

Summary of January 24th East Venice Plan Meeting Public Comments

Below are the summary bullet points for the Committee's January 24th meeting focusing on the East Venice subarea in no order of ranking. Following that are the public comments made during that meeting.

Planning Process Related:

- There's no vision for Venice in the plan. It's a cookie cutter plan that can be used anywhere.
- The plans the City is proposing don't add any more housing than we already have the ability to have with the current zoning.
- We need to create change from meaningful numbers. We're not being told what the requirement is for Venice, which puts everybody in a difficult position. The City needs to provide current housing capacity given DB, TOC, ADU, SB 9, etc.
- We need to create a map of our community that identifies things we want in Venice and to transmit to future generations, such as parks, public art, memorials.
- The Urban Forest Management Plan must be integrated into the community plans.
- Every new multi-housing infill development should have 56% affordable housing, which is according to SCAG's income level housing allocation for Los Angeles.

Neighborhood Related:

- Venice is a neighborhood, and we need to preserve our residential neighborhoods.
- We're definitely opposed to what City Planning is planning for Rose/PenMar or PenMar Park neighborhood.

Commercial Related:

- We don't want this commercialization and type of change in the E. Venice neighborhood.
- We already have commercial uses in our neighborhood and do not need or want more.
- There is a lot of vacant commercial in the area.
- Mixing residential and commercial is problematic as the business owners' priority is their bottom line and not the community and neighborhood they are inserting themselves into.

Parking and Infrastructure Related:

- If density is increased, will funding be provided for streets, parks, schools, bike lanes, etc.?
- Parking—at least one off-street parking space per unit, which cannot be converted to an ADU.
- Venice already has a deficiency in parking, and reducing or eliminating parking requirements would make it worse.
- The infrastructure deficit in the area is one of the biggest concerns.

Climate and Open Space:

- Climate resiliency should be the primary goal and standard against which everything is measured.
- We want trees and front yards, and we don't want construction to destroy the street trees, our green space and our urban forest that presently exist.
- Trees and green space must be protected, and must not be EXCEPTED for density bonuses.

Below are the public comments themselves:

Public Comment (Times are from recorder used by Committee Member):

10:36 Melissa McFadden, stakeholder on Rose Ave—referenced the poster on wall, showing how the high buildings being proposed in the current plan would look like as a result of upzoning, i.e. LEGO boxes, compared to what is there. (“The upzone of Rose Ave & Penmar Ave”). Can they do this on every lot? Can someone buy a whole block and do this? There is the element of the commercial and the ground floor--corner or mid-block store. There's no parking requirement plan available. How many of those can they string together? They haven't clarified what the business use would be. Would we be next door to a coffee house, smoke shop with the bright lights? What hours would be allowed? The plans they're proposing don't add any more housing than we already have the ability to have. We have 6,000 square foot lots on Rose. Many are already two lots. So, we already have the ability to go 4 stories. We already have SB 9 to do 4 units. Paola did an analysis and according to her count, we can now build more than what they're proposing. It's a bad plan all along. We already have commercial in our neighborhood.

13:57 Chris Von, Venice, 60 years—can you tell us how the questionnaire relates to the plan--# stories on Washington, # of square feet, a summary of what the plan is?

16:52 Sarah Wauters—I want to speak about green space and our urban forest. The graphic also illustrates what will happen to the greenery that we now enjoy if we build buildings of this sort. You can already see some of the multi-story buildings going up along Lincoln Blvd. that have no setback. There is not a single twig or a single tree because they have received an exception from the city because of the density. We should demand a vision of buildings that would have setbacks that include the existing greenery we have. This can be built into our code. Right now, the City is doing an Urban Forest Management Plan (Rachel Malarich is City Forester). That plan should be integrated with community plan—would include setbacks, trees in setbacks, a requirement for an 8% tree coverage within private property. Even if a second story, they would have a cutout where mature trees can grow and shade and provide privacy for the people who live in the lower buildings. Without that green space, the people who live here now, and the people in the new taller buildings will be miserable—their psyches will suffer, their air quality will suffer, and their cooling will suffer, as everything that trees and green space provide us now will be wiped out, unless we tell them our vision is we want trees and front yards, and we don't

want construction to destroy the street trees that presently exist. We have to be very firm and very clear in the plan that trees and green space must be protected, and it doesn't get EXCEPTED by density bonuses.

20:08 Sean O'Brien, Venice Stakeholder—if I recall back in the 60's when they developed a lot of properties throughout L.A., parking wasn't required. We're making the same mistake now that we made 50-60-70 years ago. Parking should be a big issue. To allow these giant buildings, with zero parking...we're just repeating bad policy that we're already suffering today. Venice already has a deficiency in parking, and this would just make it worse.

