Finding Your Way Around

We’ve made some exciting progress on the Hollywood Wayfinding Signage Project! Through a series of steering committee meetings, a community open house, and presentations to external organizations, we are nearing completion of the preliminary design work for this program. In addition, we’ve secured a generous contribution of $15,000 from the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce to help complete the preliminary planning and design work for this legacy project.

Over the past five years, state officials and voters have approved changes to our criminal justice system that aim to reduce incarceration and prison overcrowding, save public funds and decriminalize certain behaviors. There are benefits associated with those aims, but it also appears that some of the interventions and systems changes that were promised in the wake of criminal justice reform have failed to keep up with the needs of people who have reentered our communities.

It is too soon to know for sure the causes behind the uptick in random erratic and violent behaviors we are witnessing in our community. Walking in the neighborhood, we see an increase in visible agitation owing to mental illness and/or substance abuse. We also know that our rates of homelessness are on the increase, and where some people have become newly homeless owing to job loss or losing their apartment (see related article on page two), others face housing challenges due to their mental illness or criminal record.

In talking with our sister BIDs in Los Angeles, we find that we are not alone. Similar public safety concerns are arising in Downtown Los Angeles and Venice, in particular.

It is a complicated scenario, but both BIDs have begun to meet with local and state officials to describe how the neighborhood is impacted by these larger forces. In the last 60 days, conversations have been initiated with Deputy Mayor for Public Safety, Jeff Gorell; Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell; LAPD West Bureau Deputy Chief Dennis Kato; City Attorney Mike Feuer, and State Senator Ben Allen. Several board members from both BIDs and key property owners have walked Hollywood Blvd. with the councilmember, the deputy mayor and LAPD leadership.

Staff has drafted two blog posts to raise awareness of the issue: one about the deteriorating sense of safety on the sidewalks of Hollywood, and a second about the unintended consequences of Prop 47. Staff is quick to point out that this is not a homeless issue, per se. Instead, there is a criminal element, masquerading as homeless, that has become emboldened in...
Stunning Homeless Numbers

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) released the results of the 2017 point-in-time count at a press conference on May 31, 2017. The January count revealed a 23% increase in the county and a 20% increase in the city. Though many officials expected the numbers to increase, the jump was quite stunning.

There were some trends this year that are worth pondering. Despite progress made in housing people (14,214 people housed in 2016), the region is struggling to get ahead of the increasing number of people falling into homelessness. The numbers showed that 8,044 people experiencing homelessness for the first time became homeless in the last year. Certainly, the LA housing market, among the most expensive in the nation, is contributing to this situation. The LAHSA report noted that renters in the LA-Long Beach-Anaheim Metro Statistical Area are the most cost burdened in the nation (which means that housing costs exceed 30 percent of income). Further, LA County’s inflation-adjusted median rent increased 28% between 2000 to 2014, while median renter income declined eight percent.

In a memo prepared for the two BID boards to make sense of next steps in response to these numbers, staff outlined three areas that warrant the attention of the Hollywood business community. First, Hollywood needs an emergency shelter. The 65-bed PATH shelter closed in July 2016, and there is no option to help move a person off the street if they are interested in assistance. With Measure H dollars coming online this summer, what Hollywood needs is a potential site for a shelter and a service provider willing to take this on.

Second, Hollywood is encouraged to identify an appropriate site for permanent supportive housing. With Measure HHH bond dollars available for the next ten years to supplement financing, it would be ideal to have at least one project in the community that could serve people moving from the streets to a home.

Finally, because Measure H funding for key programs such as rapid rehousing and outreach will be channeled through LAHSA to local nonprofits, an organization such as The Center at Blessed Sacrament needs to be equipped, through the establishment of a reserve fund, to compete with the big nonprofits. Government grants can sometimes result in four to six months of delayed contract payments, and The Center will need to have cash reserves to withstand those delays.

A link to the LAHSA report is available by consulting the website at www.lahsa.org. Contact Kerry Morrison to discuss any of the ideas suggested in this article.

