



PALMS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL



February 8, 2019

Vince Bertoni
Director of Planning
City of Los Angeles
vince.bertoni@lacity.org

RE: Westside Community Plan

Dear Mr. Bertoni,

On behalf of the Palms Neighborhood Council, I write to lay out the recommendations and concerns regarding the Palms – Mar Vista – Del Rey Community Plan Update. Generally, the Palms Neighborhood Council (“PNC”) supports an equal distribution of development along commercial corridors throughout the Community Plan Area, increased mobility options, and housing options available to a range of income levels including medium income housing.

Equitable Distribution of Density throughout Community Plan Area

According to the LA Times Mapping LA project, the Palms neighborhood is ranked 9th of 265 neighborhoods in the County of Los Angeles in density population per square mile. With the addition of the Transit Oriented Communities (“TOC”) program in 2017, Palms has also experienced an influx of new development projects (see Exhibit “A”). Since Palms is already supporting such high population density, we recommend the Update provide for a fair and equitable distribution of density throughout the Community Plan Area. With the growth of Westside employment opportunities in Silicon Beach, we would also like to see other areas of the Westside take on more density during the Planning the Westside Community Plan Update process.

Within single-family neighborhoods throughout the Community Plan, we hope to see more flexibility to permit additional units to be constructed on single-family properties. At the same time, in order to protect the scale and character of single-family neighborhoods throughout the Community Plan, we encourage more intense development with greater density along the commercial corridors like Venice Boulevard.

Palms Neighborhood Council – Alison Regan, President / Eryn Block, Vice-President / V. Claire Jadulang, Secretary / David Bocarsly, Treasurer / Randell Erving, Community Org. Rep. / Jenn Gers, Residential Rep. A / Erika Graves, Residential Rep. B / Scott Chase, Residential Rep. C / Vacant, Residential Rep. D / Karla Van Horn, Residential Rep. E / John Stanley, Business Rep. 1 / Maria Muñoz, Business Rep. 2 / Aijaz Dagga, Business Rep. 3

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Commercial Corridors

The PNC recommends higher intensity zoning along commercial corridors and larger streets throughout the Community Plan area including National Boulevard, Venice Boulevard, Washington Boulevard, Culver Boulevard, Motor Avenue, Overland Avenue, Sepulveda Boulevard, Inglewood Boulevard, and Centinela Avenue.

We recognize the Expo Line Transit Neighborhood Area Plan addresses this issue along a portion of National Boulevard, Motor Avenue and Venice Boulevard. We recommend a similar concept be expanded to the other major streets in the Community Plan with an emphasis on pedestrian activation and residential density.

Additionally, the PNC encourages a commercial corridor activation program to include storefront beautification and landscaping programs along commercial boulevards and medians. The Venice Boulevard median is a missed opportunity for beautification and landscaping in our neighborhood. In Palms, we recommend a continuous and coordinated landscaping program in the Venice Boulevard median between Culver Boulevard and the 405 Freeway.

Although we have a vested interest in Venice Boulevard between Culver Boulevard and the 405 Freeway, we hope to see Venice Boulevard thought of as one thoroughfare from Palms to the ocean. We recommend the Department of City Planning work with the Council Office, Metro, Los Angeles Department of Transportation and the Bureau of Engineering to coordinate reliable and frequent transit service from the Culver City Metro Station to the beach.

Transportation and Mobility

To encourage residents to utilize the Expo Line, the PNC believes it is especially important to connect multi-modal mobility transit option throughout the neighborhood. To encourage the use of multi-modal transit options, the PNC recommends the following:

- Encourage pedestrian activity by streetscape improvements and ground floor retail.
- Implement maximum parking requirements and prohibit ground floor parking at the street frontage to reduce over-parked development projects and increase street level activity.
- Work with Metro to develop a transit-oriented development TAP Card program to implement discounted metro pass program for transit-adjacent residents throughout the City.
- Provide bus bench shelter and adequate lighting at every single bus stop.
- Incentive shared dockless transit options in new development.



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- Provide a direct connection the Metro Station to the greater protected bicycle lane network via Palms Boulevard.

