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Sunset Arts & Advertising Subcommittee Briefing Memo
Current and Historic Preservation Planning

8222 Sunset Boulevard

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Proposed Billboard Application: The purpose of this meeting is to give initial feedback on design aspects of the proposed billboard structure at this location. This includes two-sided, billboard with 1,000sf of full-motion animated billboard facing east and 480sf of an eight second ad rotating billboard facing west. There is currently no billboard on this site.

Applicant's Team:

Media Company	**Architect**	**Applicant Representative**
Interstate Outdoor Advertising	ib+a Architecture	David Neglio, President, Interstate Outdoor Advertising

Sunset Boulevard Design Excellence Review and Award

A key prerequisite of the new billboards authorized by the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy (the "Policy") was to demonstrate a high level of creativity and achievement of specific design excellence principles. This design excellence was

determined by a screening and award process that spanned from November 2019 to June 2020. Once selected, applicants were eligible to apply for a billboard application and to negotiate a development agreement to allow the new billboards.

The design principles of the Policy build on the existing creative energy of the Sunset Strip to provide for new and modified off-site signage that synthesizes advertising, urban design, architecture, public art, entertainment, and the latest in billboard technology. All proposals were reviewed to ensure they met the following principles: design excellence (including innovation, cohesiveness, timelessness), innovation, compatibility with the context of the Strip,

sustainability, economic development, and community benefit. Top-scoring submissions were granted a "concept award," necessary for them to file for the Development Agreement and entitlement application. See Section 2 of the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy and https://www.weho.org/city-government/city-departments/planning-and-development-services/billboards-on-the-sunset-strip for more details on the design excellence awards. This webpage provides a link to the document entitled Sunset Boulevard Arts and Advertising Program, dated July 7, 2020, which goes into detail about the Program – a groundbreaking effort to reimagine the world's premier locations for outdoor advertising. After the competitive vetting process, the City selected 21 projects in Round 1. A second round of applications were approved by City Council to include the eastern side of the Sunset Strip. This was called Round 1.5, of which application is one.

Project Summary

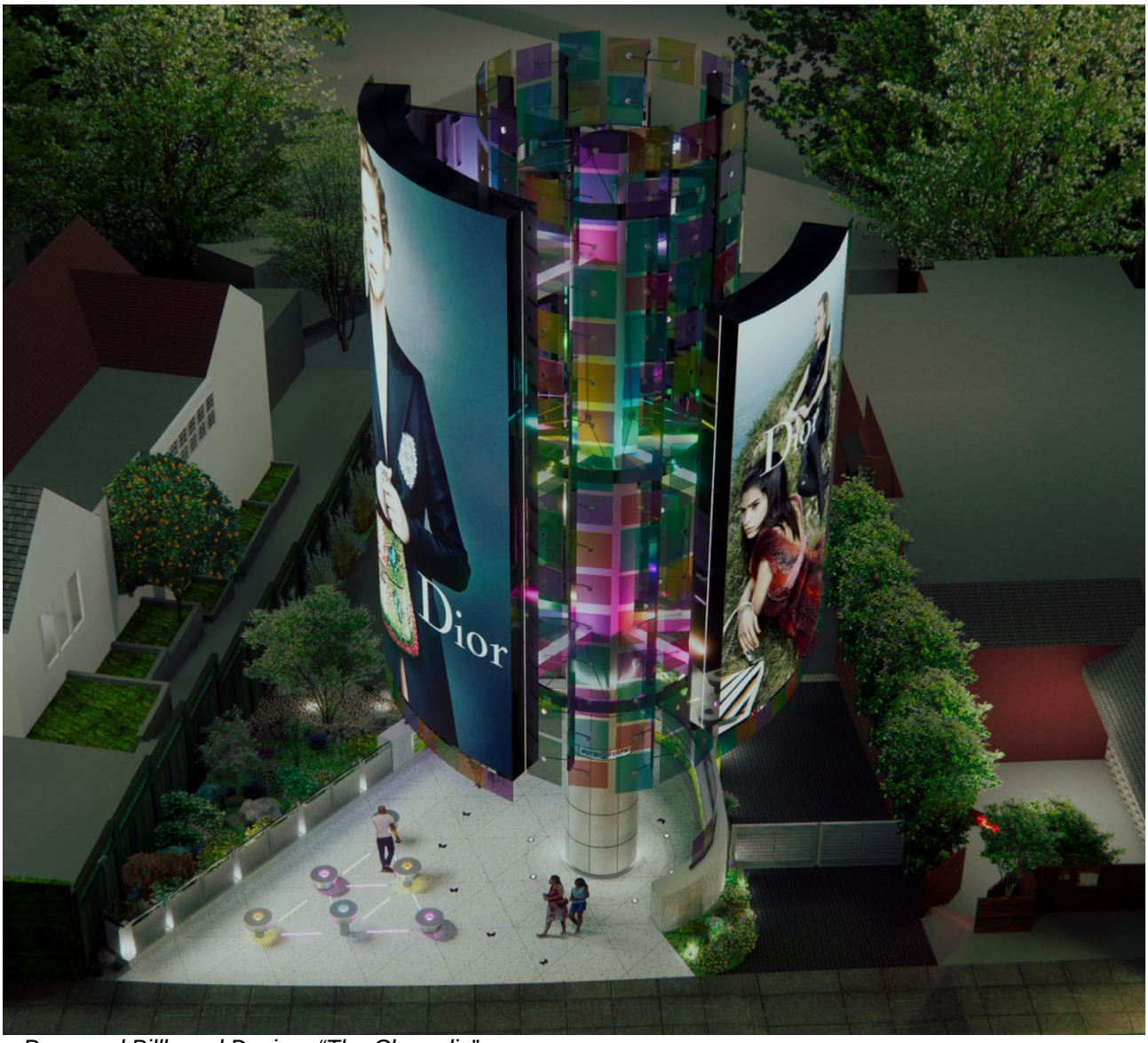
The project consists of a new, two-sided billboard just east of The Den restaurant and bar at 8222 Sunset Boulevard. There are four separate parcels at this location, two of which are located within Los Angeles and two in West Hollywood. The proposed billboard project will be solely located in the parcel at 8222 W Sunset (APN 5554-018-022). The original proposal, shown below, required significant revision to meet the design standards of the billboard policy, to fit within a window where existing billboard to the east and west were not obstructed, and to provide a more interactive pedestrian space.

