event for greater business exposure.

14. Introduce seasonal banners to identify the Southeast and its sub-districts.

Mobility

15. Create bike routes that connect the Southeast to other areas and install bike racks in strategic locations.

16. Introduce a trolley route between the City's hotels and the Southeast.

17. Designate Robertson tree type and expedite ficus replacement along with other initiatives to make the area more pedestrian friendly.

18. Study the potential for diagonal parking on the west side of Robertson, between Charleville and Olympic. The concept to be evaluated would provide for: parallel parking on the east side; one northbound travel lane; two southbound travel lanes; diagonal parking on the west side. The study should also evaluate "back-in" diagonal parking.

Additional Capital Improvements

19. Improve the LaCienega median at the park and consider a pedestrian bridge.

20. Acquire the Los Angeles property adjacent to LaCienega Park at the northeast corner of LaCienega and Olympic for additional park space and creation of a City gateway.

21. Create a minor league baseball field at LaCienega Park, with stands for 1,200-3,000 spectators, to attract a Dodger farm team.

FISCAL IMPACT

One of the positive results of the Task Force's work is that many of the recommendations are not dependent on additional funds. The commitment of staff time to work toward these goals, along with the City's partners at the Chamber of Commerce and the CVB, is the major resource needed to start addressing these recommendations.

Exceptions include: the development of parking and other area investment, such as LaCienega Park expansion and improvements, toward which $4.675 million has been designated over the next 5 years; creation of a banner program and implementation of other marketing tools which will require funding as would a trolley program (typically not able to be self-sustaining with operating costs of $38/hour). If supported in concept, staff will develop program proposals for these efforts and return to the City Council for

prioritization and confirmation of funding sources. There is sufficient funding in the current LaCienega Park capital improvement budget to address the median refurbishment.

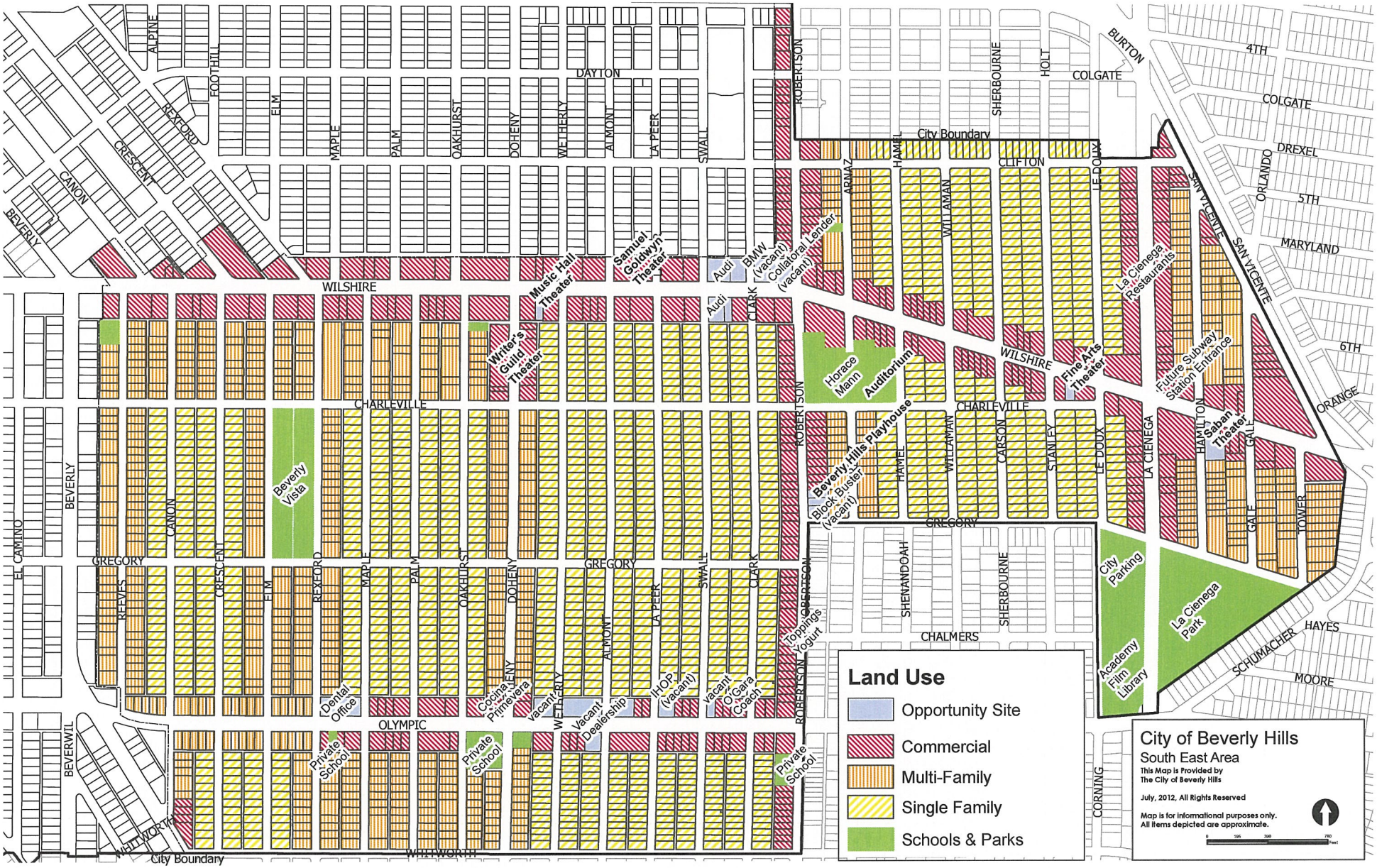
While the recommendation to study diagonal parking on Robertson could lead to a net increase in parking, the removal of one of the two existing northbound travel lanes could have mobility impacts for the region. If the City Council directs further study of diagonal parking on Robertson, the first step would be to initiate a traffic feasibility study at an estimated cost of $30,000. This study would be funded from the Southeast Revitalization capital improvement budget created this year. Further environmental assessment costs would be likely if the concept proves feasible along with costs to reconfigure the street which are not yet known.

