

**Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council  
Planning & Land Use Committee  
April 3, 2021**

**Held via Zoom Webinar**

**Present:** John Ward (Chair), Sylwia Jonasen (Secretary), Ivan Cotton, Senita Craigen, Vanessa Johnson, La Juana Mitchell, Fred Nichols, Rosalie Preston, Rey Quiroz, Luetta Watson

- 1) [10:03 AM] John Ward, PLU Chair, welcomed everyone followed by a roll call. John Ward reminded those Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council Board members, who are not members of the Planning and Land Use Committee that they are supposed to only listen in and not make comments, in accordance with the Brown Act. The meeting is recorded and available at: <https://harborigatewaynorth.org/planning-and-land-use-2/>
- 2) [10:06 AM] General Public Comment on non-agenda items.  
Dr. Tom Williams said that he is learning from the HGNNC experiences of updating the Community Plan and working with LA City Planning Department. This will help him when involved with updating the Northeast Community Plan. He also would like to receive any comments regarding this process and how it can be improved at [ctwilliams2012@yahoo.com](mailto:ctwilliams2012@yahoo.com).
- 3) [10:08 AM] Approval of the February 26, 2021, Planning and Land Use Committee minutes. Luetta Watson proposed corrections to the minutes. Motion to approve the minutes as corrected was made by Rosalie Preston; seconded by Fred Nichols. Motion passed 10-0-0.
- 4) [10:18 AM] Transit Oriented Communities Guidelines – presentation by Matthew Glesne, Senior City Planner for the Housing Element Team (10 minutes presentation, 10 minutes Q&A)  
The speaker was not available to attend. The topic was tabled until the May 1, 2021, meeting.

Rosalie Preston: TOC is a planning designation that allows for an increased density for new apartment buildings that are proposed near bus and train stations. This increased density is contingent on certain number of the units to be designated as affordable. The topic came to light because of the proposed apartment building in our community at 11630 S. Main Street (ZA-2020-7786-TOC-ZAI-SPR-HCA; ENV-2020-7787-EAF), in District 7.

John Ward stated that this designation might be a cause for parking and density issues.

La Juana Mitchell stated that it would be beneficial for the presenter to explain exactly what is the connection between the density bonus, the TOC, and measure JJJ, as there is conflicting wording in the various measures, and exactly how the number of low-income units are calculated.

Dr. Tom Williams, LA 32 Neighborhood Council: The Park & Ride located near Rosecrans might be a good place to provide an example of what TOC designation might look like in that area.

Luetta Watson requested that the TOC guidelines that she had previously emailed to John Ward to be shared with the Committee Members before May 1.

More information regarding TOC including the guidelines can be found here  
<https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/transit-oriented-communities-incentive-program>

- 5) [10:31 AM] Presentation by Duke Brothers, LLC, DBA Buddha Company South Bay, regarding their application for a retail commercial cannabis license for a store at 13222 S. Estrella Avenue in District 4, Council File 21-0420-S1 (See Attachment), with a possible recommendation to the Board

Anahi Tellez, presented on behalf of Duke Brothers. The applicant Franco Brunetti, has been operating regulated cannabis businesses in the city of Los Angeles since 2006 and has demonstrated history of compliance. The company is committed to work with the local community to enhance safety and beautification of the area. The company has added exterior lighting, security cameras, and their private security patrol is now patrolling the whole area that has previously been plagued by illegal fireworks, illegal dumping, illegal activity. The security patrol would be increased to 24 hours/day if the retail license is granted. The majority of retail licenses awarded is concentrated in southern area of the Harbor Gateway leaving the northern part underserved not only for the HGN residents but also those who pass through the area (tourists and commuters from neighboring South Bay cities of Torrance, Hermosa Beach, etc.). There is an abundance of illegal dispensaries in the area that are not regulated and do not pay taxes. Duke Brothers is actively engaging in cleaning up the area around the current location.

[10:41 AM] Q&A

**Rosalie Preston:** How long has the Duke Brothers been in that location? Are there plans that this will be only retail store or will there be growing facility at the back of the building? What kind of parking will there be on site?

