

Press Release  
John Schwada, Communications Director  
Neighborhood Integrity Initiative  
[john.schwada@gmail.com](mailto:john.schwada@gmail.com)  
310 709-0056

## **K-TOWN LEADERS SEE BALLOT PLAN AS A WAY TO PROTECT THEIR COMMUNITY** **Leaders of Neighborhood Integrity Initiative Stand with K-Town Activists**

**Los Angeles, March 2, 2016** - Koreatown community leaders gave Jill Stewart, campaign director for the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative, a tour of the site where a Beverly Hills developer is seeking to build a 27-story luxury housing project abutting low-rise apartments and on streets that can't handle the traffic of a mega-project.

"This project is the poster-child for our Neighborhood Integrity Initiative," Stewart told six TV and radio reporters at an impromptu news conference after the tour. "This project should have died long ago at the hands of sensible planning. Instead it continues to live and pose a threat to Koreatown's character, its traffic and its environment. When our ballot measure is approved by voters, projects like this will be stopped in their tracks."

The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative is a proposed ballot measure to limit the over-development frenzy in Los Angeles that is creating overwhelming traffic gridlock and destroying the character of neighborhoods. Its proponents are now obtaining the signatures needed to place the measure on the ballot.

Last year the Los Angeles city planning commission voted to kill developer Mike Hakim's 27-story Koreatown project. One commissioner called Hakim's mega-project "wildly inappropriate." But Mayor Eric Garcetti kept it alive by overriding the commission decision and moving the project forward to a City Council vote. The project - aka Colony Holdings LLC - is now awaiting a hearing before the council's Planning and Land Use Committee.

"For this 27-story project to be built city officials will have to bend almost every rule in the book – but that happens every day at City Hall," said Stewart. "The rigged system at City Hall rewards greedy developers and it is hard to beat. But the public can win and put new controls on reckless development if they vote for our measure when it gets on the ballot."

Koreatown attorney and activist Grace Yoo also said the project will result in the destruction of more than a dozen rent-controlled units. "If this project is built it will have a domino effect on the rest of the area," Yoo warned. "All of these mom-and-pop apartment buildings will be swept up by developers. The working families living in them will be evicted and the developers will put up luxury housing. I support the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative. We need it to save our communities."

Reporters also heard from Wilshire Center Koreatown Neighborhood Council vice-president Aura Vasquez who said: "I'm not against all development, just irresponsible projects like this one. Unfortunately many developers don't have the best interests of the community in mind, and they're ruining our community and filling the streets with their traffic. In Koreatown we have a traffic crisis and

a parking availability crisis created by too much development. When I get home from work it's often almost impossible for me to find a parking space. Many times I have to walk alone several blocks in the dark from my car to my apartment, and it's scary."

The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative will impose a two-year moratorium on all discretionary development projects. These are projects that require special handling, rule-bending and council intervention to go forward.

For a maximum of two years, this moratorium will stop these often flagrantly obnoxious projects that overwhelm our traffic, our neighborhoods and our environment. The moratorium will stop all projects seeking a zone change, a height district change or a general plan amendment meant to intensify the development of properties.

LA deserves a breather from the onslaught of over-development, Stewart said. The moratorium will provide that relief.

Also, the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative will require City Hall to begin a periodic, systematic review of its planning rules as set forth and established in the General Plan. During this review process, the public will have new opportunities to shape the rules of the road and the destinies of their communities.

This process can be expected to produce a common-sense principle of planning - that future development projects are permitted only when the infrastructure is in place to handle the extra environmental impacts of these projects. Now City Hall irresponsibly puts the horse before the cart - allowing development before the infrastructure. The result is chaos. Community input in setting the planning rules should fix this flaw.

Finally the Neighborhood Integrity Initiative will permanently protect the citizen-shaped General Plan against the most egregious abuses of the current rigged system at City Hall for approving major projects.

LA's general plan is supposed to be the city's planning constitution. Its integrity needs to be protected and respected. Today, however, General Plan amendments are handed out to developers like candy.

The Neighborhood Integrity Initiative will stop these developer hand-outs.

The initiative sets standards that put a lid on City Hall's irresponsible practice of approving General Plan amendments that allow greedy developers to impose their neighborhood-busting, traffic-snarling, special interest projects on our communities.