-Kerry Morrison, @KerryHMorrison

At a Glance –
2017 Homeless Count

LA County 2017 – 57,794 homeless
23% increase from 2016 total of 46,874

City of Los Angeles – 34,189 homeless
20% increase from 2016 total of 28,464

Council District 13 – 3,282 homeless
8% increase from 2016 total of 3,036

Vehicles and Encampments – 14,412
26% increase from 2016 total of 11,472

SVBID / CHC Board Meeting
Tuesday, July 11, 2017
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

HED / SVBID Joint Security Committee Meeting
Wednesday, July 12, 2017
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.

HED / HPOA Board Meeting
Thursday, July 20, 2017
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

HED / SVBID Joint Streetscape and Planning Committee Meeting
Wednesday, July 26, 2017
9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Old Hollywood Locals Night
Tuesday, August 8, 2017
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Joint Annual All Property Owners Meeting
August, 2017
*Stay tuned for date, time and location!

All meetings take place at: HED & SVBID Headquarters, 6562 Hollywood Blvd. Please RSVP to 323-463-6767 or info@hollywoodbid.org. Visit www.onlyinhollywood.org to confirm meeting times and locations. All meetings are open to the public.
Old Hollywood Locals Night

Once upon a time, Hollywood was a neighborhood where locals shopped for clothes and home goods, dined, and saw movies in the many theaters lining the boulevard. In more recent times, tourists have outnumbered locals, making some Angelinos steer clear of the area. A new event series called Old Hollywood Locals Night aims to change that, and bring neighbors together to enjoy all that Hollywood has to offer, but mostly to enjoy a sense of community.

The inaugural event included a dining “scavenger hunt,” where attendees were able to experience local restaurants by receiving free samples at participating businesses. Attendees received passbooks where they collected stamps from the restaurants they visited, and were then eligible to enter a raffle.

The block of Hudson Ave. directly north of Hollywood Boulevard was closed for a festival which included a stage sponsored by Illi Commercial Real Estate - Greg Offsay, Joseph Woods, and Carter Andrews. AMDA provided the stage and sound system, which was operated by Tony Zimbardi. Artists who performed included Sunshine & Moon, Cameron Nino, and Arthur*Autumn. DJ Myles Matisse started the party off, magician Mattias Ramos of Black Rabbit Rose delighted the audience, and Councilmember Mitch O’Farrell shared remarks. The Poem Store created custom poems for attendees.


Pop-up galleries were organized by Hollywood Heritage and HPOA, which displayed art by Thad Hunter Smith and clothing by Manam Fashion. Escape Hotel, Second City, LACE and WuHo Galleries also opened their doors to the community.

Participating restaurants included Harts Cafe, Rise & Grind, D’s Dubai Sauce, Saint Felix, Boardner’s, Loteria Grill, Black Rabbit Rose, Crying Tiger, Cabo Cantina and Urban Masala.

The next Old Hollywood Locals Night is scheduled for Tuesday, August 8, 2017 from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

-DEVIN STRECKER, @DEVINTAIT

Hollywood PAL was one of the local organizations that participated with a booth at the festival at the first Old Hollywood Locals Night on April 19, 2017. (Photo by Gary Leonard)
Walk Old Hollywood: BID Launches Historic Walking Tour

After moving the BID office to the middle of Hollywood Blvd., halfway between the happening intersections of Highland Avenue and Vine Street, HPOA staff began to fully understand the historic nature of this section of Hollywood. Indeed, our research brought us to the conclusion that this area is where Hollywood, the neighborhood, truly got its start. From the first movie theatre, to the first hotel and doctor’s office, this little stretch played host to many of Hollywood’s firsts, and many of those original buildings are still standing to this day.

Inspired by the legacy of this area, the staff hired historian April Brooks Clemmer to fully research Hollywood’s origins and to bring together the property owners to craft a vision forward that would protect and breathe new life into the hallowed grounds of what we are now calling “Old Hollywood.”