Original Concept Award Design

The currently proposed project, which is much more vertical and innovative, will have an east facing full-motion billboard at 1,000 square foot and a west facing board of 480 square feet, providing 8-second ad rotation. Each of the billboard faces are curved. The highest point of the billboard (east facing) is 56' above grade. The billboard structure, with hammered white metal aluminum cladding, is 60'6" above grade. In between the two billboards is a vertical support structure that is clad in colorful dichroic glass panels[1]. Laminated dichroic glass is glass

[1] The Amazon headquarters building in Seattle uses dichroic glass: https://www.whereartinspiresbeauty.com/3132-2/ So too does the

which can display multiple and different colors depending on how sunlight interacts with it. The effect of the glass is created by refraction, not reflection. This paneled piece, together with the educational displays on the butterfly in the plaza below, support the project's name, "The Chrysalis." The single pole structure at the innermost of the vertical element is a matte white finish. A secondary structure supports the dichroic glass panes, and a third outer layer contains the billboard screens.



Proposed Billboard Design- "The Chrysalis"

Plaza Improvements

All billboard projects are required to provide meaningful public realm enhancements that actively engage and augment the pedestrian experience along Sunset Boulevard. This project proposes an interactive display in the plaza below the billboard, principally devoted to the

Museum at Prairiefire in Kansas: https://www.visitthemap.org/

monarch butterfly. The project's entire area at grade will be improved with both hardscape materials and landscaped solutions. Within the elliptical area defining the pedestrian plaza, the surface will be a custom-mixed concrete. Permeable pavers would be the more environmentally responsive material choice here in lieu of the concrete.

Outside of the plaza, the landscaping is designed to support the monarch butterfly population and other pollinators, and will contain wood mulch and various small trees, shrubs, succulents, perennials and groundcover planting (See plant palette and notes).

The butterfly garden is located in an area between the city boundary and the eastern property line and will be planted with pollinator and caterpillar host plants. The plan also includes two spots for the butterflies that congregate on wet sand and mud to partake in "puddling," drinking water, and extracting minerals from damp puddles. The landscape design should take into account opportunities for both direct human interaction and a protected habitat area in the newly created eco-environment. In addition, the garden area would be most effective by not only attracting a broad range of pollinators to feed, but also offering a protected habitat for nesting and breeding.

To the south, behind the garden and plaza areas, an enclosed electrical room is proposed topped by a vegetative green roof. Ideally this roof would be incorporated entirely on West Hollywood property and be a part of the plaza and garden experience as a whole. As proposed, the roof is at a different height.

The applicant intends to seek wildlife habitat certification. In order to be certified, a habitat must have the following five elements: (a) provide natural sources of food, (b) water, (c) cover, (d) places to raise the young, and (e) is maintained in a sustainable way that incorporates native plants, conserves water and does not rely on pesticides.

