

# 'This is going to be the best project': Big turnout for Warner Center Promenade mall mega redevelopment

By [Bianca Barragan](#) May 1, 2019, 10:55am PDT

1,400 rental units, new shops and restaurants, 572 hotel rooms, and a 15,000-seat venue



Westfield Promenade mall in [Woodland Hills](#) with 1,400 new rental units, offices, shops, 5.6 acres of public open space, and a 15,000-seat "entertainment center." "This is going to be the best project for this area," Canoga Park resident Shain Sabeti said.

Roughly two-thirds of the hearing's attendees wore grapefruit-sized stickers on their shirts that said "YES!," and the majority of speakers said they favored the project, mainly because it will bring jobs, from construction to retail, and improve the site, which is now a largely vacant mall. French commercial real estate company Unibail-Rodamco [bought](#) Westfield in late 2017, paying \$16 billion. This 34-acre project is the company's first housing development, project representative Cindy Starrett noted at the meeting.

"We have a vested interest in making sure this gets done right, and we will get it right," said Larry Green, the executive vice president for Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield. This redevelopment is the largest of a slew of developments spurred by the [Warner Center 2035 plan](#)—a set of planning guidelines implemented in late 2013 with the aim of remaking this corner of the western Valley as an urban, live and work community with walkable and transit-friendly neighborhoods. In a nod to the plan, Westfield has dubbed its project Promenade 2035.

Work on the multi-phase project is expected to begin as early as 2021, with a hotel and creative office space. When complete in 2033, the Promenade will contain 5,610 parking spaces, 572 hotel rooms, 629,000 square feet of office space, and 244,000 square feet of restaurants and shops. Buildings on the site will range between one and 28 stories tall.

But for opponents of the project, one element is out-of-step for the site and the neighborhood: the 15,000-seat venue planned for the corner of Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Oxnard Street. Details on the venue are not entirely clear. The size is not finalized, but it could be as large as 15,000 seats—4,000 seats smaller than the Staples Center. And it still hasn't been determined if the venue will be used for sports or live music or something entirely different. Depending on the structure's ultimate use, it is also unclear whether it would be enclosed by a roof or remain open-air.

Representatives for the Promenade say the venue would be a big bonus. "How great will it be for residents not to have to drive to Downtown or Inglewood for a high-quality entertainment and sporting experience?" said Green.

Affordability concerns were another common concern among opponents. [Rents have risen swiftly](#) in the neighborhood over the last five years, and the Warner Center 2035 plan does not require affordable housing to be included in projects ([though that could change](#) in the near future), so the Promenade project's units will be purely market-rate.

Area resident Gina Thornburg said that by omitting affordable housing from its project, Westfield was "not displaying a social responsibility." "We think we get the variety of different demographics living at the site because we have a variety of different types [of housing]—studio apartments, live/work, one-bedroom ... three-bedroom apartments," Green told Curbed.

A representative for Los Angeles City Councilmember Bob Blumenfield, who represents the project area, said that while Blumenfield supports the project, he "is concerned" about the stadium and the uncertainty of plans for its size and programming, and will continue to work with Westfield on that.

Blumenfield has also taken steps to address the lack of affordable housing included in projects in Warner Center, though any changes will come through after the Promenade project.

Promenade 2035 requires a number of approvals from the city's zoning administrator and the deputy advisory agency before it can proceed. A decision is expected in three weeks at the earliest.