Having initially walked the area with property owners who told their own stories about the buildings they represent, Clemmer pieced together a narrative describing what was it like to witness Hollywood’s transformation from a tiny suburb of Los Angeles to the glamorous film capital of the world. After testing the tour for several months, we launched this tour in May as an experience open to all! On this tour, you will learn the history of Hollywood from around 1885-1960, and have a chance to peek inside some of the hidden gems on the boulevard. Join us to learn the story of how Hollywood transformed from a sleepy little town of orange groves into the center of the world’s entertainment industry…in less than 50 years! Take a walk back in time to visit the homes, shops, theaters, offices and restaurants that define Hollywood’s historic identity.

You’ll visit the oldest residential home on Hollywood Boulevard, go inside a theater that hosted star-studded premieres during Hollywood’s golden age, and sip a drink where Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks unwound after a long day of filming, and where writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway wrote classic American novels.

Our destinations include:
• Hollywood’s first and most famous movie theaters.
• The oldest remaining residence on the Boulevard.
• The longest continuously-operating restaurant in Hollywood.
• Architecturally iconic buildings.
• Hollywood’s premiere shopping district during its Golden Age.

Along the way you’ll see how the story of Hollywood is still unfolding as the modern-day artists and creatives continue to reinvent their neighborhood while honoring its storied past. Tickets cost $20 each. The tour is regularly scheduled for the last Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Additional dates and times are offered as needed, and private, group, and Spanish language tours are available by arrangement.  

-APRIL CLEMMER, @VINSPIREDAPRIL

Update on Public Safety Trends

To add weight to our conversations with elected officials, a Public Safety Survey is being released this month to gather input from people who live, attend school or do business in Hollywood. This survey will serve as a benchmark to document our collective perception of safety, and to document changes over time. It is hoped that by this time next year, a follow-up to this survey will show some improvement.

To access the survey, either follow the link, or access the website to connect to the survey instrument. It will only take five minutes, but if we can generate a neighborhood’s worth of responses, we will have good feedback to share with our city and state officials.

-KERRY MORRISON, @KERRYHMORRISON
Music In the Air

While most known as a movie town, Hollywood has long been a hotbed of musical activity. Today it is home to many musicians and several musical education institutions.

Hollywood is rich in music history, with many great bands and artists having gotten their start here, and many famous recordings produced in the many studios located here.

To celebrate this musical heritage, and recognize the vast amount of talent right here in the community, HPOA produced the second annual Make Music LA on Hollywood Boulevard on June 21, 2017, at the historic Egyptian Theatre’s forecourt.

Sponsored by Sunset + Vine Apartments and Robertson Properties Group, and with cooperation from American Cinematheque and Musicians Institute, the event was an all-day, all-ages, free outdoor concert.

Performers included students and alumni of Musicians Institute Honey & Jude, Bruno Romano + Oriana Lucas, Rayassa, and Janvi Anand. Additional local artists included Earth Arrow, Sunshine & Moon, Emily Zuzik, and Arthur*Autumn. Hohner donated harmonicas to attendees. Urban Masala sponsored lunch for all artists.

Make Music Los Angeles on Hollywood Boulevard is part of Make Music LA. Based on France’s Fête de la Musique, a national musical holiday inaugurated in 1982, the festival has become a phenomenon celebrated on the same day in more than 800 cities in 110 countries. Make Music LA engages all communities of Los Angeles in an annual cross-cultural celebration of the power of music and art through musical performances by amateurs, students and professionals.

-DEVIN STRECKER, @DEVINTAIT

AMDA: Music to Hollywood’s Ears

What does a music, dance, acting and performance art theater have to do with the preservation and rehabilitation of the Hollywood community? Quite a lot, actually. AMDA College and Conservatory of the Performing Arts began in Manhattan, but has a home in Hollywood where the school has been instrumental in the updating and re-purposing of old hotel, office, and apartment buildings.

The school’s LA campus is located at the lovely art deco Yucca Vine Tower and the Vine Building, both of which are modernized and vital structures thanks to the school. Add to that the re-purposing of several older apartments and hotels – the most recent on Wilcox Ave. – as student housing, and AMDA gets an A for improving the community as well as for education.

A fully accredited school, AMDA offers Professional Conservatory and Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in acting, dance theater, music theater, and the performing arts to over 1400 students.

