

## **Bergamot Station Art Center Frequently Asked Questions – June 2017**

**Plans for this site have been going on for years. Why are we only at the conceptual phase of the project? When will the revitalization efforts of Bergamot Station Art Center start and when are they expected to be complete?**

Since the site is owned by the City of Santa Monica, an extensive and transparent public review process has been conducted to envision a revitalization plan. The first element of the public process, adoption of the Bergamot Area Plan, framed the revitalization opportunities and future land uses allowed for the site. Following the Bergamot Area Plan adoption, a multi-year Request for Qualifications and Proposals process was held, in which a development team was selected (the Worthe Real Estate Group). Finally, recommendations regarding a conceptual plan were developed by the Bergamot Advisory Committee and subsequently approved by City Council on June 13, 2017.

On January 1, 2018, the City will enter into a master lease with the Worthe Real Estate Group to manage the arts center for an interim three year period while land use entitlements are pursued for the revitalization plan, which is estimated to take approximately two years to obtain. Thereafter, building renovation and new construction would be phased in over a number of years. In the meantime, the Bergamot Station Arts Center would continue to be open for business and community enjoyment.

**What are the public objectives to be realized in revitalizing Bergamot?**

There are several public objectives to be achieved through the revitalization of Bergamot, including: (1) the retention of existing gallery spaces and majority of existing buildings, (2) the creation of additional space that is dedicated to art uses and cultural non-profit organizations, including the addition of a new museum for Santa Monica; (3) the long-term support of below-market rents for galleries and non-profit arts and cultural uses to ensure that Bergamot Station is a safe harbor in the community for those uses, (4) the generation of ground rents and additional revenues to support ongoing operations and affordable fares on the Big Blue Bus; and (5) the incorporation of additional public amenities on the site such as a community center, bike facility, and open space to host arts and cultural events.

**How will this plan create more opportunities for arts organizations?**

The plan would create additional building space that would be provided at below-market rent for cultural and non-profit arts organizations, including a new museum, additional performing arts space, and outdoor event programming for the community.

**How will you ensure that the community arts use is fulfilled?**

The City will negotiate the development agreement and ground lease to include community benefits that reflect the public objectives and conditions for the site such as preservation of below-market rents for galleries and non-profit cultural and arts uses. In addition, the Arts Commission will be working with staff, the development team, and community to develop an Arts Center management plan for the site that will describe the community art activities to be produced annually and the performance requirements associated with the programming.

**Why is a hotel proposed for the site?**

A hotel is meant to help activate the site, including during the evening hours, and will have amenities such as a restaurant and additional gallery space to support the Arts Center. A hotel would also help address the overnight accommodation needs of the immediate area, including the nearby businesses

and medical centers. In addition, a hotel creates critical revenue that helps support the Big Blue Bus (which owns the land) and sustains the art center's below-market rents for galleries and non-profit arts and cultural uses. Lastly, the hotel would create unionized jobs with local hiring and training programs to help connect local residents with good-paying jobs.

**What has the public process been to date? How can the public weigh in in the future?**

Every step of the process, from the development and adoption of the Bergamot Area Plan to the deliberations of the Bergamot Advisory Committee, to the hearings before the Arts Commission and City Council, have been open to the public and involved active community participation. The formal development review process will include public hearings before the Architectural Review Board, Planning Commission, and City Council prior to the final approval of the project. The public is invited to attend and participate in any and all of these meetings.

**What is the mix of for-profit arts organizations and non-profit arts organizations now? What will it be in the future?**

The City seeks to retain the current for-profit arts businesses (fine art galleries) and non-profit arts organizations (such as City Garage Theater) while expanding the number of arts organizations housed at Bergamot as additional space is created. The goal is to ensure that Bergamot remains a safe haven for the arts in Santa Monica.

**Over \$2 million of new City revenues are expected to be generated each year from the revitalization of the site. How will the funds be allocated?**

The funds generated from this site would go into the City's General Fund budget, which is used to support the City's parks, libraries, schools, and essential City services including police and fire. The Council has indicated its interest to channel a portion of the project generated revenue to support the Big Blue Bus, which owns the land, in order to help reduce pressure on increased bus fares.

**Why are galleries, which are private businesses, not required to pay market rents at Bergamot?**

Fine art galleries are an important part of the City's cultural eco-system. Many galleries share similarities with museums, in that the public may visit and experience the art without a requirement to purchase. In contrast, art galleries also help connect artists to collectors and educators. Most art galleries would not be able to survive in areas such as Santa Monica without some level of subsidization. In return for reduced rents, galleries and other cultural tenants are expected to support community and cultural objectives by sustaining arts programming and events that are open to the public.

**How will rents be determined for the revitalized Bergamot? What is considered below-market rent?**

The City will evaluate the market rents in the area for art uses to establish a baseline and analyze the developer's financial models for the project to determine what amount of subsidization can be offered and, similarly, what the galleries can afford. The baseline will also establish economic value to help quantify the Arts Center community benefits provided in return for below-market rent beneficiaries. The analysis will establish what amount of rent can be provided below the market rent baseline to support the art uses without undermining the economic feasibility of the overall project.

### **Is the private portion of Bergamot beholden to the Bergamot Area Plan?**

The Bergamot Area Plan governs both the private and public portions of Bergamot Station Art Center. Both sites are part of the Conservation Zone to ensure long-term protection for creative, cultural, and art uses. In addition, the City has aspirations that the private portion of Bergamot maintains galleries and art spaces and the two properties would continue to operate in a synergistic manner.

### **Why is the Bike Center smaller compared to earlier plans?**

The Bergamot Advisory Committee reviewed the various elements of the original development proposal and deemed that a smaller bike center would provide ample community benefit without taking away much-needed space for the arts. The site is zoned at very low density to protect the scale and character of the project so any new uses require trade-offs in space allocation. Since the original proposal was created, the City implemented a citywide bike share program and has continued to invest in bike racks at the Expo Stations, helping to reduce the anticipated demand for a large bike center operation.

### **Why isn't there affordable housing or live-work space proposed for the site?**

The adopted Bergamot Area Plan prioritizes art uses at the Bergamot Arts Center Station and prohibits housing in order to ensure compatibility amongst the various cultural activities within the Arts Center. The Bergamot Area Plan provides for opportunities for housing in areas near the Arts Center.

### **Who was on the advisory board?**

The Bergamot Advisory Board was comprised of eleven community stakeholders representing members of the Santa Monica Neighborhood Council, the Arts Commission, local business community and the Bergamot tenants. See [www.smgov.net/bergamot](http://www.smgov.net/bergamot) for additional info.