

Plans to replace Hollywood Park racetrack progress



Norman Kondy Urban Design

A rendering shows the Hollywood Park Tomorrow development plans for an area that will anchor the Century Boulevard and Prairie Avenue in Inglewood.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-hollywoodpark11-2009mar11,0,4602628.story>

Developers intend to unveil a model of the retail district that would be built on the Inglewood site. The project, which would also include residences, must still be approved by the city.

By Ari B. Bloomekatz
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The controversial plan to raze the landmark racetrack at Hollywood Park is coming into clearer focus this week as developers plan to unveil a model of the proposed 620,000-square-foot retail district that would partially replace it.

The Hollywood Park Tomorrow project would mark one of the region's largest redevelopment projects, covering 238 acres in Inglewood -- though it faces hurdles.

The plan has yet to be finalized, and Inglewood officials still must approve it. The developers say that once they get the go-ahead, they're ready to tear down the track and break ground on the roughly \$2-billion project.

A question remains about the feasibility of launching such a large project amid an economic downturn

that has stalled similar developments.

Hollywood Park officials have guaranteed horse racing only through this summer.

The proposed project's plan is to mix the retail space -- which includes dozens of shops and restaurants, a 15-screen movie theater and a refurbished casino at its existing location -- with nearly 3,000 residential units, 75,000 square feet of office space, a 300-room hotel, 25 acres of park space and a four-acre civic site that could be a school.

"What they're proposing is the Hollywood Park of tomorrow," said Inglewood City Councilman Daniel Tabor. "I hope this is the model of what Inglewood will be, at least to some people, an upscale, growing, livable community where people can own a home, shop for the . . . goods and services that they need, and enjoy themselves at restaurants and night spots."

Tabor said one of his priorities before moving forward is that developers "promise the community that it will create not just employment opportunities during the construction phase, but employment opportunities with livable wages into the future."

Tabor said the council could vote on whether to approve the plan as early as April or May and that he hopes developers are able to break ground around January 2010.

A small-scale model, 5-by-5-feet, will be shown Thursday to Inglewood's city leaders and will be on public display this weekend at the racetrack to provide a glimpse of what the future could hold.

Gerard McCallum, a project developer for Hollywood Park Land Co., a subsidiary of Bay Area developer Wilson, Meany, Sullivan, estimated that the project would take two to three years to complete.

Although there is broad support for the project at Inglewood City Hall, some race fans at Hollywood Park have been hoping the track will be saved.

The closure of the Hollywood Park racetrack and the construction of a major mixed-use development would be a definite milestone for Inglewood, which several years ago lost its beloved Los Angeles Lakers when the team moved from the Forum to Staples Center in downtown L.A.

Hollywood Park opened in 1938 -- and was known as the racing track of the stars. Hollywood moguls Jack L. Warner, Samuel Goldwyn and Walt Disney were early leaders, and the park attracted its share of Hollywood types well into the 1980s.

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