WEST LOS ANGELES SAWTELLE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
West Los Angeles Community Plan Update Ad Committee and Board of Directors Joint Meeting -- Agenda
Tue., Apr. 2, 2019 -- 7:30 PM
Felicia Mahood Senior Center (11338 Santa Monica Blvd. - Los Angeles, Calif. 90025)

NOTICE: Out of an abundance of caution, this committee meeting is noticed as a joint board meeting, and will be making recommendations for the Neighborhood Council board to take action at a later meeting.

THE AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT: As a covered entity under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Angeles does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services and activities. Sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices and other auxiliary aids and/or services, may be provided upon request. To ensure availability of services, please make your request at least 3 business days (72 hours) prior to the meeting you wish to attend by contacting Jay Ross, Board Member, at (310) 979-9255 or email JRoss@WLANC.com.

PUBLIC ACCESS OF RECORDS: In compliance with Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt writings that are distributed to a majority or all of the board in advance of a meeting may be viewed at our website: www.WestLASawtelle.org, or at the scheduled meeting. If you want any record for an item on the agenda, contact Jay Ross, at (310) 979-9255 or email JRoss@WLANC.com.

PUBLIC INPUT AT N.C. MEETINGS: The public is requested to fill out a “Speaker Card” to address the Board on any agenda item before the Board takes an action on an item. Comments from the public on agenda items will be heard only when the respective item is being considered. Comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the agenda that are within the Board’s jurisdiction will be heard during the General Public Comment period. Please note that under the Brown Act, the Board is prevented from acting on a matter that you bring to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, the issue raised by a member of the public may become the subject of a future Board meeting. Public comment is limited to 2 minutes per speaker, unless adjusted by the presiding officer of the Board.

RECORDING MEETINGS: Meetings may be sound or video recorded.

LOCATION: For questions, contact Zel Limenih (310) 479-4119 or Zel.Limenih@LACity.org.

All items on the agenda are subject to discussion, possible action and filing of a Community Impact Statement to the Office of the City Clerk.

1. Call to Order
      1. Addition of neighbor stakeholders: TBD.

2. Reasonable accommodations requests.

4. Public Comment (stakeholders and government agencies) - Items not on the Agenda: 1 minute minimum per speaker.


6. Ex parte communications: Jay Ross - None.

7. Administrative:
   a. Outreach: How to connect with stakeholder groups - residents, business, school, elderly, student, poor, disabled
   b. Joint meetings with Westside NC (shares the area with WLASNC).
   c. Timeline: Is 3 years sufficient time for Planning Dept. to complete research?
   d. Walking tours: Proactively invite planners to our community and show them what we like.
   e. Population and zoning capacity: Current and projected, and what methodology will the Planning Dept. use? How will population be allowed across the 35 Community Plan areas?

8. Tasks:
   a. Apr.-May: Establish goals and objectives.
   b. May-Jun.: Establish land uses, zones and development standards.

9. New business:
   a. Examples of good community plans: Posted: 
         i. Toluca Lake (San Fernando Valley).
         ii. Cornfields (northeast Los Angeles).
         iii. Stanton (Orange Co.).
         v. Santa Monica Blvd. Overlay (West LA NC-PLUM).
         vi. Mar Vista CC public comment.
   b. TOC Guideline revisions as part of update process.
   c. New Neighborhood Mixed-Use Zone (NMU): Westside NC created and Planning Dept. approved.
   d. Goals/objectives to keep in current West L.A. Community Plan.
   e. Community Plan sections
      i. Housing/buildings:
         1. Development standards calculate to include density bonuses.
         2. Scooter nests, bike parking.
         3. FAR that corresponds to density/height.
         4. LID planters as part of landscaped area.
         5. Roof decks as part of open space.
         6. Santa Monica Blvd. earthquake zone.
         7. Tree requirements, planting requirements (dirt, planters, pots).
      ii. Commercial:
      iii. Industrial:
iv. Transport
   1. Bike lanes, bus lanes.
   2. Bus shelters, info boards.
   3. Connections to V.A. subway station, Expo stations.
   4. Evacuation routes.

v. Public ROW
   1. Sidewalk width, landscaped parkways, traffic calming, benches, street trees.
   2. Scooter nests, bike racks.
   3. Flashing crosswalks.

vi. Open space-public
   1. Pocket parks.
   2. Bundy Triangle Park.
   3. West LA Civic Center.

vii. Open space-private
   1. Plazas, courtyards along commercial corridors (not private dining), and around transit stations

f. Affordable housing
   i. Level of affordable housing to receive TOC incentives.
   ii. Inclusionary housing.

g. Infrastructure

h. Motion: City shall require inclusionary housing in all multi-family housing (State law allows cities to mandate this.)

i. Motion: The City shall include zoning and design standards from WLASNC’s approved revisions to:
   1. Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance Amendment.
   2. Westside Multi-Family Q Conditions.
   3. Exposition Station Neighborhood Transit Plan - Bundy Station.
   5. Design Standards.
      a. Floor area to include all uses above grade (including parking).
   7. Sawtelle Blvd. Corridor Overlay (under consideration).

j. Motion: FARs to be the same as in NC resolution on Exposition Station Neighborhood Transit Plan.