**Anahi Tellez:** Duke Brothers is applying for the retail license under Phase II of the City's Social Equity Program. They have been cultivating and manufacturing cannabis products at this facility the last 2 years. They invited CD15 representatives (e.g., Alison Becker, Senior Advisor to Councilmember Buscaino) to tour their facility. The facility is very large and there is ample parking.

**Fred Nichols:** What is the timing of the HGNNC Board to make a statement on this proposal?

**Anahi Tellez:** The Department of Cannabis Regulation (DCR) does not give timelines. Duke Brothers LLC started the application process 2 years ago before there was a formal process by the DCR

**Luetta Watson:** Did they reach out to the stakeholders who live in District 4 about this business?

**Anahi Tellez:** The stakeholders that the company is required to reach out to are: local Chamber of Commerce, local drug and rehab facility, the Neighborhood Council, local Police Department. They have started getting signatures and support letters from local businesses in the area since the area is zoned as manufacturing.

**Luetta Watson:** Has the business contacted the 135<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Watch whose members are the residents of that community?

**Anahi Tellez:** Through the local police department they have contacted their community support groups. Duke Brothers LLC is open to engage with other groups that are working in the area.

**Luetta Watson:** This business is going to be serving tourists and the South Bay residents?

**Anahi Tellez:** The location is right off of the 110 Freeway exit and the tax revenue from this location will be benefitting this community.

**Rey Quiroz:** What do you mean by social equity?

**Anahi Tellez:** It is a City of Los Angeles program started in 2018 and it is intended to help disproportionately impacted minority communities that suffered from the war on drugs. It specifically gives a way for people who have been previously arrested for cannabis, who live in low socio-economic

areas, to legally engage in the market. One of the partners in Duke Brothers has been previously arrested for cannabis and that's why the organization is now applying under Phase II of the program.

**Vanessa Johnson:** Is concerned with economic equity that the business should add to this community. The businesses in the area come in, work, and then leave. They add nothing of economic value to the community. Hoping that the business has a plan to add money to the community rather than just taking it out. The residents living on the opposite side of the freeway and their needs should be addressed and their voices need to be heard.

**Anahi Tellez:** In the staffing plan, which was shown to CD15, at least 50% of workers for their retail location will be hired from a 3-mile radius. They are open to suggestions on providing community benefits such as trash pick up on Estrella. Cannabis businesses are taxed at twice the rate of other businesses in the City of Los Angeles.

[Public Comment]

**Barbara Tyson,** District 7 stakeholder: Has family members who had cancer and were able to benefit from cannabis. There should be a benefit for the community when the businesses are brought into the community. We need education programs for the youth as well as the rehab facilities and seniors. If businesses are going to come here and support the community they need to understand that they need to support the youth and senior programs.

**Anahi Tellez:** The medicinal qualities of legal cannabis are mostly now benefitting baby-boomers and it is important to support that.

**Thomas Clarke,** District 4 stakeholder, off of 135<sup>th</sup> and 110 Fwy: Has been in the area 30+ years. He is 100% against any cannabis store in the neighborhood. He has been user himself and only sees negative impact to the community. If anyone needs cannabis they can go elsewhere. We don't need the money. We want a safe community and don't need anything anymore that would hinder the community.

**Anahi Tellez:** Their business is going through all the proper channels to offer legal cannabis. The alternative is having abundance of illegal locations.

**Blanca,** 135<sup>th</sup> Street - less than a mile away from Duke Brothers location: How will they be contributing in a non-mandatory way?

**Anahi Tellez:** Picking up the trash on Estrella, additional lighting, security cameras, security guard for 24 hours per day instead of the current 12 hours, hiring locally – those are so far all the items that are not required but the company decided to offer.

**Dr. Tom Williams,** zip: 90032, Chair of Transportation Committee: The location of the store is less than a 150 ft from 110 Fwy, however it is over a mile from the closest freeway exit. The location may encourage more cut-through traffic in the residential area to the west.

