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## Triangle Upkeep Mired in Bureaucracy

BY ALLISON B. COHEN · JUNE 30, 2016



*City agencies swept the Vermont Triangle Jan. 28th of the homeless encampment that had taken up there since December but the homeless returned to the site within a couple of hours.*

LOS FELIZ—Bureaucratic paperwork appears to be the latest snafu slowing

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efforts to clean up or transform the Vermont Triangle in an effort to discourage homeless encampments at the site.

Upkeep for the triangle—located at Hollywood Boulevard and Vermont and Propsect avenues—has been ping-pong back and forth between the Los Feliz Business Improvement District (LFVBID) and the East Hollywood Business Improvement District (EHBID) since 2008 when former Los Angeles City Councilmember Tom LaBonge spent \$800,000 to have the street median landscaped into what it is today.

According to Jeff Zarrinman, who sits on a number of community boards and is the current vice chair of the EHBID, the process of officially transferring a permit to care for the triangle from the LFVBID to the EHBID, which all thought had happened some time ago, is currently in the works.

The responsibility of upkeep for the triangle has become increasingly important the last 1 ½ years as it continues to ebb and flow with homeless encampments.

Most recently, the homeless seem to be settling in at the location bringing in furniture and chairs. On a recent afternoon, a clothesline—hung

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between two trees—could be seen drying clothes.

“Lighting is a big problem,” with the triangle, said Zarrinman. “People are throwing rocks at them,” to turn them off. “[The homeless people] like it dark.”

According to Zarrinman, he is working with the Councilmember David Ryu’s office to secure funding for a redesign of the location, including getting new street lights that a taller—and less likely to be broken—as well as getting the triangle’s six trees trimmed, which some locals have said are attractive to the homeless as they well-shade the area.

“We need to make the triangle less comfortable,” Zarrinman said.

According to Zarrinman, the East Hollywood BID has made changes to the triangle in the past, including redesigning its irrigation.

“We buried it and installed a drip system,” he said. “[People] were using the [old irrigation system] to bathe.”

But according to Zarrinman, the EHBID needs help from the Los Feliz community to help fund a hopefully permanent fix for the triangle.

“One solution,” he said, “is to create a



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property based business improvement district for Los Feliz.”

Business improvement districts, like the LFVBID, are either merchant-based or property-based, which according to city records, bring in a lot more funding.

East Hollywood’s BID, for example, has an annual budget of \$200,000, collected from 90 property owners. Los Feliz’s business improvement district, on the other hand, brings in approximately \$65,000 to \$70,000 annually, collected from about 300 local business owners.

According to LFVBID President Chris Serrano, the organization has considered taking steps to convert to a more income-generating BID.

“The LFVBID has and will continue to evaluate business vs. property based BIDs,” she said in an email. When asked to elaborate on those evaluations, Serrano did not respond.

According to Eugene Van Cise, with the Los Angeles City Clerk’s office, and who oversees the LFVBID, property-based business improvement districts are more stable and as such “would be a good idea,” for Los Feliz.

Cise said there are 151 properties in Los Feliz. Assessments, which would be

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higher, would be charged to the property owner on their annual property tax bills.

Rena Masten Leddy, the managing director of the LA Fashion District Business Improvement District said if Los Feliz were interested in such a conversion, the Larchmont Village Business Improvement District, would make for a good comparison of how much such a conversion would generate.

According to Heather Duffy Boylston, a spokesperson for the Larchmont Village Business District, the organization's budget annually is approximately \$130,000.

Posted June 30 2016 at 6:00 a.m.

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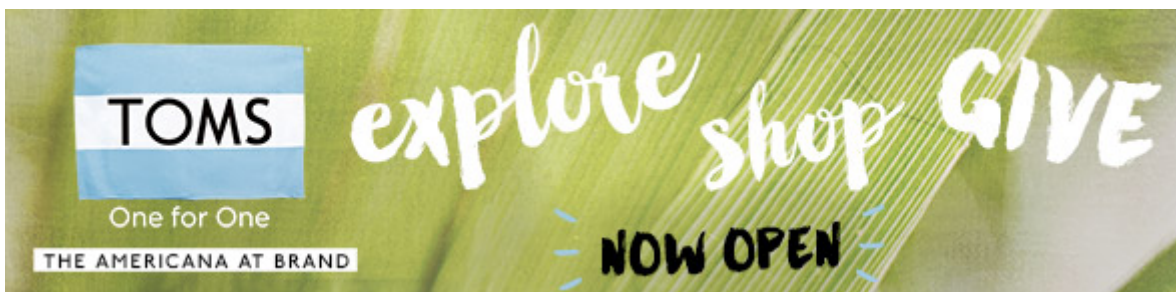
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