

# ArtExchange's Design Details Begin To Emerge

By Tiffany Rider  
Gazette Staff Writer

Details of a proposed art workspace/studio/cooperative began emerging last Tuesday at a public meeting about the proposed ArtExchange project downtown.

The ArtExchange is planned as a nonprofit studio cooperative that has been in the works for 15 years. The facilities could include 15 studios for professional artists to create their works, a gallery for the art to be displayed and sold, a hot shop for ceramics and glass blowing and a multipurpose room that can be used as a classroom or a venue for local events.

Developers at last week's meeting provided visuals of the proposed building as well as outlined goals for the ArtExchange, which include connect-

ing youth and artists to networking opportunities, providing an affordable location for artists to produce their work and creating an art experience hub in Long Beach.

The ArtExchange will be built at the southeast corner of Third Street and Long Beach Boulevard using the historic Acres of Books facade, and will include both indoor and outdoor space. The first 100 feet of the Acres of Books building will be incorporated into the facilities, and materials from the rest of the building will be used to construct the gallery and other art studios on the property.

When completed, there will be about 10,850 square feet of building space. The concept has been compared to the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria,

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## Art Exchange

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Va., as an art space where visitors can observe, learn about and purchase local art.

The concept is the brainchild of Phil Appleby of Appleby Real Estate Brokerage and Property Management Services, a local businessman who came up with the idea in 1994.

"It is very rewarding to have invested this many years in the dream, and really what I've always thought of as a gift to the city," Appleby said. "It's very rewarding and delightful, and grounded in a sense that I believe we have been given an opportunity to create a successful economic engine and it's our responsibility to deliver that."

Along with being an economic engine for Long Beach, Appleby said the ArtExchange would become a catalyst for the growth of the East Village arts district.

"We think the city benefits because it creates a cultural anchor, much like what you have in a shopping center. You do need anchors to make the other art culture opportunities work," he said. "So we think that this also acts as kind of an anchor for this longtime burgeoning arts district. We think this (project) is a very important part of that as a catalyst to continue to make the East Village arts district grow into a cultural and art center."

Appleby described the artists who would benefit from the ArtExchange as individual small businesses who need the support of the community.

"I think as it relates to artists, it gives the artists a cen-

tral destination place for tourists and art aficionados and the local community to come and hopefully support through their purchases," he said.

Appleby said the ArtExchange would help the city identify itself as a more cultural and artistic community that will attract development.

"I think this is an important driving economic engine, and hopefully we can generate income over time ... well, (income would be) reserves because this is a non-profit ... so that it is a great model for people to look at how art can be profitable and how a facility like this can create funds and be able to use those funds to create more art and artistic opportunities," he said.

Appleby added that continuous support from the Long Beach community has kept the idea alive. He gave particular credit to the Lowenthals, including state Sen. Alan Lowenthal and Assembly-woman Bonnie Lowenthal and City Councilwoman Suja Lowenthal.

"Suja made this a major priority," Appleby said. "So we're here now, and Suja's support is how one stays in the battle. We've had great support from the council; we've had great support from the Redevelopment Agency. We've never had anything but positive reinforcement, and that's really what keeps you alive. It's the reinforcement that the concept, and what it can do, is thought of fondly and I think that keeps you going."

"In the big picture, we hope this is just the beginning of a catalyst that makes things bigger and better, but in the short run, it's a home for artists."