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TO: Department of Planning, City of Los Angeles
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FROM: Kerry Morrison, 
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SUBJECT: ENV-2018-2116-EIR
Hollywood Center Project

Greetings. Thank you for this opportunity to participate in the public comment period for the proposed Hollywood Center Project. This is a long-awaited addition to the Hollywood community, and I want to offer my enthusiastic support for proceeding with the project as planned.

My reasons for this enthusiastic support are even more pragmatic as we live through the collective suffering and uncertainty of a global pandemic. **Now more than ever, projects that represent hope for the future, investment in our city, and jobs for our community are critical and to be welcomed.**

Those who might resort to pre-pandemic tactics to stymie, slow or sue to stop the forward progress of this project are living in the past. It is time to plan for the future in a city that *will be forever changed* by the human and economic dislocation that is emerging all around us. We are not going to wake up one day and find that this "is over." This is our new normal and Los Angeles needs this investment.

For some perspective: I arrived in Hollywood in 1996 when a small group of property owners decided to take the risk to invest their time, talent and treasure to jumpstart the Hollywood renaissance. I served as the executive director of the business improvement district (BID) for 22 years and lived through every day of the slow progress forward to revitalize this neighborhood. People who take this story for granted did not do the hard work to bring Hollywood this far.

Back in those days, the neighborhood was on life support, having experienced the triple whammy of the '92 civil unrest, the '94 Northridge earthquake and the mid-90's tunneling under Hollywood Blvd to build out the METRO Red Line. I learned to celebrate every risk taken by a property or business owner to invest in the betterment of the community. Whether it be a coffee shop, a façade improvement or the construction of the W Hotel; slowly but surely, the community began to come back to life. And even with setbacks – such as 9/11 and the financial collapse of 2008 – the intrepid community members who believed in this community soldiered on.

The fact that this developer – who has been working for over 10 years to bring a project to this community and transform parking lots into housing, commercial, retail, and civic open space that the community desperately needs – is still willing to hang with Hollywood in the face of the current world-wide crisis is noteworthy. The project provides over 1,000 housing units in a city that suffers from a housing shortage, 133 of which are for low and very low-income senior households. This is significant given that homelessness among seniors is the fastest growing cohort according to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. MP sets a good example for others by setting aside a portion of their project for this population.

Additionally, the DEIR shows that the project has taken into consideration and mitigated environmental concerns, such as the developer's commitment to be carbon net-neutral during construction and operation, incentivizing public transportation use and building on the city's growing transit infrastructure, and including a new geotechnical investigation which only adds to the multiple other studies conducted in the immediate area, where *other proposed projects have been already completed and built.*

This country is reeling under the weight of dislocation unlike we've experienced in our lifetime. I write this one month before the comment period ends for the DEIR, but already we are seeing the signs of a protracted economic recession. The first quarter GDP dropped by 4.8%, the largest drop since the Great Recession. According to a forecast issued by the LA County Economic Development Corporation, the unemployment rate in L.A. County could **exceed more than 30 percent within the month.**

Los Angeles needs Hollywood Center. From their website:

Construction of the project will create approximately 7,560 full-time and part-time jobs throughout the City of Los Angeles economy, of which 4,670 will be construction jobs located on the project site. Annual operation of the project will support another 1,230 full-time and part-time jobs. In addition, the project is estimated to generate more than \$9.2 million in one-time revenues to the City of Los Angeles General Fund during project construction, and over \$226 million in net new General Fund revenue through 2050, after accounting for the cost of City services delivered to the project site and City property tax revenue currently generated from the project site.

Los Angeles City Planning Department
Hollywood Center - ENV-2018-2116-EIR

For the City of Los Angeles to delay or deny this project, after nearly a dozen years of effort, multiple redesigns, and countless dollars spent on litigation, environmental and seismic studies would send a chilling message to future investors. That is the old Los Angeles. Let's work together to rebuild this city and make it better. Hollywood Center is a project around which we can unite and be proud.

cc: Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell