



Bixby Knolls – Economic Enhancement Strategy

Hyett Palma - Executive Summary

BIXBY KNOLLS ECONOMIC ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY 2009

OVERVIEW

This is a summary of a report presenting the community's economic vision for the commercial portions of Bixby Knolls. It was completed by HyettPalma, Inc. on April 30, 2009 in conjunction with a Process Committee formed by the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency. The strategy was developed to further strengthen the commercial areas of Bixby Knolls and to guide their future development through 2014. It is essentially an update of a similar economic enhancement strategy completed by HyettPalma in 1993.

On February 9, 2009, HyettPalma conducted a community meeting at the Petroleum Club, attended by more than 200 residents and local business owners. Additionally, they conducted stakeholder interviews and market analysis resulting in the following Findings and Recommended Course of Action:

FINDINGS

GENERAL FINDINGS

- There would be a logical and appropriate mix of businesses, goods and services that would enable residents to spend their money in their own neighborhood.
- The commercial areas would be made to look attractive and well maintained similar to the residential portions of Bixby Knolls today. Improvements would include litter and graffiti removal, cleaning and maintaining 405 Freeway access points, façade upgrades, and enhanced lighting to make the area inviting both day and night.
- Bixby Knolls would be a “destination neighborhood” connected to transit stations and Passport buses so that those from beyond the area could easily visit and enjoy the shops, restaurants, art, culture, entertainment, and nightlife. A marketing effort would be implemented to promote the awareness of businesses and community amenities.

- Long Beach Boulevard would continue to be a corridor of predominantly professional services, offices and medical uses.
- Atlantic Avenue would have a greater sense of place. It would be a “destination” with an “identity” that gives people a reason to visit rather than going elsewhere. Its historic structures would be recognized and used to create an urban ambience along with a greater diversity of shops and restaurants.



Atlantic Avenue Corridor

- A portion of Atlantic Avenue from Bixby to San Antonio would be a “pedestrian zone” filled with boutiques, small shops and restaurants with an environment that invites walking rather than driving. Businesses would be open later in the evening giving potential customers a greater opportunity to shop and enjoy the areas amenities.
- Buildings on Atlantic would face the sidewalk with parking at the rear. Landscaping would be enhanced along with more bike racks, and benches.
- The Bixby Knolls Shopping Center would either be “totally revamped” or torn down in an effort to modernize the development into a pedestrian oriented commercial area with thriving businesses.
- Parking would be convenient, adequate and affordable throughout the commercial area of Bixby Knolls.
- Care would be taken to ensure that commercial uses do not encroach into residential area via traffic, noise and lights.
- The village atmosphere and mix of businesses in the Atlantic pedestrian zone would allow it to attract a broader range of users including: neighborhood residents, local area employees, Long Beach Memorial staff and visitors, freeway travelers, conventioners, tourists, families, teens and seniors.

RETAIL MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

- To ensure long-term economic results and success, the Bixby Knolls economic enhancement effort must be market driven and involve business owners, property owners, developers, patrons and local government.
- The primary trade area has an estimated population of 96,198 with an estimated 31,288 households. By 2013, the figures are projected to increase to 98,659 and 31,803 respectively.
- The average household size is 3.01 persons, larger than the national average of 2.59, reflecting the family oriented nature of the trade area.
- The total combined annual income of households within the primary trade area is \$2.2 billion per year.
- The average annual household income is approximately \$70,262 and is projected to increase to \$83,387 by 2013.
- The total estimated demand for retail products in the trade area is \$570 million annually.
- The primary trade area currently includes approximately 1 million square feet of retail space generating approximately \$130 million in total retail sales each year.
- Bixby Knolls is currently capturing approximately 23% of the retail sales potential within the primary trade area.
- Taking steps to enhance Bixby Knolls, it is conservatively anticipated that Bixby Knolls may have the potential to increase its share of retail sales in the primary trade area from 23% to between 23.5% and 24% by 2014. This would amount to an increase of between \$4 million to \$6 million in retail sales per year.
- The above increase could potentially support the development of between 30,000 and 50,000 net square feet of additional retail space or an equivalent increase of sales by existing businesses by 2014. (The actual results will be greatly affected by the level of effort over the next five years put in by key participants as well as the local impact of the ongoing recession.)



Increased Retail Activity

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

ECONOMIC ORIENTATIONS

- **Long Beach Boulevard** should continue to function as a primarily an office corridor. If market conditions create a demand for more housing, consideration should be given to accommodating some amount of demand along the boulevard.
- **Atlantic Avenue** should continue to have three distinct economic orientations:
- **Bixby Road to San Antonio Drive** should be enhanced and re-oriented to become the pedestrian-oriented commercial “village” so desired by the community.
- **I-405 to Bixby Road** should continue to be an auto-oriented area of offices, convenience retail businesses, and national chains/franchises requiring a larger building footprint.
- **North of San Antonio Drive** to Del Amo Boulevard should continue to be primarily comprised of the Bixby Knolls Shopping Center and national, auto-oriented businesses.
- **Orange Avenue** should continue to serve as primarily a residential spine having a limited amount of convenience retail which should be clustered in nodes.
- **Wardlow Road** from Orange to Atlantic should be enhanced to become an eclectic mix of neighborhood serving businesses (including convenience retail, food, personal services, and offices) that serve and blend with its single and multi-family residential uses.

ATLANTIC AVENUE FOCUS AREA

- Clean & Safe
 1. Rapid removal of graffiti and litter and the friendly presence of police in the form of foot and bike patrols should be a priority.

2. It is recommended that merchants of all first floor businesses keep their display window lights on in the evening. Subject to available funding adding pedestrian oriented lights to existing poles should be a priority.
- Pedestrianize
 1. The recommendations of the Greneker Solutions study entitled Bixby Knolls Atlantic Avenue Business Corridor, One Vision, should continue to be implemented.
 2. More bike racks should be added along Atlantic Avenue.
 3. Creative, customized banners should be placed on Atlantic as they recently were on Long Beach Blvd.
 4. The City and BK BIA should encourage business owners to use projecting (rather than flush mounted) business signs.
 5. High quality indigenous public art should be encouraged through a placement plan.
 6. Consideration should be given to lowering the speed limit on Atlantic to 20-25 miles per hour to increase pedestrian comfort and safety.
 7. Although a recent study concluded the parking is currently adequate, the situation should be monitored as additional customers are attracted to the areas.
 8. A parking expert should be retained to determine if any amount of angled parking can be returned to Atlantic and appropriate side streets.
 9. Any surface level parking created in the future should not be located on Atlantic since doing so would deter pedestrian movement.
 10. Any new buildings constructed on Atlantic should be built at the sidewalk to encourage pedestrian movement.
 - Building Improvements
 1. The BK BIA should aggressively market and encourage the use of façade grants available through the Redevelopment Agency specifically targeting in the focus area.
 2. All façade grant recipients should be required to comply with the design guidelines created for Bixby Knolls in 2001.

3. The BK BIA should work with the City to assist business investors navigate the permitting and review process.
 4. Owners of existing and future multi-story buildings should be encouraged to create market rate loft apartments in their upper floors consistent with City building and zoning regulations.
- Business Development
 1. In an effort to maximize **business retention** efforts the BK BIA should: visit business owners by going door-to-door; market the City’s assistance programs; discuss with owners issues/concerns regarding their economic success; put owners in touch with the appropriate technical assistance sources such as the SBDC; keep owners informed about the overall enhancement effort.
 2. In an effort to maximize **business attraction** efforts the BK BIA should: have the executive director take the lead; the effort should be concentrated in the Atlantic Avenue focus area and aimed at recruiting first floor “impulse uses” such as specialty retail, food, art and entertainment businesses;
 3. **Internal business recruitment**, where existing businesses seek other businesses that will complement their operation, should be encouraged.
 4. The following is a listing of businesses appropriate to seek for the Atlantic Avenue focus area: food establishments with outdoor seating, ethnic offerings and live entertainment; casual apparel for all ages and genders; art galleries and art/craft supplies; personal services such as day spas; pets and pet products; and, kitchen store with cooking classes.
 - Gathering Places
 1. The community has expressed a desire for the focus area to serve as a gathering place. This should be accomplished by creating a concentration of specialty shops, restaurants, art and entertainment venues; making the best possible use of the Dana branch library and Historical Society building; supporting the ongoing farmers market.



