

This Is Not Housing

Yesterday, I expressed wonder that the City of Los Angeles actually did planning right for a change. Obviously, I jinxed it.

Reducing VMT, and thus carbon emissions, requires cities to plan and zone for affordable housing (whether defined as deed-restricted or simply at a reasonable market rate). But despite city leaders' claims of an affordable housing crisis, the City Council seems more interested in satisfying the hospitality industry:

> The Los Angeles City Council voted yesterday to initiate proceedings that would see that a vacant lot near USC sold to a local development firm that hopes to build a hotel on the property.
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> The approximately 33,000-square-foot site, formerly home to the Bethune Library, is located at 3685 S. Vermont Avenue. A report from the Economic & Workforce Development Department recommended that the City of Los Angeles, after acquiring the property from CRA/LA, should sell it an entity controlled by Orion Capital, which plans to build a Courtyard Marriott hotel featuring 167 guest rooms and 7,000 square feet of ground-floor retail space.
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> The City of Los Angeles had previously considered the Bethune Library property as an opportunity site for affordable housing in Exposition Park, and had even gone as far as soliciting developers for the project. In February 2017, the Los Angeles Times Editorial Board wrote that the promise of affordable housing on the library property would have been blocked by Measure S, a ballot initiative sponsored by opponents of large developments.

Why in the world is the Council turning a site slated for affordable housing into yet another hotel? If nothing else, why not force Orion Capital to use 10% of its floor space for housing? I checked: the Housing Element of the City General Plan earmarks this site for housing.



Marqueece Harris-Dawson: Hates Affordable Housing?

The Councilmember for this district is Marqueece Harris-Dawson, who likes to claim he is very, very progressive. Apparently that means building lots of hotels and forcing its workers to live miles away. Meanwhile, there are dozens of Marriott Hotels in southern California, but only one is unionized.

Few people in the world hate NIMBYism as much as I do, but when things like this happen, homeowners are allowed to wonder why some neighborhoods get upzoned to provide for affordable housing, and others get hotels. The Council had better have a very good answer for this.