

Communication from Public

Name: Alameda Studio Owner, LLC (“ASOLLC”)
Date Submitted: 10/18/2022 01:50 PM
Council File No: 22-0617
Comments for Public Posting: CF-22-0617; Downtown Los Angeles Community Plan Update/2040 (“Community Plan Update”)



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October 18, 2022

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Los Angeles City Council
Planning Land Use and Management Committee
200 N. Spring Street, Room 340
Los Angeles CA 90012

**RE: CF-22-0617; Downtown Los Angeles Community Plan Update/2040
("Community Plan Update")**

Honorable Councilmembers:

This firm represents Alameda Studio Owner, LLC ("ASOLLC") the owner of that approximately 14.6-acre parcel of real property located generally at the southeast corner of Alameda Street and 6th Street and identified as Assessor's Parcel No. 5164-010-003, 5164-010-004 and 5164-010-005 (the "Property"). The Property is depicted in Figure 1, below. The Property is in the Central City North Community Plan, which is included in the Community Plan Update that will be before this Committee in the near future. We applaud Los Angeles Department of City Planning ("LADCP") Staff on their challenging work and tremendous efforts moving the Community Plan Update closer to approval. Downtown Los Angeles needs a forward-thinking plan and implementing zoning code. ASOLLC is supportive of the Community Plan Update's adoption.

ASOLLC acquired the Property with a vision to develop a state-of-the-art world class production studio campus that includes soundstage uses, production support uses and production support office all on a single campus (the "Project"). To that end, ASOLLC recently filed an application with LADCP requesting approval of a Vesting Conditional Use Permit for a Major

Development Project, Site Plan Review, and a Vesting Tentative Tract Map (the “Vesting Application”) for the Project.¹

The Project was designed with the Community Plan Update and proposed new zoning code in mind. Even though not currently applicable, the Project complies with many of the regulations set forth in the Community Plan Update’s proposed new zoning code. For example, the Project’s mix of uses (soundstages, production support and supporting office) are permitted by-right. The Project’s proposed Floor Area Ratio (“FAR”) will not exceed the proposed 1.5 FAR maximum. The Project will not exceed the proposed 90 percent maximum lot coverage as required by the newly proposed code. All Project buildings comply with the proposed zoning code’s 280-foot building width maximum. All Project buildings comply with the proposed zoning code’s Primary and Side Build-to-Depth, with the exception of a publicly accessible parklet near the intersection of Mill Street and 6th Street. While the public parklet does not comply with the proposed Build-to-Depth, the public parklet will stimulate pedestrian activity, a primary goal of the Community Plan Update and the implementing zoning code. Additionally, all Project buildings comply with the proposed zoning codes Build-to-Width and frontage planting requirements. Accordingly, the Project as designed complies with many of the proposed zoning code’s provisions.

As a soundstage production campus, however, the Project must take security seriously for its future tenants, actors and actresses and various productions. This paramount security concern requires Project design that provides a feeling of safety and sanctuary within the Project’s campus. A few of the proposed zoning code’s requirements are not conducive to a safe and secure production studio campus. Nevertheless, ASOLLC is conscious of the Property’s special location within the growing Art’s District and the importance of designing a project that engages with the public realm and the Art’s District community. Achieving the fine balance between these two contrasting goals is not a simple task.

The Project’s architectural team (Grimshaw Architects) has designed the Project in a manner that satisfies the zoning code’s spirit while maintaining critical and essential security. The proposed zoning code requires 15 percent of the lot area as amenity space. The Project’s 118,626 square feet of amenity space exceeds this requirement. The proposed zoning code, however, requires public accessibility to 75 percent of the amenity space. While the Project provides 27,490 square feet of publicly accessible space, the balance of the Project’s amenity space must remain safe and secure to facilitate soundstage production activities. Similarly, the proposed zoning code requires publicly accessible pedestrian passageways that a soundstage production campus cannot accommodate. The Project, however, does include secured pedestrian access points along all street frontages, which will help stimulate pedestrian activity along 6th Street, Alameda Street and Mill Street.²

¹ LADCP Case Nos. CPC-2022-5829-CU-SPR and VTT-83917 filed on August 15, 2022.

² The access points deviate from the proposed zoning code’s 15-foot passageway width requirement and entrance spacing requirement due to the soundstage production campus’ unique needs.

Similarly, the proposed zoning code transparency requirement is inconsistent with a production soundstage campus and the need to keep all soundstages private. The Project, nevertheless, provides substantial transparency, where engagement with the public realm outweighs the need for privacy. The Project proposes office structures along 6th Street, Alameda Street and Mills Street. These office structures are proposed with transparent facades that will help engage the street. Additionally, the ground level of each studio structure facing 6th Street will include transparent facades (although not through to the studio use itself), also engaging the street.

Finally, the proposed zoning code imposes a minimum building break requirement of 25-feet. The Project satisfies or exceeds this break requirement at various locations. Due to a soundstage production campus' unique need the Project cannot satisfy this requirement at other locations without sacrificing value production studio space. The Project's architect has been mindful of the proposed zoning code's various elements and has strived to achieve compliance with those elements even though they are not currently applicable.

ASOLLC is excited to deliver a new soundstage production campus in the heart of the Art's District. The Project assists in retaining entertainment jobs, and continued growth within the Art's District. As demonstrated above, the Project complies with many components of the Community Plan Update's proposed zoning code. The Project has been designed to balance the unique security needs of a soundstage production campus while engaging the pedestrian environment as much as possible. Swimming against the grain, the Project defies the perception of a monolithic pedestrian hostile movie studio and engages the public realm along all street facing frontages. ASOLLC looks forward to LADCP's processing the Project's Vesting Application and continued engagement with the Art's District community.

Very truly yours,



Michael Gonzales
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