Further study would be required in order to know the proper scope of a feasibility study for a minor league baseball stadium at La Cienega Park and City Council direction to study this further would be needed in order to estimate the costs to pursue this idea.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council direct staff to incorporate these proposed programs into the Work Plan effort designated as Implementation of Southeast Task Force Recommendations in this year's budget for Policy & Management, and to coordinate with Community Development, Community Services, Public Works, the CVB and Chamber of Commerce on the creation of related work plans. Specific City Council guidance is requested with respect to further study of diagonal parking on Robertson and exploration of developing a minor league baseball facility.

David Lightner
Approved by


Land Use
Opportunity Site
Commercial
Multi-Family
Single Family
Schools & Parks
City of Beverly Hills
South East Area
This Map is Provided by
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All items depicted are approximate.
City Boundary
WILSHIRE
CHARLEVILLE
GREGORY
OLYMPIC
WHITWORTH
DAYTON
COLGATE
CLIFTON
CHALMERS
BURTON
4TH
5TH
6TH
MARYLAND
DREXEL
ORANGE
HAYES
MOORE
SCHUMACHER
SAN VICENTE
ORLANDO
ALPINE
FOOTHILL
ELM
REXFORD
CRESCENT
CANON
BEVERLY
MAPLE
PALM
OAKHURST
DOHENY
WETHERLY
ALMONT
LA PEER
SWALL
ROBERTSON
ARNAZ
HAMEL
WILLAMAN
SHERBOURNE
HOLT
LE DOUX
CLARK
CARSON
STANLEY
SHENANDOAH
HAMILTON
GALE
TOWER
CORNING
EL CAMINO
REEVES
BEVERWIL
Beverly Vista
Music Hall Theater
Samuel Goldwyn Theater
Writer's Guild Theater
Horace Mann Auditorium
Beverly Hills Playhouse
Fine Arts Theater
Future Subway Station Entrance
Saban Theater
La Cienega Restaurants
City Parking
La Cienega Park
Academy Film Library
Audi
BMW
(vacant)
Collateral Lender
Block Buster
Toppings Yogurt
Dental Office
Cocina Primavera
IHOP
O'Gara Coach
Vacant Dealership
Private School