MI: The Music of Hollywood

The Musicians Institute has been located in Hollywood for 40 years, bringing with it the true sound of the music industry.

The musical education behemoth offers challenging music performance programs that combine contemporary music performance with vigorous education in traditional music disciplines. Performance programs include five major disciplines of study: guitar, bass, drums, keyboard, and vocal. Along with the impressive performance programs, The Musicians Institute offers in-depth Industry Programs as well to prepare graduates for music careers, training students in state of the art facilities.

According to Beth Marlis, vice president of industry and community relations at Musicians Institute, as well as the executive director at The Musicians Foundation which provides student scholarships, “The school is arguably the most well-known and respected contemporary music school in the world.”

She notes that the school’s location in Hollywood is an essential element of its success. “There’s a reason we are where we are – it’s because the music industry is the school’s focal point, and its bull’s-eye is in Hollywood.”

For more info: these two snippets are excerpts of more in-depth blog entries at www.onlyinhollywood.org.
Challenges of Today, Potential of Tomorrow

Hello Fellow Sunset and Vine District Stakeholders (and those in the HED)! It’s hard to believe but we are already half-way through 2017! I am pleased to report that since my last letter, both our BID and staff continue to make significant progress in what has proven to be a challenging season for our district and city. I’m sure many of you may have seen the recent results of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) annual homeless count. From 2016 homelessness in the County of Los Angeles is up 23% and in the City of Los Angeles 20%. This has not come as a surprise to many of us, as this increase has been felt for quite some time in our Hollywood neighborhood. That being said, I am happy to say that help is on the way.

On March 6, voters in Los Angeles approved the passage of Measure H, a quarter cent sales tax measure that would provide approximately $350 M a year to support homeless outreach and services in the County of LA. You can read more about the actions being taken by our community to meet this challenge in the article on page one.

On January 31, 2017, CHC staff attended and spoke at the the public hearing held by City Council to consider legalizing street vending. Our staff shared the concerns of our stakeholders with the City Council on the blanket approval of vending without proper enforcement measures in place. Despite a number of speakers who shared our views, the Council has gone forward with plans to decriminalize street vending. We continue to monitor the situation and work with our local Councilmember to ensure that the enforcement piece is not forgotten as the City drafts an ordinance to regulate street vending on a go-forward basis.

On an exciting note, Matthew Severson, our Operations Manager for the BID, has been working these past several months with Wayne Hunt, of Hunt Design to create a Wayfinding signage program that would be utilized in both the Sunset and Vine and Hollywood Entertainment District BIDs. The project will provide directions to significant community attractions, icons, Metro transit stops, and city parking garages. A working group consisting of representatives from both BIDs, the Chamber, and city officials have met several times over the past quarter to refine the design and solidify the locations of the proposed signage. Our staff also hosted an open house for stakeholders, community groups, neighborhood councils, and business owners in the area to allow them to share their thoughts and feedback on the signage.

Lastly, I want to convey my thanks to our ad-hoc BID Renewal committee chaired by Brian Folb. This group has been working tirelessly with our consultant, Urban Place, to find the best structure and programming to continue the worthy work of this organization well into 2029. This is not a small undertaking, but in the wake of the challenges our community faces – from chronic homelessness to planning for smart growth, I have personally seen the immense value and the priceless contributions our BID, board, and staff have made these past 10 years since our founding. As we get closer to our vote, I hope you will join me in saying “yes” to continuing our BID, and that you will all continue to participate in making the Sunset and Vine District one that can be enjoyed by all for years to come!

Enjoy your summer and we look forward to seeing you at our All Property Owners Meeting this August - date and location to be announced. Until then, ciao!

-Fabio Conti, CHC Board President
The Egyptian Theatre was crafted to look like an ancient Egyptian structure, using Egyptian Revival style. It was constructed in a similar way to sets from the big biblical productions of the day using false doors and staircases. The hieroglyphs are real symbols and the depictions of deities on the exterior of the building are actual Egyptian gods, according to historian Margot Gerber. (Photo by Gary Leonard)

The Grand Egyptian Theatre

Built in 1922, The Egyptian Theatre at 6712 Hollywood Boulevard was the first true movie palace in Los Angeles, and as such, became the first home for Hollywood premieres. Margot Gerber, director of marketing and publicity for the Egyptian Theatre and American Cinematheque, as well as serving as the chair of the Art Deco Society, has been working with the historic theater since 1992.

