

North Hollywood Ready and Willing to Implement Redevelopment Project

by Jack Scagnetti
(Second of two articles)

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In 1919, the Lankershim Bank of North Hollywood shared a building with Jones' drug store, and horseless carriages put a hint of the future on the community's quiet streets.

At the Cahuenga Pass entrance to North Hollywood, "Gateway to the San Fernando Valley," is the 420-acre Universal Studios and its parent company, MCA, world famous for its motion pictures, television production and studio tour. A short distance away, on Riverside Dr. at Lankershim, is Barris Kustom Industries, builder of custom cars for films, TV and movie stars. A block away on Riverside is the headquarters of the National Hot Rod Association, which operates and

sanctions drag races throughout the country. St. Charles Catholic Church, a replica of the Carmel Mission, is a familiar landmark at Lankershim and Magnolia. Nudie's Rodeo Tailors, at 5015 Lankershim Bl., features exhibits of world famous stars' attire. The Palomino Club, 6907 Lankershim Bl., is nationally known as "Nashville West," featuring big name country and western performers. Peter Pan of Hollywood, at 5430 Satsuma Av., is the English muffin supplier to the world.

North Hollywood is "home" for 200,000 residents and 5,000 businesses. You can find just about every type of facility in the community's 21 square miles, which are generally bounded by Coldwater Av. on the west, Clybourn St. on the east, Roscoe Bl. on the North and Ventura Bl. on the south.

North Hollywood is also the home of some distinguished hotels and restaurants. Playing a vital role in the community's tourist trade and schedule of business meetings are the

Sheraton Universal Hotel, Beverly Garland's Howard Johnson's Resort Lodge, the Sportsman's Lodge Hotel and Mikado Motor Hotel. The restaurants of the hotels are augmented by such noteworthy dining spots as Alfonse's, Ernie's Taco House, Arthur Wong's Far East Terrace, King's Arms, Le Petit Chateau, Leon's Steak House,

the city limits. North Hollywood has several men's and women's clubs and is represented in every men's service club that is national and/or international in scope.

North Hollywood, with its strategic location for the labor market, rail, motor, air and harbor transportation facilities, is an important industrial area. The Chamber of Commerce,

the future of North Hollywood. Recent openings of Gemco and Builder's Emporium stores in the community are further evidence.

Within the community's boundaries are parks and playgrounds comprising a total of 143 acres, indoor and outdoor theatres, bowling centers, swimming pools, handball and tennis courts, baseball and softball diamonds

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North Hollywood by night in 1977. The bright lights on the left are on Lankershim Bl.

Maison Gerard, Red Lantern, Reuben's, Smoke House, Sorrentino's, Tail O' the Cock and Victoria Station.

As the most populated city in the Valley, North Hollywood is served by 60 churches representing practically all denominations, and there are 15 elementary schools, two junior high and two high schools, along with 13 private and parochial schools. Three fire stations, a police station, regional public library, eight post office branches and two hospitals are within

with attorney Joseph G. Hurley as its president and W.M. Neighbors, manager, is one of the most active and dynamic in the Los Angeles area, having doubled its membership to 650 the past year.

North Hollywood has a full range of financial services; 12 banks, 11 savings and loan associations, brokerage firms, financial consulting firms and finance companies serve the community. The new high-rise (United California Bank) building on Lankershim demonstrates the faith in

and other sports activities.

Because of its proximity to major motion picture and television studios, North Hollywood has been the home of famous movie stars and other celebrities through the years. Bing Crosby lived on Camarillo Street in the 1930's and 1940's. Perhaps the most widely known star residing in the community today is Bob Hope, who lives in Toluca Lake near Lakeside Golf Club.

Actress Beverly Garland serves as

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honorary mayor, while actor Arthur Wong is ambassador of goodwill and "Nudie" is honorary sheriff.

Like other areas in metropolitan Los Angeles, North Hollywood experienced a dramatic growth shortly after World War II. Construction of many new homes and the establishment of new wholesale, retail and service firms, industrial plants and professional offices made North Hollywood a thriving business community with what seemed certain to be a bright economic future. Building of the Laurel Plaza mall, dominated by the May Co., and the Valley Plaza, at Laurel Canyon and Victory Bl., with Sears as its center, provided the community with excellent shopping facilities. But these

shopping centers, along with Fashion Square in nearby Sherman Oaks, proved to be very serious competition for North Hollywood's downtown shopping area by the middle 1960's.