**Anahi Tellez:** Instead of looking at the traffic impacts, the other side is to look at the economic impacts of the pandemic and what this new business would bring to the area aside from traffic.

**Mercedes,** lives close to the area where the business will be: How will this dissuade the illegal activity?

**Anahi Tellez:** It comes down to accessibility, it has been proven that the legal businesses will come together with the local police enforcement and will get these illegal locations shut down like it happened in Downtown LA.

**Arvie,** District 4 stakeholder: What has been going on in the building since 2018? The location has mostly industrial companies. However, she doesn't think that the business was very open to what is

happening at this location.

**Anahi Tellez:** The facility is authorized for cultivation, manufacturing, and distribution since 2018. That didn't mean they were up and running back then. All the approvals took long time. Now, the additional approval requested is for the retail element to be added to the existing licenses. There are 30 parking spaces. They have heard that the increased lighting, cameras, and security patrols actually worked to make the area safer, however, the improvement of the area is work in progress and they are here to listen to those requests. Duke Brothers LLC is applying under the Social Equity Program and they are not venture capitalists.

[Written comments read by John Ward]

**Leila:** Thank you for addressing and helping us clean up our community and dealing with the chronic issue in the area. Thank you Duke Brothers for choosing our community to want to spend money and pay taxes to better our area! We wish you well with your application and hopefully those who make the decisions will see the benefits of having a LEGAL dispensary in our district supplying SAFE cannabis. Let's hope the ones making decisions put their efforts on REAL issues rather than denying you.

**Mr Jordan,** District 4 stakeholder: Three years without consulting neighborhood watch or Neighborhood Council.

**Anahi Tellez:** They are not required to consult with Neighborhood Council for Phase II licensing. They have been meeting and consulting with City Hall and nearby community.

**Keith:** It is wonderful that the company is committed to clean the community, what other plans do you have to add value to the community?

**Anahi Tellez:** They are open to suggestions. Are there community events, festivals, special programs? Any suggestions are welcome. They are open to all of these including educating the community about cannabis.

[11:23 AM Anahi Tellez lost connection]

Luetta Watson requested that we send out the cannabis factsheet for stakeholders to have information on how to make recommendations regarding this issue.

[11:29 AM Anahi Tellez returned to the meeting]

**Arvie,** District 4: This location is close to elementary school.

**Anahi Tellez:** They are outside the 700ft buffer zone that the City of Los Angeles has put in place.

**La Juana Mitchell:** The application states that there are 6 retail locations authorized for the Harbor Gateway Community Plan area. What is the impact on the neighborhood and why would we want to authorize an additional retail location?

**Anahi Tellez:** The recommendation from 2018 is for one location per 10,000 residents according to population numbers from the American Community Survey. The census data has not been updated and the cap will most likely be increased and more locations will be authorized later on.

**Thomas Clarke,** District 4 stakeholder: What cities and streets are your other locations? What are the chances of you not opening a retail outlet on Estrella?

**Anahi Tellez:** The other locations are near DTLA (Sacramento and Los Angeles Streets – operating since 2007). The regulations are due to be revised and there will be more cannabis businesses coming through.

**Dr. Tom Williams:** Is there an email that the suggestions could be sent to?

**Anahi Tellez:** Yes, the suggestions can be sent to: [community.buddhaco@gmail.com](mailto:community.buddhaco@gmail.com)

**Rosalie Preston:** From what the secretary of the City Council PLUM Committee indicated, we have time to discuss and gather more information before Committee needs to vote on this matter. Fred Nichols concurred.

**Luetta Watson:** stated that the illegal cannabis dispensaries will be addressed by LAPD and the requests for legal licenses are within the community's purview to opine on. The issue is not whether you approve of cannabis or not but the undue-concentration within a Community Plan area.

**Anahi Tellez:** The update to the American Community Survey will drive the lift of the cap on the number of retail cannabis locations in the area.

John Ward moved that the vote on this item be postponed to the next meeting. Sylwia Jonasen seconded. The motion passed 10-0-0.

