

Proposed technological hub being discussed in Compton

By ANNE ARTLEY
Contributing Writer

COMPTON — With a new technological hub proposed here, the city is hoping to produce the next Snapchat or Steve Jobs.

HubCity Live is a \$145 million development that will house a seven-story innovation and business center with labs, offices and flats, a three-story cultural and education center including a performing arts theatre and fitness facility, and a five-story plaza with a virtual reality video game arcade, shops and restaurants.

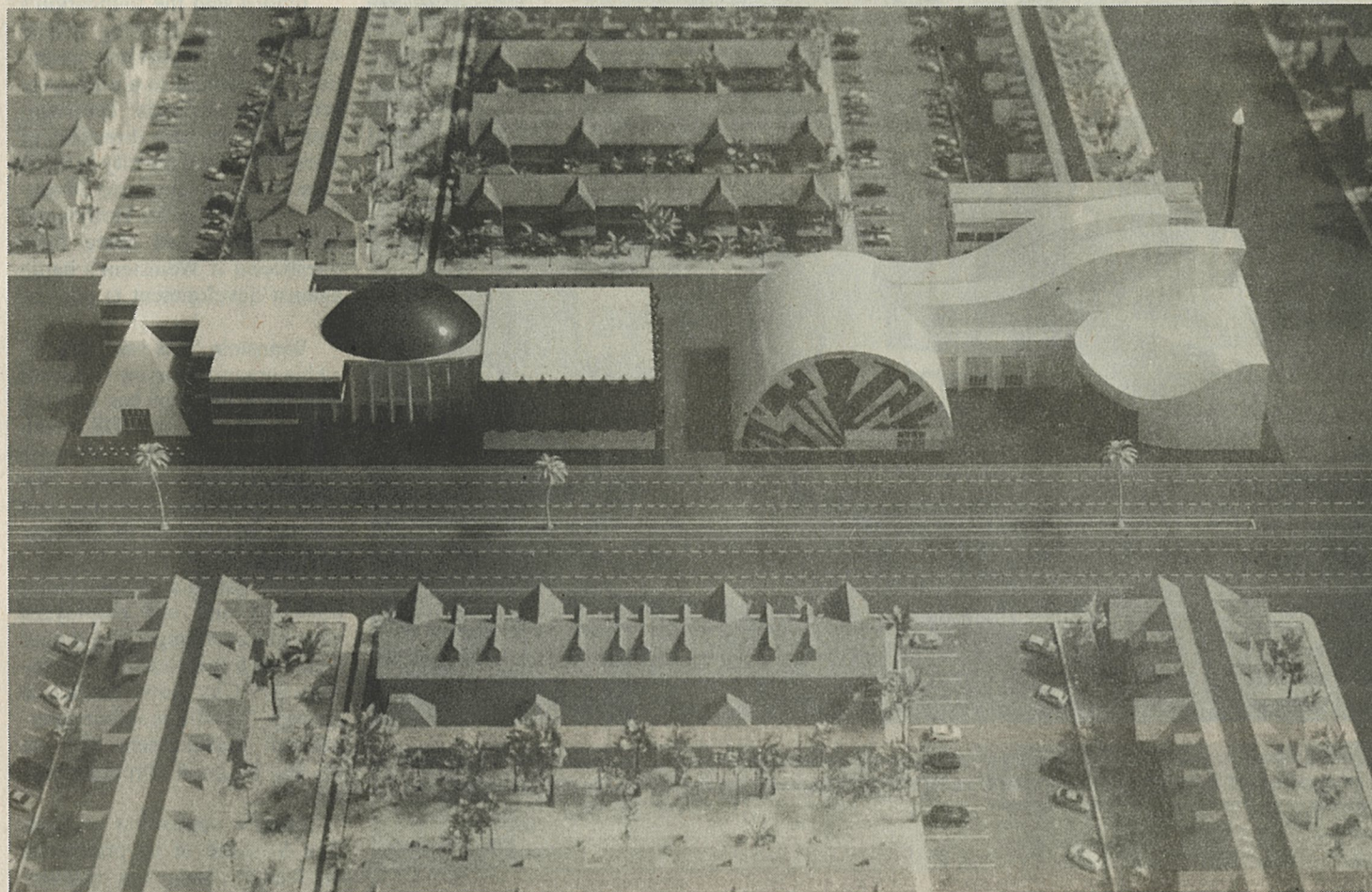
Ivory Chambeshi, the project's community and economic development director, said she is most enthusiastic about the business and innovation site since it can "show urban youth that they are valuable and they can have the possibility to work with entrepreneurs and see the potential for their lives."

The component will include an incubator, a Hackerspace (a community project area), a supercomputing lab, a Makerspace consisting of a wood shop and machine shop and a three-dimensional printer lab. Entrepreneurs can also take advantage of six living labs (apartments that integrate a group workspace), 36 co-office spaces and 25 micro-flats.

"I'm excited that the city gets to experience this for generations to come," said Rickie Byars Beckwith, the founder of HubCity Live. "We can come together to talk about what's wrong in the world, or more importantly, what's right in the world and how we can keep it going."

Though one of the project's main goals is to create an environment for long-term innovation, its directors also aim to generate construction and retail jobs for the local population.

The HubCity Live team



An artist's rendering with an aerial perspective shows the HubCity Live project, a new technological hub proposed for the city of Compton. The proposed development could provide more than 1,000 construction jobs and 500 permanent jobs for the area.

Courtesy photo

plans to dedicate 10 percent of the 1,070 available construction and 500 permanent jobs to locals, ex-offenders and other "hard-to-employ" populations, Chambeshi said. It has also made a commitment to increase the involvement of veterans in technology.

By integrating the community and investing in its creative development, the HubCity Live directors said the project will benefit all residents rather than pushing them out through gentrification.

"This is definitely something we're sensitive to, as a minority and woman-run project," Chambeshi said, adding that the city already has strong

rates of home ownership.

"On the other side of the coin of gentrification is displacement, and we're adding units of housing."

The target site is also an un-

used area, though the team is still considering three other spaces, according to Chambeshi.

The project is currently undergoing preliminary discussions with Compton's May-

or Aja Brown and the City Council to secure the property. Chambeshi said it is slated for completion in 2019.

"A lot of people will see the area from the Artesia (91) Free-

way, and to have that associated with Compton would be great," said Compton's chief building official David Dent.

Its proximity to the MTA Blue Line and its status as a hub for traffic from the Port of Long Beach also makes Compton an ideal location for such a development, according to Chambeshi.

"Urban America is overlooked as a site for tech innovation," she said.

The development was born out of Beckwith's desire to expand her mobile arts education program and summer camp, Kuumba In Motion, to include Compton students.

When the 2015 movie "Straight Outta Compton" was released, it did not screen in the city because it has no movie theater, a fact that underscored the lack of a strong cultural presence in Compton, Chambeshi said.

Although plans for HubCity Live do not include a movie theater, the performing arts theater will have screening capabilities.

The potential for a creative hub has also attracted celebrity attention. Advisory board members will include actresses Rosario Dawson and Hillary Swank, as well as former professional boxer Laila Ali (daughter of Muhammad Ali), inspirational speaker Iyana Vanzant and singer Siedah Garrett.