

Neighborhood Gathering Place and Billboard Conversion on the Northwest Corner of 7th Ave and Montecito

This process, which began with an idea from a neighbor, involves creating a neighborhood gathering place called "The Lyceum". It is situated on the vacant lot at the northwest corner of 7th Ave and Montecito. The current billboard on this site is to be converted to digital and moved to the north end of the lot in exchange for building the Lyceum.

The Lyceum design includes seating, a shade structure, trees, bushes, a walking path and small stage area. The concept is to create a place for pedestrians, cyclists and residents to sit and chat, get some shade, or even listen to an arts presentation (like a poetry reading). It has lower-level plantings of various types, and is completely visible from the street. It provides a place for socializing, public art, and potential economic benefit too. The City will own the land, and the Community Alliance of Seventh Avenue (CASA) will manage it under the rules and regulations of the City of Phoenix Parks Department. A professional designer and builder will be hired to complete the project within a budget of about \$45,000, and the plan is to break ground shortly after the first of the year. Conceptual drawings are attached.

The billboard is to be relocated to the northern border of the site, converted to digital format and the display will be slightly smaller than the present board. The billboard will face south only, and be fenced with material that is compatible with the look and feel of the Melrose District. The billboard lot has been vacant for decades, and this type of use is a great amenity in the Melrose District.

The owner of the billboard, Clear Channel Outdoor, is committed to working with everyone involved; the city, residents, and others to control the lighting and minimize its effects at all times. Clear Channel is a strong partner who has supported and contributed many things in the Melrose District, like donating billboard ad space for the Street Fair! About a year ago, they removed a billboard on 7th Ave just a few blocks south of this site, all on their own. Also, the City requires them to remove other billboards in the city when they convert one to digital, and Clear Channel will comply with this requirement.

Our collective effort is supported by Mayor Stanton and Councilwoman Pastor. Please join them, CASA and the Seventh Avenue Merchant's Association in supporting this mutually beneficial project by signing the petition or sending an individual letter of support.

This project will be presented at the following meetings:

- Seventh Avenue Merchants Association General Meeting, Oct 27th, 6:30 pm, at Community Church of Hope, 4121 N. 7th Ave, enter from 6th Drive just north of Indian School.
- City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board Meeting, Nov 17th, 5:00 pm, at City Council Chambers, 251 W Jefferson.
- City of Phoenix Zoning Administrator, to be scheduled, at City Hall, 200 W. Washington.

For more information, contact Charley Jones, CASA President, 602-359-5095, charcor@cox.net, or any CASA board member. Check us out at: www.CASAon7thAve.org