An educational community board that includes a curved LED video screen runs along the backside of the perimeter of the plaza space and is topped by a series of the same dichroic glass panels, the same material as above on the "Chrysalis" structure. A screen wall and fence, with dichroic glass inset panels, runs along the front portion of the plaza on either side of the community board. All the fencing and screening is meant to screen the parking lot to the rear and to protect the roof-top butterfly garden from human interference. The community board is intended to draw and invite pedestrians to come from the sidewalk to investigate the video display. However, there are concerns over the long-term effectiveness of this screen wall. On the one hand it isolates the plaza goer from the garden itself and creates more of a "zoo-effect". It does not provide for interactivity. And on the other this glass wall is very high maintenance and will be susceptible to graffiti and carving into its surface. One alternative is to embed the narrative into an etched metal panel system or into a concrete wall. This would be far more durable and low maintenance.

The exact programming for the video display has not been determined and the applicant appreciates input from the Subcommittee on this, as well as other aspects of the pedestrian plaza in order that it becomes a destination spot.

Programming for the board could include:

- The story of the monarch butterfly
- Videos of other endangered species
- Videos of displays at the LA Zoo
- Videos of scenes from nature: undersea, mountain, forests, icecaps, birds, night sky, solar system, etc.
- Videos of history of West Hollywood
- Calendar of events.

Videos could be programmed to run every 15 minutes, or on demand during certain hours by dialing up selected videos from a smart phone. The plaza will contain "toadstool" seating which will help deter activities such as skateboarding. These seats would be at varying heights and linked to interactive color strips. These lights would operate 24/7 for security. Pedestrians will also be able to look up into the Chrysalis structure.

Lighting

The applicant has a lighting designer as part of their team to provide detailed lighting specifications. The intent is that there is enough lighting for the plaza and structure but that it will not overpower any element on the project site or create excess glare and light trespass. The applicant is seeking a visually stimulating experience with a variety lighting sources and locations, while making sure to consider glare and light trespass.

Aside from the lighting that comes from the billboard sign faces, which is regulated by code, the Chrysalis structure, with dichroic panels, will be lit during the day by the sun and during the night by low level LEDs within the structure. The Chrysalis lighting is described by the applicant:

> *"The internal illumination of the Chrysalis's dichroic glass panels originates primarily from two vertical arrays of fully adjustable LED spotlights arrayed behind the vertical PV panels at the back of the Chrysalis. Aimed so as to minimize light-spill and visibility from neighboring buildings, these fixtures will create irregular patterns of light on the dichroic glass panels and provide spill-light onto the Plaza. Illumination of the Chrysalis's main and secondary structural elements will be kept to a minimum – the visual focus is to be the light on the dichroic glass panels. During daylight hours, only natural light will provide illumination of the glass panels, but this will be supplemented in a gradual way as the day gives way to the evening and the Chrysalis awakens."*

Ideally, this day-to-night change from natural lit glass to artificially lit glass will also reveal a metamorphic-like transformation in the chrysalis itself, both perceptually and through changing kaleidoscopic patterning.

The plaza will have six heavy-gauge, stainless steel "toadstools" with integrated up and down lighting that will respond subtly to human interaction. These toadstools will be automatically controlled and synchronized with linear color-changing LED lights in the terrazzo surface of the plaza. Reliance on technology both for the interactive component and synchronized lighting controls is not only expensive and risky but also requires high maintenance protocols for cleaning and regular servicing to ensure uninterrupted operation. Vandalism also represents a higher risk here. In this case, the applicant team is encouraged to consider low-tech and lower

maintenance options for the seating and focus interactive activities more directly between people and nature itself when it comes to telling a story.

Up lights will be integrated into the fencing to define the plaza space. At the central billboard structure, lighting will accentuate and heighten the magic of the dichroic glass, transforming the Chrysalis in the evening hours into a sparkling centerpiece at the entrance to West Hollywood. The perimeter landscaping will be partially illuminated by wall fixtures and in-landscape down lights for security at night. The areas for utility and parking will be lit and all lighting fixtures will have a dimmable control. Low level illumination will be provided by in-wall light fixtures outside of the plaza area. The color changing features can be adjusted for special cases such as holidays and events. Please see Attachment A of this report for a detailed narrative of all project lighting provided by the applicant.

