



LAND USE, HOUSING & CONSTRUCTION

**July 25, 2012
Noon-1:30 p.m.**

1. Welcome and Self Introductions

2. LA's Housing and Mobility Future

- Housing Element 2013-2012 Update
Matthew Glesne, Department of City Planning
- Mobility Element Update
Jane Choi, Department of City Planning
- Transit Oriented Development Planning
Patricia Diefenderfer, Department of City Planning

3. Action Item

- Wyvernwood/ Boyle Heights Mixed-Use Community Project
Mark Sanders & Steven Fink, Fifteen Group

4. Update Item

- NBCUniversal Evolution Plan

Upcoming Events:

- Cap & Trade Forum: Friday, August 24th, Cal State Dominguez Hills

Next Meeting:

Dark in August

Wednesday, September 26th 12-1:30 pm

latimes.com/business/realestate/la-fi-nbc-universal-20120717,0,2938879.story

latimes.com

NBCUniversal scraps plan to build housing on Universal back lot

Instead of developing apartments and condos on Universal Studios land, it now suggests adding more film and TV production facilities, enhancing the theme park and building an extra hotel.

By Roger Vincent, Los Angeles Times

6:10 PM PDT, July 16, 2012

NBCUniversal has dropped controversial plans to build thousands of residences on its famous back lot and hopes instead to add movie and television production facilities and expand the Universal Studios Hollywood theme park.

The new \$1.6-billion proposal was unveiled Monday just before the release of the final environmental impact report on the company's proposal to improve the sprawling studio and tourist attraction in the San Fernando Valley.

An earlier plan, valued at \$3 billion, called for nearly 3,000 apartments and condominiums at the east end of the studio's property; they would have been served by proposed shops and restaurants. Many neighbors were opposed to the housing, and this year Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky called on NBCUniversal to ditch the residential component of its "Evolution Plan."

Housing development would have made economic sense for the company, Universal Studios President Ron Meyer said a meeting with The Times on Monday. Yaroslavsky and Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge, however, "urged us to focus on our core business," Meyer said, "and they are right."

Yaroslavsky and LaBonge attended the meeting at Universal and voiced support for what they called the "no-residential alternative" while stopping short of endorsing the new plan, which still faces city and county approval processes.

Eliminating a portion of the back lot to build housing would reduce television and motion picture production at Universal — potentially costing jobs — because there would be less room for filming, Yaroslavsky said. He also expressed sympathy for neighbors in the hills above the studio.

"If you lived over the back lot, you wouldn't want Park La Brea Towers erected in your backyard either," Yaroslavsky said, referring to a massive apartment complex in the mid-Wilshire area of Los Angeles.

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LaBonge said he hoped Universal would continue to emphasize film and television production on the lot and the popular Universal Studios tour.

"This is an important tourist attraction," he said. "You see people outside smiling with anticipation."

Homeowner groups have been watching Universal's plans with interest over the years.

The president of the Hollywood Knolls Community Club, Daniel Savage, said dropping the housing component would be "a welcome change in terms of lessening the potential negative impacts on traffic and infrastructure such a housing complex would have, but also preserve to the greatest extent possible the historical Universal back lot and keeping it available for production, which is greatly needed in this city."

The new plan calls for adding 327,000 square feet of development to the theme park, which might include an expansion of the well-known tram tour and parking. The boundaries of the theme park would not grow.

The theme-park enhancements might seem to be a natural complement for the planned Wizarding World of Harry Potter, which NBCUniversal said in December would cost "several hundred million dollars" to create. The studio hopes to emulate the success of the attraction at Universal Studios Orlando in Florida.

But on Monday, NBCUniversal officials said they hadn't determined where they would place the "Harry Potter" attraction, which is expected to include a re-creation of the Hogwarts castle as well as Potter-themed rides, shops and restaurants.

A key revision of the proposal calls for construction of two 500-room hotels instead of one. The new plan also would bump up the amount of new production facilities and offices to 1.45 million square feet from 1.24 million square feet.

The revised plan calls for \$100 million in transit and roadway improvements as originally proposed, said Thomas Smith, senior vice president in charge of real estate on the West Coast for NBCUniversal.

The budget would include a new ramp and other improvements on the 101 Freeway. About half the \$100 million would be spent on improving traffic flow on nearby streets, intersections and freeways; the other half would be spent on transit programs, including shuttles, a Metro bus and employee and visitor incentives to forgo car trips.

The final EIR has deemed the no-residential alternative "environmentally superior," officials said, and NBCUniversal has asked the city and county to focus on that version of the plan for the upcoming approval process.

Comcast Corp., which owns a majority interest in NBCUniversal, supports the new plan, Meyer said. Public hearings on the final environmental impact report lie ahead. If the proposal is approved, construction will begin right away, he said.

The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp., a business trade group, said it supports NBCUniversal's latest proposal, which would create thousands of construction jobs.

"Not only will these new attractions, destination spots and recreational options boost the economy around the Universal City facility, but they will significantly stimulate our entire region's hospitality and

tourism industry," the group said.

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SAVE THE DATE

Cap and Trade Forum

Friday, August 24, 2012

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

CSUDH Loker Student Union

1000 E. Victoria Street, Carson

Join Assemblymembers Isadore Hall, III, Susan Bonilla and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce to learn more about the implications of the California Air Resources Board's "cap and trade" program; set to regulate 600 of the state's largest greenhouse gas emitting stationary sources, including numerous local entities.

Call 52nd Assembly District Office to RSVP (310) 223-1201



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