- 6) [11:38 AM] Citywide Sign Ordinance Council File 11-1705 – presentation by Patrick Frank, President, Coalition for a Scenic Los Angeles, requesting Community Impact Statement, with a possible recommendation to the Board

Patrick Frank gave presentation on the differences between the City Planning Commission's Recommendations (Version B Plus) and the PLUM Committee Version of the Citywide Sign Ordinance, Council File 11-1705. He asked that the PLU Committee issue a Community Impact Statement opposing the most recent version of the Citywide Sign Ordinance that emerged from the PLUM Committee in December 2020, as it encourages digital billboards in more areas of the City. The City Planning Commission version allowed the digital billboards in 22 designated sign districts.

Fred Nichols: What are other reasons PLUM Committee might have besides the additional revenue?

Patrick Frank: The City has been troubled by budgetary issues. However, the City is going to get \$1.3B in bailout money that relieves the pressure. The sign companies have also been contributing to the campaigns of the PLUM Committee members.

John Ward: The vibrancy of digital signs in locations like New York, Tokyo, Hong Kong is very invigorating and shows capitalism at its greatest. How and why these signs are blight in Los Angeles but are welcome in the other cities?

Patrick Frank: Version B Plus allows those digital billboards only in locations that can be likened to the location as Time Square, where there is more pedestrian traffic (like LA Live). The PLUM Committee's version is going to allow digital billboards virtually anywhere (including at random intersections without foot traffic).

Rosalie Preston: Are there sample template letters if we decide to support the Version B Plus? Our HGNNC has weighed in previously with a position very close to the one presented today.

Patrick Frank: Yes. We have a sample version of that. The City is planning to vote on it in 2-3 weeks.

John Ward read the example of the CIS. He asked if the vote should be postponed for the HGNNC PLU Committee to be presented with the view of the LA City PLUM Committee regarding their proposal?

John Ward requested vote if the Committee will vote today. The motion has passed to vote on 04/03/2021 6-4(Jonasen, Mitchell, Nichols, Ward)-0.

Rosalie Preston made a motion to adopt the recommended language for the Community Impact Statement on Council File 11-1705), which is a slightly revised version to the one the PLU Committee supported a few years ago. Luetta Watson seconded. The motion passed 6-4(Jonasen, Mitchell, Nichols, Ward)-0.

- 7) [12:06 PM] Reports (5 minutes each):
  - a. 2,500 ft set back for oil and gas drilling

Rosalie Preston reported that the Los Angeles City plans to phase out all oil and gas drilling. State assembly bill AB 467 requires a 2,500 foot setback between sensitive uses and oil and gas wells, as well as ban most dangerous drilling practices (fracking, steam injection, water/steam flooding, and acidizing) within California. Those are important proposals that the PLU Committee should consider and support in the future.

- b. Status report on draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Prologis warehouse at 15116-15216 S. Vermont Avenue; 747-861 W. Redondo Beach Blvd. (ENV-2017-1015-EIR), in District 3.

John Ward updated the PLU Committee that there is no date set yet for the release of the draft EIR as per Jivar Afshar of Major Projects within LA City Planning Department.

- 8) Announcements

Rosalie Preston: It's very important for the PLU Committee members and other stakeholders to attend the April 10 Plan Check meeting because they will have speakers who will talk about cannabis regulations. The materials from this meeting can be accessed here: <https://plancheckncla.com/2021/04/10/plancheck-meeting-zoom-links-4-10-21/>

La Juana Mitchell: Remind NC Funding that even though there is not a date yet for review of the Prologis DEIR, we need to move to get the contract for the approved consultant finalized.

Fred Nichols: He would hope that the full HGNNC Board will have option to see the CIS letter for Council File 11-1705 and read it before their April 13 meeting.

- 9) Next meeting: Saturday, May 1, 2021 @ 10 AM  
Meeting adjourned: 12:14 PM

Minutes taken by Sylwia Jonasen, PLU Committee Secretary