By the late 60's, the downtown area began experiencing a serious loss of business establishments. The original layout of the area, with small and odd-size lots and inadequate parking, drove business away. A number of firms closed shop altogether or moved to more desirable locations. Small retail businessmen, fearing further loss of sales, did not give any encouragement to approaches made by major department stores for establishment of a regional shopping center. The downtown area, with no large stores for attraction, was in a steady, serious decline. Blight in older business and residential districts became a problem.

Guy McCreary, son of a Weddington family woman, kept up the community spirit of the Weddington tradition by becoming active in the Chamber of Commerce. In 1968, he was named head of a redevelopment committee to work with Los Angeles city planning departments. He helped raise \$12,000 through the Chamber of Commerce to finance an economic report on North Hollywood to submit to Los Angeles city officials. In 1969 the City of Los Angeles appointed an Advisory Committee of 35 people, comprised of merchants, professional men and women, service club representatives and educators, to work on a plan for the community's redevelopment.

By March, 1975, the city council had adopted the North Hollywood Community Plan. Next came the task of working out the myriad details of how the plan would be put into various stages of development. Many committee meetings were held and when attorney Hurley, who has been in law practice in North Hollywood for 25 years, became co-chairman of the committee, he urged the community to implement the plan, pointing out that it required virtually no zoning

change recommendations which would slow down redevelopment. Planners were consulted for architectural and activity themes for a revitalized North Hollywood.

Under Hurley's leadership, a non-profit organization called Operation Gateway was formed to work in tandem with the Chamber of Commerce on redevelopment planning. Operation Gateway received several thousand dollars in contributions for architectural plans, the money coming mostly from Central Federal Savings and Loan, Weddington Investment, V.D.A. Properties and Ramco Metal Forming, while Hurley and his office staff donated many hours of their time.

"Old pioneer residents developed a new spirit and saw Operation Gateway as the last chance to help save the community, and their children say they're going to stay and work toward North Hollywood's redevelopment," said Alvin Livingston, a consultant in Hurley's office.

The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) of the City of Los Angeles made an extensive study of North Hollywood's economical, social and physical condition. In conjunction with the North Hollywood Advisory Committee and under the direction of Councilman Joel Wachs, a Phase I Report for the North Hollywood Revitalization Study was completed, in March, 1977, expanding on earlier work associated with the North Hollywood Community Plan. The CRA report concluded that parts of North Hollywood should be redeveloped strongly to correct blight found in the older business and residential sections.

The CRA recommended that revitalization could be accomplished by rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial property; promotion of new residential, commercial or industrial uses for a wide range of economic capacities; improvement of both vehicular and pedestrian circulation;

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construction of new public facilities, such as utilities, open space, street furniture and graphics, and public buildings; and re-parcelization of small fragmented parcels into parcels of a larger scale which, if made available under single ownership, could be purchased by the private sector for expansion of existing uses or for new development.

Several factors were cited by the CRA for making North Hollywood a strong candidate for revitalization: the community's location near freeways and the Los Angeles central business district and easy access to the rest of the Valley, a "pleasant physical setting," the promotional activities and tourism of Universal Studios, which is second only to Disneyland as a Southland tourist attraction (3 million people are expected to take the studio tour this year, and thousands attend the Universal Amphitheatre); support of the local business community, and traffic generated by the concentration of new and used car dealers on Lankershim.

expected within two months, and will involve a series of public meetings between businessmen and homeowners and the CRA staff to determine the plan's eventual form.

The CRA has also recommended that the project be funded through community development block grants and the tax increment system under state law which channels taxes generated by increased property values into the redevelopment area away from the normal taxing authority and into the redevelopment project. Grant programs recirculate revenue-sharing monies to cities for use in combatting blight.

Hurley said Operation Gateway, whose slogan is "A Renaissance by Private Enterprise in the Public Interest," said: "Very fine builders have expressed sincere interest in rebuilding and revitalizing those residential areas which have deteriorated beyond redemption, and a major mortgage banking house and major shopping center developer have expressed interest in North Hollywood."

The bright prospects of implementing North Hollywood's revitalization plans has given the business community and residents a new spirit. Although legally a part of Los Angeles since 1923, North Hollywood has developed its own unique identity, and this "sense of community" has been sustained by the local residents, who look to the future with renewed hope.

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Attorney Joseph G. Hurley, president of the North Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, is leading Operation Gateway.

Using five revitalization alternatives from low to intense degrees of redevelopment, plans would involve from 38 to 278 acres in actual revitalization, requiring the purchase of from \$27.7 million to \$187.2 million in private land, the report said.

City Council approval of the CRA's recommendation is required and is