



POP STAR KICKS IT AT CROSSROADS
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Santa Monica Daily Press

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BURNT LEFTOVERS

Investigators set to go to work at Pico Neighborhood fire site
STORY AND PHOTO ESSAY ON PAGES 12-13

Fabian Lewkowicz fabianl@smdp.com

COOL IT: Firefighters continued on Tuesday to try and control a fire that erupted in the Pico Neighborhood Monday night. Investigators said it might be days before they can sift out clues to its start.

Hey, developers, hold that thought

Residents look to stop building until city has a plan

BY KEVIN HERRERA
Daily Press Staff Writer

CITYWIDE — A group of residents frustrated with development throughout the city are waiting for the hammers to drop, at least for a little while.

A coalition of neighborhood groups will ask the Planning Commission tonight to support a building moratorium for Santa Monica until a new general plan is approved by the City Council.

Residents are currently working with city staff to develop a plan that will outline how land should be used for the next two decades.

The process has been delayed because of changes in leadership in City Hall. During that time, several projects, including three large residential developments totaling 896 units and 19 condo projects totaling 400 units, have gotten the green light.

The coalition believes those projects, and others approved in the near future, could make the general plan update irrelevant. Residents are particularly concerned about the future of the light manufacturing district, which appears ripe for change and has

become a target of developers.

"Residents have spoken time and time again over the past three years ... about their vision for our city, and it does not include the unprecedented growth the city has sustained over the past 23 years," said Diana Gordon, co-chair of the Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City, which has partnered with Friends of Sunset Park, North of Montana Association, Wilshire-Montana

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Paparazzi focuses on Premier pitch

FROM PREMIER LEAGUE PAGE 3

the same name. "This league is just full of guys looking to have fun and stay in shape, however, we have had a few bad apples that we've had to weed out who have left over anger from not making the college football team or whatever and take it out on the pitch.

"It's great to play a game and then head back to the bar."

What also sets the league apart is the level of dedication and diversity within. There are teams comprised of Americans, Brits, Mexicans, Irish lads and Scotts, Romanians, Israelis and Argentineans. There are actors, lawyers, doctors, writers and bankers.

IT'S A PRETTY SWEET THING WE'VE GOT GOING OVER HERE."

Michael Orosco

manager Los Angeles Premier League, TP United

"You can find the entire world playing here," Orosco said. "That's kind of what soccer is all about and we pride ourselves in it and our dedication to sportsmanship. Right now, we have a community of guys who love to play soccer. It has taken off from there.

"It's a pretty sweet thing we've got going over here."

GETTING THE BOOT

The league was formed in 2002 by Westside resident Amir Rofougaran and other soccer enthusiasts who wanted to play closer to home

in a league that was not as large as others, nor as dangerous. Some of the larger city leagues play on poorly-maintained fields and are overcrowded with those looking to take out their aggression on the next man. Three teams started the first season and since then it has steadily grown to 11, which seems to be the limit for now as the league has trouble finding proper places to play.

"Crossroads has been great," Orosco said. "The field is well maintained ... They've basically kept us around by allowing us to rent it."

Playing doesn't come cheap. The rent is \$175 an hour, Orosco said, and that usually means \$235 a game. Each player pays an average of \$200 a season to participate.

"We could play for cheaper in the city, but you get what you pay for," Orosco said.

With the opening of the new Airport Park and its synthetic turf soccer field, there may be room to expand the league, but Orosco and others aren't so sure.

"Adult soccer is not well liked in this city," Orosco said. "If you try to get a game going at Clover Park, you get kicked off the field. It's really tough. The only way we can do it is to play at Crossroads."

The field there is somewhat smaller than a regulation size field, but it suits the players just fine.

During a recent game involving the L.A. Vale and O'Brien's FC, sponsored by the pub of the same name, a small group of fans had gathered, mostly to check out Williams. Teammates were seen jumping up and down on the sidelines encouraging players to give it their all. One fan kept going on and on about how good the players are, many of them being former professionals and college standouts back in the day.

"The players are really good," said Lee Rogers, who called Premier, a "local blokes league."



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STAR ATTRACTION: Members of the LA Vale take on O'Brien's FC during a recent Los Angeles Premier League match at Crossroads School. The adult soccer league was formed in 2002.