10. Public Comment (stakeholders and government agencies) - Items not on the Agenda: 1 minute minimum per speaker.

11. Member announcements

12. Adjournment

Members:
Jay Ross, Boardmember representative (310) 979-9255 JRoss@WLANC.com
Desa Philadelphia, Boardmember representative DPhiladelphia@WLANC.com
Jean Shigematsu, Boardmember representative JShigematsu@WLANC.com
PLATKIN ON PLANNING-You don’t need to be a lobbyist for the real estate industry to realize that the entire country, especially Los Angeles, is in the midst of a housing crisis. We can see it for what it is, without using this crisis as a pretext for schemes and scams carved out for real estate investors, such as free up-zones and loopholes to dodge public hearings, L.A’s 1986 Proposition U, and the California Environmental Quality Act. A basic plan-monitoring program would quickly dispel the most preposterous of these ruses, that rolling back zoning laws wondrously solves the housing crisis, drives up transit ridership, and reduces Green House Gas emissions.

The housing crisis presents itself to us in at least four different ways:

Homelessness. The most visible aspect of the housing crisis is increasing homelessness and homeless encampments. While many Angelinos imagine that this is a local problem, calling encampments Garcettivilles, the growth of homelessness is, in fact, a disgrace throughout the entire United States.
Overcrowding. While overcrowding is increasing across the entire country, according to the Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles and Orange Counties have some the highest rates of overcrowding in the United States.

Rent-gouging. According to the Business Insider, 90 percent of the 100 largest urban areas in the United State experienced significant rent increases from 2017 to 2018. As for Southern California, “the rental market is going completely nuts. The area has five cities on the above list: Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Ana, Anaheim, and Long Beach. In four of them, rents have jumped between 10% and 15% from a year ago.”

Out-migration of people who can no longer afford to live in California. Over the past decade over 600,000 people left California, most of whom were poorer and less educated than those who stayed. At the same time, California experienced a net increase of 50,000 new residents with a bachelors or advanced degree.

Roots of the Housing Crisis: The housing crisis did not mysteriously appear one day. It is the result of at least 12 reversible public policy decisions.

Elimination of HUD (Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development) public housing programs. Beginning with the Nixon Administration (1969 -1974), the Federal Government began a long-term program to eliminate HUD’s public housing programs. In 2019 the remnants of these programs are now on the Trump Administration’s chopping block.

Termination of HUD-subsidized affordable housing programs, especially 221.d.3 and 236. These dismantled affordable housing programs have produced many successful projects in Los Angeles, especially in Chinatown, Little Tokyo, and Bunker Hill. Unfortunately, the covenants that that restrict these rental units to low-income tenants are now expiring. As these changes unfold, thousands of these well-located affordable units will switch over to high-income tenants.

Underfunding of Section 8 housing. In Los Angeles 600,000 people want Section 8 housing, but because of funding cutbacks, only 400 people per year move into Section 8 housing.

Dissolving Community Redevelopment Agencies. In 2011 California had over 400 redevelopment agencies, but the Legislature’s decision to dissolve them in early 2012 led to their demise, including their role in funding affordable housing projects.

Freezing the Federal minimum wage at $7.75 per hour, far below inflation and the cost of living, has forced millions into such poverty that they can no longer afford a decent place to live. Had the U.S. minimum wage been indexed to inflation, it would now be $11 per hour, still less than a living wage. Had it been indexed to increases in productivity, it would be a living wage of $21 per hour, enough to lift many people out of homelessness and over-crowded houses and apartments.

Substituting token affordable housing density bonuses, offered through SB 1818 and TOC Guidelines, for dismantled Federal and State housing programs, and then not inspecting
affordable housing sites to certify that pledged affordable units exist and their occupants are, in fact, qualified low-income renters.

Restricting Los Angeles’ rent stabilization law to housing built before 1978, in buildings with five or more units. By excluding housing that has been constructed within the past 40 years, or single-family, duplex, and four-plex units from rent control, rent increases and evictions have soared.

Spreading data-free narratives that homelessness, rent-gouging, and overcrowding result from zoning laws, not broad shifts in public policy, mortgage rates, tax legislation, and the business cycle. Obvious questions, such as explaining how a constant, zoning, can cause enormous fluctuations in the cost of housing and the rate of housing construction, remain unasked and unanswered. If these questions were posed, the plunge in housing prices and production in the 1990s and during the Great Recession would be a conundrum for those genuinely concerned about resolving the housing crisis.

