

Communication from Public

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Council File No: 21-0383
Comments for Public Posting: I'd like to submit the attached comments in opposition to the 5600 Hollywood project.

June 14, 2021

Planning & Land Use Management Committee
Los Angeles City Hall
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90068

Re: PLUM Committee Agenda for June 15, 2021, Item No. 17
5600-5606 W. Hollywood Boulevard, 1655-1681 N. St. Andrews Place
DIR-2020-4296-CU-DB-SPP-SPR-VHCA, ENV-2020-4297-SCPE
Sustainable Communities Project Exemption (SCPE)
Council File: 21-0383
OPPOSED

Members of the PLUM Committee,,

I am writing to express my opposition to the project proposed for 5600 Hollywood Blvd, DIR-2020-4296-CU-DB-SPP-SPR-VHCA, ENV-2020-4297-SCPE. While proponents might argue that the inclusion of 40 VLI units will provide needed affordable housing, a ratio of 80% market rate to 20% affordable simply perpetuates the gross imbalance that lies at the root of LA's housing crisis. A report recently issued by SAJE in conjunction with UCLA shows that Hollywood currently has a 10% vacancy rate, and that the majority of the vacant units are at the high end of the market.

The Vacancy Report

https://www.saje.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/The_Vacancy_Report_Final.pdf

In addition, the project involves the demolition of a 14-unit apartment building at 1655 N. St. Andrews Place. This reduces the net gain of housing accessible to low-income households, leaving an increase of only 26 units.

Also, a reading of CA PRC 21155.1 makes it clear that the project does not qualify for a Sustainable Communities Project Exemption (SCPE). CA PRC 21155.1(a)(1) requires that "The transit priority project and other projects approved prior to the approval of the transit priority project but not yet built can be adequately served by existing utilities".

Solid Waste

The project will be served by the RecyclA/Zero Waste Franchise Program. Since its inception, this program has failed to meet the requirement set by AB 939 that municipalities divert 50% of solid waste collected to recycling. The amended contracts for this program only require waste haulers to divert 35% of waste to recycling by 2023, and due to the current recycling crisis, it is unlikely they will meet even that modest goal. Because the RecyclA/Zero Waste Franchise Program is out of compliance with State law, it is clear that the project will not be adequately served by existing solid waste services.

Water Infrastructure

According to a 2015 analysis by the LA Times, the water pipes serving the area are between 80 and 90 years old. During the period covered by the Times' analysis, 2010 to 2014, there were numerous leaks in the area surrounding the project, including four near St. Andrews and Sunset.

LA Times Map of Water Leaks 2010 - 2014

<http://graphics.latimes.com/los-angeles-pipe-leaks/>

A project of this size will put considerable additional stress on pipes that are already in need of replacement. It is doubtful the project can be served by existing water infrastructure.

Historic Resources

The project is not eligible for review under SCPE if it impacts potentially historic resources. CA PRC 21155.1(a)(5) requires that "The transit priority project does not have a significant effect on historical resources pursuant to Section 21084.1." CA PRC 21084.1 states that a structure does not need to be listed on the California Register of Historical Places, only that it has historic significance and is eligible for listing.

The 14-unit, 1957 apartment building at 1655 St. Andrews Place was designed by Josef Van Der Kar, a modernist architect known for his extensive work in Los Angeles. He designed the Shire Home, which was named a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument in 2010. Other examples of his work are the Jenkyns House in Silverlake and the Wohlstetter House in Laurel Canyon. Van Der Kar was investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee because he refused to comply with the Federal Housing Administration's requirement to ban the sale of houses to minorities. This issue arose when Van Der Kar was working on the Community Homes project with fellow architect Gregory Ain. Aside from Ain, Van Der Kar also counted Buckminster Fuller, Rudolph Schindler, and Richard Neutra among his associates. An overview of Van Der Kar's career is available by following the link below.

The architecture and activism of Josef Van der Kar

<http://mid2mod.blogspot.com/2011/06/josef-van-der-kar.html>

For these reasons, the proposed project does not qualify for review under SCPE.

Thank you for your time.

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