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Weekend Weather Forecast

Friday

Partly Sunny

69°



Saturday

Sunny

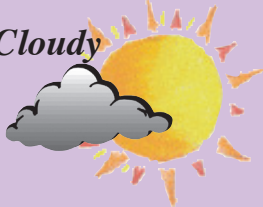
71°



Sunday

Partly Cloudy

67°



Invasion of the Spiders



One of the many El Segundo homes decorated for Halloween. Photo by Marcy Dugan. www.marcyduganphoto.com.

Plaza, MTA Weigh in on Maintenance Yard Project

By Brian Simon

Last week, the City of El Segundo went on record to challenge the environmental review for Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority's (MTA or Metro) proposed Crenshaw Transit Corridor Project. The project's goal is to provide important north/south transportation linkages between the South Bay, Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), the Crenshaw Corridor and the Exposition Line, which connects to downtown Los Angeles, Culver City and Santa Monica. MTA's proposal looks at two possible options: a 12-mile bus rapid transit (BRT) line or an 8.5-mile light rail transit (LRT) route, with both ending in or around El Segundo. In either scenario, MTA plans to build a facility to service the vehicle fleet. One of the two locations considered for this operations and maintenance yard is a parcel in El Segundo near Rosecrans Avenue and Sepulveda Boulevard. The parcel could range anywhere from 14 to 30 acres in size.

In a letter sent to MTA before the close of the comment period on October 26, City staff cited various zoning, logistical, environmental, public safety and aesthetic issues with the project, while contending that the draft environmental impact statement/report (EIS/EIR) does not adequately address impacts from the maintenance yard operations. Furthermore, staff said it is unclear exactly which land parcels will be required for the facility. But the most pressing concern was the potential impact on the future of Plaza El Segundo and related sales tax revenues for the City. According to staff, MTA's project is incompatible with the commercial/retail zoning for the site outlined in the City's general plan.

The proposed yard and accompanying offices would absorb roughly one-third of the land earmarked for Plaza's planned 425,000 square foot Phase II development, as well as a number of other parcels generally located southwest of Douglas Street just north of Utah Avenue. Even more significantly, City

staff concluded that MTA's project would prohibit the extension of Park Place that is absolutely necessary for Phase II to move forward.

Plaza's Phase II was originally scheduled to break ground by early 2008, but thanks to a recession that has put the kibosh on commercial projects in general across the nation, those plans are on hold for the time being. Rosecrans-Sepulveda Partners, LLC (RSP), Plaza's development team, currently owns the 8.6-acre former Air Products property and has an option on the 12.9-acre Honeywell property. It has not entered into any formal talks with MTA about selling any of the land, according to a letter sent to the City last week by RSP representative and president of Mar Ventures Allan Mackenzie. In the letter, Mackenzie wrote that while RSP believes the

proposed Crenshaw line would be beneficial since it will provide direct linkage to whatever people mover is adopted at LAX, the partners also share the City's concern about which exact land parcels will be needed for the maintenance yard. "In discussions with the MTA, we have stressed the importance of the Park Place alignment being preserved to ensure it can be installed," the letter states, adding the point later that "were the MTA to acquire the land north of Park Place, this would still leave sufficient land for a viable development including the prime frontage along Rosecrans Avenue."

Mackenzie went on to note that while RSP is "committed to the ultimate development of Phase II of Plaza El Segundo" and has

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Chamber Awards Teacher Mini-Grants at Main St. Mixer

By Brian Simon

At the October 22 mixer held on the 400 block of Main Street, the El Segundo Chamber of Commerce presented its annual mini-grants to teachers from the El Segundo Unified and Wiseburn school districts as well as to those from two private facilities—Vistamar School and St. Anthony's School. In all, 108 instructors received grants totaling \$12,055 that will help subsidize academic materials and projects not allocated in school budgets. These funds especially come in handy during a challenging time in which state budget cuts continue to adversely impact schools.

The Teacher Mini-Grant Program was originally developed by the Rotary Club

of El Segundo, which has donated thousands of dollars over the years to local instructors for small classroom projects. The Chamber also had a similar program, prompting the two organizations to join forces in recent years to maximize funding opportunities and build community awareness.

The program allows Chamber members to foster educational opportunities for local students. The tax-deductible donations typically range from \$75 to \$150 and sometimes higher, such as one for \$500 designated to a six-teacher tandem at El Segundo High School. Examples

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