The hardest part about managing the league is keeping everyone together. For the most part, attendance has been good. Occasionally a player or two from a team won't be able to make it because of work or family.

"That's why we are looking for people who are really interested in playing," he said. "This is a volunteer league. No one is making money off it so if we're going to put in this much effort, we want to make sure people are dedicated and want to play."

Dedication and the love of the game is what brought Richard Taylor back. The manager of O'Brien's suffered an injury to his knee requiring two ACL surgeries.

"That's basically why I became the man-

ager," Taylor said. "Having the injuries made me miss the game so much and then we added a few more teams that made the league even more competitive and that made me feel like I was missing [out]. So I worked hard on getting back in shape and I'm back."

Players will readily admit that they are very protective of the league and do not want to do anything to jeopardize it. That said, they don't mind a little publicity.

"Maybe it will help us get better recruits," Weaver said. "I'm not sure what it will do. Perhaps it will force us to grow. I don't know by how much but sooner or later I think that will happen."

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CITY OF SANTA MONICA REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Santa Monica invites proposals for:

Consulting services for the selection and implementation of a homeless management information system.

Submission Deadline is July 11, 2007 at 5:00 PM PDT.

The request for proposals may be obtained from the Human Services Division, City of Santa Monica, 1685 Main St., Room 212, Santa Monica, California; by calling (310) 458-8701; by e-mailing your request to julia.brown@smgov.net; or by visiting the Human Services Division website at <http://www.smgov.net/hsd>.

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Builders asked to slow their roll

FROM MORATORIUM PAGE 1

Neighborhood Coalition, and the North of Montana and Ocean Park associations in calling for the moratorium.

"Meanwhile, without an update plan, development projects throughout the city are steamrolling ahead," Gordon added. "It's time now for our city to put the brakes on what is essentially unplanned development ..."

The existent general plan is more than 20 years old and a new one is at least a year away from adoption.

Developers had mixed reactions to the moratorium. Some were concerned about the effects a stoppage might have on projects already underway, while others said it would make them reluctant to purchase property in Santa Monica if they were unable to build for at least a year or more.

In a city desperately seeking affordable housing, the moratorium could exacerbate the problem, developers warned.

Representatives with the coalition said they are open to excluding certain types of development, such as single and multi-family residential housing and affordable housing, which are exempted by law from a building moratorium.

Cities do have the ability to pass a moratorium on development, but face a high burden of proof. Under the law, before a government body can adopt or extend any moratorium on development, it must find that there is a current or immediate threat to the public's health safety, or welfare.

West Hollywood recently adopted an emergency interim ordinance to halt approvals of luxury housing projects that replace sound housing stock while it revises its 1988 housing element. The practice of replacing existing market rate units with a lesser number of larger, high-priced luxury units was eroding the city's supply of middle income housing and was at odds with its own housing replacement goals and state mandates, officials there said.

"We believe that these same development pressures exist in Santa Monica, causing the loss of long-time, 'rooted' resi-

dents who are unable to find other suitably priced housing," a letter from the coalition to the Planning Commission states. "What is imperative is that we free up the staff resources to move ahead and complete the general plan revisions as soon as we can, and that we ensure that all interim development not be at odds with that update and with residents' targeted goals of scale and size for Santa Monica."

Still, moratoriums are rare, according to Eileen Fogarty, director of planning and community development in City Hall, but they can be useful tools. Fogarty feels one may be in order for Santa Monica as the Land Use and Circulation Element of the general plan is hammered out.

Residents and city staff have made progress over the last six months on the update, holding forums on placemaking and neighborhood preservation. The next step is tackling the light manufacturing district, where current projects are out of step with the desires of residents, Fogarty said.

"The real issue, to me, is not placing a moratorium on one kind of project or another, but on one area over another," Fogarty said. "We are going to see change, and in one area, there are clearly projects that are not representative of what we've heard from residents. Those projects are in the industrial area."

Typically, when a moratorium is passed, Fogarty said, projects already approved move forward and are not affected. However, the council could choose to cast a wider net.

Planning Commissioner Jay Johnson said he too is open to a moratorium on development, but only in certain areas.

"I doubt we need a moratorium in (single family residential), but certainly in the (light manufacturing district)," Johnson said. "Downtown is another area that has been really targeted for development, but I can't be too precise without first having a hearing and seeing everything in front of me."

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