Business Development

BIXBY KNOLLS SHOPPING CENTER

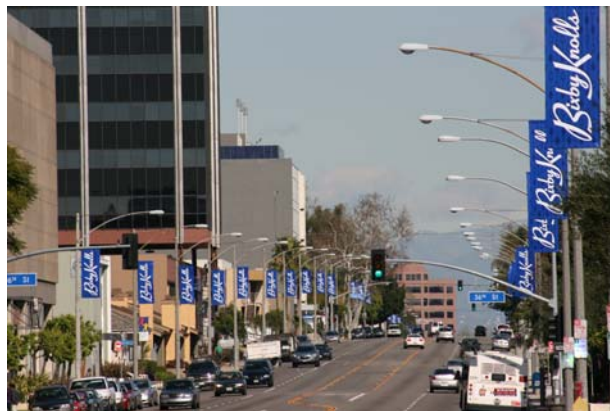
1. The Redevelopment Agency should continue to take the lead in addressing the ultimate revitalization of the center that is of growing concern to the community given its highly visible location in the focus area.

OVERALL IMPROVEMENTS

- Wayfinding
 1. A consistent sign system should be developed including: signs directing motorists from the 405 to Bixby Knolls; “welcome to Bixby Knolls signs at all entrances; signs leading motorists to all major attractions such as Sherer Park and the Dana Library.

- Entrances

1. The image of Bixby Knolls is greatly affected by the appearance of entrances, especially from the 405. The City should: contact Caltrans to beautify and maintain the on and off ramps; remove tagging within 24 hours; install wayfinding signs.



Gateway Signage

- Marketing
 1. One large family oriented signature event should be held annually with the purpose of creating a particular image for the business district. Existing efforts by the BK BIA to get local media coverage should be expanded to include all print and electronic media throughout Los Angeles and Orange County areas. The BK BIA should continue its strong effort utilizing its website, Facebook and e-mail blasts to market the area. The existing Bixby Knolls Directory should be augmented by creating a glossy “lure brochure” that can be placed at locations including airports, hotels, restaurants, gas stations, visitors centers, etc.

- Management

1. The following is recommended to ensure the implementation of the Bixby Knolls Economic Enhancement Strategy:
2. The BK BIA Board of Directors should adopt this Bixby Knolls Economic Enhancement Strategy 2009 as the official guide for the further enhancement of the commercial areas.
3. The BK BIA, working with the City, should assume the lead in implementing the overall enhancement effort including marketing, public art (according to an approved theme) and small business development.
4. The City should be responsible for implementing the economic implementation strategy related to public improvements, public safety, traffic and parking, incentives, large business development, and the Bixby Knolls Shopping Center.
5. The City and the BK BIA should jointly implement the economic enhancement strategy related to wayfinding, entrances, clean and safe, and encouraging upper story loft development in appropriate areas.
6. The Redevelopment Agency staff and BK BIA executive director should meet quarterly to monitor the implementation effort.
7. Two community forums (sponsored by the BK BIA) should be held each year with the purpose of keeping the community apprised of what is being implemented, upcoming actions and a Q & A opportunity to comment on the progress.



Public Art

This report was prepared as a collaborative effort between the Long Beach Redevelopment Agency (RDA) and the Bixby Knolls Business Improvement Association (BKBIA).

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For information about the RDA, visit www.LongBeachRDA.org



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