Ignoring the end of raw land in Los Angeles as a leading factor responsible for LA’s reduced middle class housing production. Unlike the urban edge, where raw land still exists, in Los Angeles new development – almost entirely expensive -- depends on the demolition of existing buildings, usually matched with residential evictions, to secure building sites for highly profitable in-fill development.

Failing to compile easily accessible housing databases. LA’s Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID) has failed to assist prospective tenants by maintaining an easily accessible list of affordable units, whether created through Section 8, SB 1818, or TOC Guidelines. Likewise, they have also not assembled a list of qualified low-income renters that landlords can refer to when screening applicants for their affordable units.

Slow-walking the formal planning and monitoring processes, creating unnecessary barriers to determine where under-utilized zoning is available for by-right housing construction, where local infrastructure and public services have sufficient capacity to serve more buildings and people, and where the greatest demand for affordable housing exists or is forecast.

Claiming the market can meet the need for affordable housing by building expensive housing, without any evidence to back up this totally specious claim. Other than a protracted real estate crash that cuts deeper and lasts longer than the 2008-2013 Great Recession, LA’s new, expensive apartments will remain expensive for the foreseeable future and continue to pull up rents in nearby neighborhoods.

Like climate change, the housing crisis is manmade, and we know who the perpetrators are and what they did.

California population to hit 40 million - & about to fall

This summer, California’s population finally surpasses 40 million. We should celebrate by reflecting on just how small we are.

Of course, we won’t. California, like an insecure male lover, is always bragging about how big it is. And so crossing the 40-million threshold — by state figures, it’s likely to happen in late summer — will occasion another round of boasting about our size, not merely in population but in economic output and cultural impact. The moment will also produce new predictions about how soon we’ll get to 50 million or even 100 million people.

But such projections are unlikely to be met. To the contrary, California should consider the real possibility that our era of population growth is over — and that shrinkage may be our future.

Trends that have produced population decline in other places are now strong in California. Our birth rate has fallen to its lowest rate ever. We’re losing more people to other states each year than come back to us. And international immigration remains low—and could fall further given the federal government’s systematic harassment and mass deportation of immigrants.

Our state’s own policies — especially underinvestment in schools, infrastructure, and housing — all discourage family creation and add to the high cost of living that drives younger people away from here. The result is a rapidly aging California population that will consume less and innovate less (most new things are invented by the young), weakening the economy and reducing the number of jobs.

And I’m not even mentioning the population reduction that could result from once unthinkable disasters — from nuclear war to massive firestorms.

California’s population growth is already at record lows — less than 0.8 percent annually — and falling. During the heyday of immigration, in the 1980s, annual population growth was 2.5 percent a year. Indeed, with many other states growing faster than the Golden State, in 2022 California could lose a seat in the House of Representatives for the first time ever.

California would hardly be alone if its population started to decline. Illinois and Pennsylvanıa have seen their populations decline in some recent years. And the most recent population report from the United Nations shows that 51 countries are expected to see population decreases between now and 2050, including countries that inspire our state’s social policies, like Germany and Japan.

Despite the warning signs, the prospect of population loss hasn’t penetrated the California mind. To the contrary, we remain devoted to the great California pastime of overestimating our own population growth. One serial offender, Gov. Jerry Brown, has talked about the inevitability, and environmental threat, of a 50 million-person California that will require us “to find a more elegant way of relating to material things.”
But for decades, California number crunchers have been quietly ratcheting down population estimates. As recently as the mid-1990s, the state and federal governments’ official predictions showed California reaching 50 million people by 2020, a year when our real population likely will be fewer than 41 million.

And if we never get much beyond 40 million, will it be a mortal wound to our pride? After all, the United States had almost exactly that population way back in 1872, which was when the newspaperman Horace Greeley, famous for the advice “Go West, young man, and grow up with the country,” ran for president, lost, and promptly dropped dead.

Today’s 40-million-person California, for all its delusions of grandeur, has less than one-eighth the population of the United States, less than one-third the population of Mexico, and not even 1/35th the population of China. If California were a country, we would rank just 35th, behind Ukraine, Uganda, Argentina, Colombia, Tanzania, and Myanmar. Our state’s most populous city, L.A., ranks 71st worldwide.

This California, of 40 million, faces a choice. Either accept that we’re a small place that’s likely to become smaller—at least compared to a fast-growing world. Or think more seriously about how to attract more people here, and do a better job of nurturing and retaining the young people we have here now.

If we’re as big as we think we are, this is no time to think small. [http://www.ocregister.com/californias-population-to-hit-40-million-and-about-to-fall]