“I became the historian during the theater’s renovation in 1997 and 1998,” she relates. “I’ve launched a public tour of the theater one Saturday morning a month, as one of the ways to promote and preserve it.”

Gerber also uses all forms of social media to share what the theater screens each week, with many Cinematheque members and others on the theater’s mailing list.

“Preservation is an on-going challenge. We did a half-million-dollar update to our original renovation in 2016 and 2017. A lot of the plaster was very compromised from water leakage. Our portico roof was in dire need of repair. We were also able to restore some murals on the courtyard walls that were cracking and crumbling.”

She notes that the theater is a historic cultural monument registered with the City of Los Angeles.

The theater was designed by the architectural firm of Alyer and Holler, and the first film screened was Robin Hood, starring Douglas Fairbanks.

“In the first five years the theater was open, the highest grossing films of the era played there, including Charlie Chaplin’s The Gold Rush. Sid Grauman was the impresario who presided over the Egyptian Theatre until 1927, when he sold his interest to be part of the development of the new Chinese Theatre down the street where he remained until his death in 1950,” Gerber reports.

Today the theater screens a variety of films, with many showings highlighted by in-person guest appearances. Everything from Super 8 to 70mm format films are shown.

“Showing films on film as opposed to a digital format is almost a museum-quality experience,” Gerber explains.

The theater was among the first in Los Angeles to host filmmakers and other guests related to films in person outside of film festivals, all year long. The theater’s 60 foot screen provides an immersive experience for viewers.

According to Gerber, “seeing a film at a theater with so much history is a rare treat. There are not a lot of single screen movie palaces left. It is a state-of-the-art theater housed in an historic shell, so the quality of the presentation is very high tech,” she enthuses. “The theater is one of the last open-air courtyard theaters along with the Alex in Glendale and the TCL Chinese up the street.”

As to the future? The American Cinematheque, the non-profit that owns and operates the theatre, plans to keep the Egyptian running as a movie theater long past its 100th birthday in 2022.

This is an excerpt. For the entire story, visit www.onlyinhollywood.org.

-Genie Davis, @GenieWrites
Earth Focus is the inaugural Environmental Film Festival, LA’s first festival of its kind, free to the public on July 29 at Hollywood’s iconic Egyptian Theatre, presented by KCET and Link TV in partnership with Washington, D.C.'s renowned “Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital.” A full day of screenings and panels include “Water & Power: A California Heist,” “Rise: Sacred Water- Standing Rock,” “Tomorrow” and “The Age of Consequences” with films introduced by celebrity activists Raphael Sbarge, Ed Begley Jr., Patrick Fabian and Sharon Lawrence.

Formerly “Wine & Jazz,” the series now called “Summer Jazz Nights” takes place every Tuesday, from July 11 through August 8, 2017, from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Central Courtyard at Hollywood & Highland Center. Nominal donation for wine, beer, cheese selection and seating, with 100% of the proceeds benefiting Project Angel Food. Artists scheduled to perform include Naughty Professor; Cameron Graves; Pete Escovedo Latin Jazz Orchestra; Josh Johnson; and Bria Skonberg. Schedule subject to change. Produced by KJAZZ 88.1 FM Radio and Rum & Humble.

The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce will be holding “Breakfast with the Mayor” at the Loews Hollywood Hotel on Thursday, July 20th, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. This will be second address by Mayor Eric Garcetti to the Hollywood community since taking Mayor’s office in 2013. As Hollywood’s former Councilmember for CD-13, Mayor Garcetti is familiar with the challenges of Hollywood’s unique community and has spearheaded some great accomplishments during Hollywood’s revival. Admission is $75 before Monday, July 17th.

www.kcet.org/earthfocus

www.hollywoodandhighland.com

www.hollywoodchamber.net