To encourage pedestrian activity, the PNC recommends developing a clear pedestrian connection between the Palms Expo Line Metro Station and Palms local retail area at National Boulevard and Motor Avenue. The PNC also recommends improving pedestrian access to the Expo Line Bike path by providing a striped crossing at either Tabor Street or Watseka Avenue along Exposition Boulevard south of Palms Boulevard and another striped crossing at Woodbine Street and National Boulevard.

The PNC also recommends improving pedestrian safety throughout the entire neighborhood. On our neighborhood commercial streets, we recommend curb extension requirements, specifically at the intersection of Motor Avenue with Regent Avenue, Tabor Avenue, and Woodbine Street. For pedestrian safety on commercial corridors, the PNC recommends striped mid-block crossings especially on Motor Avenue near the post office and at Woodbine Street, such as required by the Livable Boulevards concept. For pedestrian safety on local streets, we recommend requiring all vehicular ingress/egress to new development projects be accessed from rear or side alleys, where available.

The alleys need to be a fully functional, safe and accessible part of the neighborhood. We also recommend that all new development projects be required to improve the condition of the full width of the alley adjacent to the project with adequate lighting, security cameras, and drainage. Since the Bureau of Engineering does not request alley improvements for by-right projects, Rewrite LAMC 12.37 regarding highway dedications that alley dedication and improvement be required for all new development.

Palms Expo Line Metro Station

The PNC would also like to see more development immediately adjacent to the Palms Expo Line Metro Station consistent with the below recommendations:

- An enhanced pedestrian experience with safer street crossings,
- Passenger loading and unloading area adjacent to the Metro Station,
- More density adjacent to transit station,
- Inclusionary affordable housing requirements to include a range of income levels including medium income levels/workforce housing,
- Maximum parking requirements,
- Required pre-paid transit passes for residents of new construction,
- Public Art in and surrounding the metro station, and



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- Wayfinding signs to find transit and transit maps.

Zoning and Land Use Designations

Medium Residential

While higher intensity zoning is supported, there are also several existing R3 neighborhoods with 45-foot height limits. Generally, the buildings in these areas are 2- to 5-stories. Before we begin developing 6 stories and taller within these R3 areas, let's start addressing the housing crisis adjacent to the Metro Station, on the commercial corridors, in other parts of the Community Plan and the City as a whole.

That being said, there are areas where these medium residential neighborhoods can be expanded to create better transitions between single-family uses and uses of greater intensity. For example, there is a spot of single-family zoning sandwiched between medium residential on Tilden Avenue despite the fact that the entire neighborhood between Venice Boulevard and Regent Street is zoned R3. We believe this should be rezoned to be compatible with its adjacent neighbors and allow more density near Venice Boulevard.

Figure 1. ZIMAS map of Tilden Avenue



Industrial

Palms strives to be a walking residential area with neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Palms is an attractive neighborhood to residents because it is centrally located



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and transit-accessible to major employment centers in Culver City, Silicon Beach, Santa Monica and Downtown. But, we do not view our neighborhood as the major employment center, industrial center or hybrid industrial center. There are patches of industrial zones around the neighborhood at Overland Avenue and Venice Boulevard (see Figure 2) and on National Boulevard. These transit accessible areas could be supporting new and affordable housing or mixed-uses that include housing with minimum housing requirements instead of minimum industry requirements.

Commercial

We recommend the Community Plan Update increase the Floor Area Ratio in commercial zones to allow for greater development on commercial corridors for residential/mixed-use projects in lieu of the Height District 1 limitation currently in place. Ground floor uses should activate the pedestrian environment. All ground floor parking should be lined with habitable uses toward the commercial corridor and vehicular access should be located from an alley, where available. As previously stated, PNC encourages a commercial corridor activation program to include storefront beautification and landscaping programs along commercial boulevards and medians.

Figure 2. ZIMAS of Overland Avenue/Venice Boulevard intersection





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Open Space

The Venice Boulevard median is zoned for Open Space (see Figures 1 and 2). This area is utilized as a public right-of-way. While we would look forward to a coordinated landscaping program in the Venice Boulevard median, we recommend removing the Open Space designation in the median to allow for greater development on Venice Boulevard without needing to seek relief from transitional height requirements.