Other Project Elements

The project site includes two parcels that are diagonally bifurcated by the West Hollywood City boundary (western portion) and the Los Angeles City boundary (eastern portion). The existing bar/restaurant on the site is to remain and the billboard and pedestrian plaza will be located toward the front of the eastern parcel (which does not contain The Den bar/restaurant). The existing newsstand will be removed. The existing parking to the rear (in Los Angeles) will remain. The existing driveway will be improved with stamped concrete.

There is currently no billboard on this site. There is an unused newsstand structure on site, which is slated for removal. The existing fence along the eastern boundary will be repaired and refinished. The project will include new plantings along the parking lot perimeter fencing, screening of the trash bins in the back of the site, and the repaving of the driveway adjacent to the project site. The electrical transformer and switch board are proposed at grade, behind the plaza display wall.

The height of the proposed billboard structure is lower than the nearest billboard to the west in West Hollywood. Two vertical solar panels are installed on the rear for the full height of the of the billboard structure. Power generated by these panels will be fed directly to the grid. The solar panels will have low levels of reflection and will shield many of the light fixtures used to illuminate the glass panels. A logo for the Interstate media company, is proposed on the north elevation and will be integrated into the pole cladding and will have a maximum text height of 8” with a 3” border around the text.

The measurement table below shows the relevant measurements of the proposed billboard in relationship to the existing building.

Measurement	East facing sign Full-motion Rotation	West facing sign 8-second Rotation	Community board
Height to top of billboard, measured from Plaza	56'-0"	49'-2"	2'-9-1/2"
Height to top of billboard, measured from adjoining grade	63'-6"	56'-8"	10'-3-1/2"
Height to top of billboard measured from roof surface (Den restaurant)	41'-7"	34'-9"	n/a
Distance between top of roof and lower edge of billboard	1'-7"	4'-9"	n/a
Dimensions of billboard and sign area)	25'-0" x 40'-0" 1,000 sf	16'-0" x 30'-0" 480 sf	36'-0" x 2'-0" 72 sf
Square footage of sign area (ad sign area)	1,000 sf (1,000 sf max)	480 sf (500 sf max)	n/a
Angle of billboard in relationship to Sunset	Curved sign facing Sunset Blvd	Curved sign facing Sunset Blvd	Curved sign facing the plaza

Approval under the Billboard Policy

The proposed billboard is permitted under the Sunset Boulevard Off-Site Signage Policy (the "Policy"), Chapter 8 of the Sunset Specific Plan, which governs the location, type, and standards for new billboards on Sunset Boulevard. This is a new billboard granted a design excellence award under Round 1.5 of the Sunset Arts & Advertising Program. The proposed billboard exceeds the height limit for this site and therefore is an alternative standards project under the Policy. The project is eligible for a billboard under the Alternative Project category. This category was created for those projects that do not propose a new building, a major remodel, facade, or site improvement, or a cultural resource designation and instead offer an "out-of-the-box," placemaking setting that establishes a unique, substantive, and recognizable urban experience as part of a billboard proposal. In this case, the proposed "alternative" serves as an urban folly set in an interactive plaza meant to educate the public about issues surrounding wildlife migration and extinction. As such, this folly creates a "destination" and a recognizable setting for those to meet, gather, and experience.

The Policy ensures that all lighting and operations are addressed. The applicant will be providing lighting and operations details that will cover:

- hours of operation
- luminance (amount of light emitted from billboard)
- illuminance (light falling on a given surface from billboard)
- digital sign control and transitions
- visual comfort and contrast control; and
- the use of renewable energy.

The application includes a viewshed/sightline analysis to show the proposed billboard project in context with existing billboards, proposed billboards and cultural resources. No existing or proposed billboards will be obstructed. This analysis is used to confirm that visual impacts are minimized.

Pursuant to this Policy, every billboard is subject to a development agreement which details the public benefits derived from each new billboard. Those public benefits, among others, include:

- Minimum annual payments **-** there will be substantial annual payments based on value and capital costs.
- Alternative standards request benefit – this is required due to the project being over the height limit for this site.
- Requirement that building remains occupied **-** or significant payment increase are required.
- Requirement to use the latest in green energy practices and to conduct periodic technology updates**.**
- Requirement for City Content and Public and Arts Programming.

Next Steps:
The Subcommittee is encouraged to provide design-related feedback including the effectiveness of the public realm enhancements and how effective the user experience will be, the choices of materials, the integration of technology, the effectiveness of the sustainability strategies, and the effectiveness of the proposed lighting as examples.

A recommendation will be required from Planning Commission on a development agreement, zoning map amendment, and sign permit and will be part of the application package brought forth for review to the full Planning Commission. Thereafter the City Council reviews all permits and the development agreement for final approval.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Applicant Lighting Narrative
B. Project Plans