That being said, our open space is extremely limited. We hope to see the creation of new open space, if possible. We also hope that Community Plan update will address open space access. There are nearby open spaces in Mar Vista and Rancho Park, but these are difficult to access without a personal vehicle.

Increase Housing Opportunity

Medium Income/Workforce Housing

New development should include restricted affordable housing for medium income and workforce housing. The Transit Oriented Communities program does not include medium income and workforce housing inclusionary options for development incentives. We hope to see the Low and Medium Income brackets represented in our community in addition to the Very Low and Extremely Low Income units.

Home Ownership

Current development targets the renter community. We recommended incentivizing creative opportunities for home ownership including new residential condominiums, condominium conversions and Small Lot Subdivision projects.

We would like to see the Community Plan Update provide some flexibility for current homeowners in single-family zones to create income opportunities on their lots by developing one to three units in their rear yards, if space is available.



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Guidelines for Neighborhood Appropriate Developments

The Palms Neighborhood Council has approved Guidelines for Neighborhood Appropriate Developments that addresses basic good-neighbor policies including off-site construction parking and pest control. Please consider these guidelines while updating the Community Plan.

Thank you so much for your attention to our neighborhood. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or if you would like to coordinate an outreach event in our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Palms Neighborhood Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison Regan".

Alison Regan

President

CC: Paul Koretz, Council District 5
Aviv Kleinman, Council District 5
Kinikia Gardner, Department of City Planning
Diego Janacua, Department of City Planning



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Exhibit "A"

Map of TOC Projects in the Palms Neighborhood Council Area





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Exhibit "A" Continued

Table of TOC Projects in the Palms Neighborhood Council

ADDRESS	CASE NUMBER	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	STATUS
3642 S MOTOR AVE	ADM-2018-1441-TOC	6-story residential project with 62 dwelling units.	In plan check.
3739 S MOTOR AVE	ADM-2018-5351-TOC	5-story mixed-use project with 30 dwelling units.	In plan check.
3451 S MOTOR AVE	ADM-2018-6238-TOC	5-story mixed-use project with 30 dwelling units.	In plan check.
3535 S OVERLAND AVE	ADM-2018-868-TOC		Administrative review complete
3739 S CARDIFF AVE	DIR-2017-5455-TOC	6-story residential project with 74 dwelling units.	LOD Issued
3678 S OVERLAND AVE	DIR-2018-1136-TOC-WDI-SPR	Mixed-use project with 187 dwelling units and 3,864 sf of commercial.	LOD Issued
3716 S MOTOR AVE	DIR-2018-3014-TOC	7-story mixed-use project with 34 dwelling units.	LOD Issued
10412 W VENICE BLVD	DIR-2018-3021-TOC	Mixed-use project with 79 dwelling units and 1,145 sf commercial.	LOD Issued
10150 W VENICE BLVD	DIR-2018-3536-TOC	6-story mixed use projet.	Under Planning review.
3716 S BENTLEY AVE	DIR-2018-4296-TOC	6-story residential prject with 17 dwelling units.	Under Planning review.



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10524 W WOODBINE ST	DIR-2018-4752- TOC	6-story residential project with 33 dwelling units.	LOD Issued
10375 W WASHINGTON BLVD	DIR-2018-6322- TOC-SPR	Mixed-use project with 108 dwellin units and 3,600 sf of commercial.	Under Planning review.
3766 S MOTOR AVE	DIR-2018-6691- TOC	6-story mixed-use building with 36 dwelling units and 458 sf of commercial.	Under Planning review.
3641 S MOTOR AVE	DIR-2018-7340- TOC	30-unit apartment building.	Under Planning review.
3818 S DUNN DR	PAR-2018-5737- TOC		Administrative review complete
3565 S OVERLAND AVE	PAR-2018-6947- TOC		PAR in progress.
10015 W WASHINGTON BLVD	PAR-2018-7137- TOC		PAR in progress.