21:11 Ralph Santalucia, lives on Rose—last month went door to door collecting signatures concerning this particular issue. 3 days on 5 blocks. Only one person was interested in the changes proposed by City Planning. Every single other person wants it to stay the way it house been. I've lived in my house for 51 years. I pay my taxes and everyone around me pays their taxes. We didn't ask for these changes. I feel like the City is trying to meet some goal the state or federal government has required to increase apartments. We don't want it on our street, and we have a right to say something. We're paying taxes, it's our homes, and we have a right to defend our homes. As far as these commercial stores...we don't need any. Lincoln Blvd is so loaded with stores and so many empty spots. We've got Smart 'N Final, we've got all sorts of stores. We can't walk one block to a store? We don't need them between the blocks and at the corners. This is ridiculous. I don't even know if it's going to go anywhere but I don't know who is going to be listening, because if the City has an agenda already to increase the amount of units, I feel like they won't listen to our goals as they aren't interested in our goals. But I am interested in our goals and everybody else here is too.

23:23 Shannon—question or comment for the city. Can we ask, strategically, why this is the proposal in the first place? Can they come back and tell us how many commercial uses in the proximity are vacant and why there is a need for more? It would be helpful to understand the rationale behind the proposal. Similarly, with regards to the multi-family housing, especially if you drive down Lincoln, not necessarily in East Venice but especially in Santa Monica, I'm curious to know the price points for the rentals as it doesn't seem like it's affordable housing. I'm curious what the multi-family housing would be in East Venice as it's likely those rentals are now too high and vacant. I want to demand the City tell us what they already see, what's available to us, and why they believe there is a need for more.

24:55 Naomi: I can answer part of that. We ARE under a mandate from the state. The state needs to build 455,000 units in the county. There's a mandate to respond to that. There's a question of how many units in each council district that hasn't yet been answered. Their proposal is mixed-use commercial and housing density bonuses, which is supposed to increase the affordability/availability. And so, there are questions, pros and cons on both sides as to whether anything they're proposing meets those demands. The community is concerned about the impacts of the proposals on the existing community—how we live, impact on the community, open space, land use, impacts of climate and all of that, in the face of trying to answer the demands of these proposals. One of our approaches is to get from you your

preferences in terms of some of the things being proposed. That's the survey. Is there a gap from what we have vs. what they think we need? Is there an ability to address those issues? What I'm hearing is that nobody wants change. My doctorate is in leadership and change and so I understand that! And so, it's a process. What's really important here is that we do hear from you. I believe in the power of the people. I really do. I believe in the voice, not just to yell and scream, but to have a plan. Not just to say we don't want that and that, but to have a plan to say what we do want, so we have something to fight for, to be rational about, to go forward with. And so that's what we're trying to do here. In reference to your question, I don't think we can say "none" due to the state mandate.

29:00 Alix—the Public Policy Institute released the housing report in August. If we're just building density and losing population, that will be problematic. We need to create change from meaningful numbers.

30: 07 Pia Altavilla, lives in Rose Penmar area—I support neighbors who don't want high structures. There are a lot of children in our area, neighbors who have been there for over 50 years. It's a residential area and we want it safe for our children.

30:56 David Ewing—questions: Regarding the RHNA state required numbers—the county has been allotted a number, but we're being asked to make decisions on the basis of not being able to keep things the same but we're not being told what the requirement is for Venice, which puts everybody in a difficult position. We're being asked for an answer without being asked the right question. There's a complication for the City, that if they did give us a number, it would become very hard for the City to back off the number and balance our neighborhood against someone else's when everyone has a number that they're clinging to.

32:51 Rachel Posentia, live on Flower Ave East of Lincoln, first block—a third generation Venice resident, supporting senior mother and raising 7-year-old daughter. Venice is a neighborhood, and we need to preserve our neighborhoods. On my block we have 14 children. Come out on a Sunday afternoon and they're outside playing. With respect to the corner stores and the mid-block stores....We live behind Med Men, Prince Street Pizza, a Pilates studio, Sally Mae, and St. Josephs (that's another story for another time). By my house, there are empty pizza boxes lying on the street, Med Men bags, I get a lot of Med Men paraphernalia stuffed into my mailbox daily, thrown into my yard. No one cares. All the customers come and park in front of my house. When it's raining, I have to walk a block with groceries. We need to think about our neighborhoods, our children and our seniors and how to protect them. We have so many people coming and going, they hit and dent our cars all the time. They have events in the parking lot at 800 Flower. They park all the way down the street. They have events in the parking lot that are amplified, they go past curfew, and they don't clean up. The commercial property business owners are saying their businesses aren't making it as we don't support them. But they don't notify us about their events, they expect us to just suck it up. It's about their bottom line and not about the community and the neighborhood that they're inserting themselves into. (And, the corner store is vacant and available.)

35:45 Erica Moore—I have had a business in East Venice for almost 40 years. I'm a renter at my business and I rent my home on Penmar. One of my biggest concerns is the infrastructure deficit that we have. And am concerned about the types of projects they are putting, like the one that's two doors down from my business that's been going on for 7 years. It's uninhabitable, it's uncompleted, and is not providing housing. And we had no idea it was coming. It's totally devastated the building I'm in. There's one across the street that's also got a lot of problems. Anything that's being proposed should be vetted. They're getting away without having to do the CEQA reports, including proper traffic studies and shade studies. All the things that are supposed to be required are put aside due to the different density bonuses and TOC regulations. It's impacting all neighborhoods in a very negative way. The bottom line is you can't put aside things like geological reports, because that shows what could happen. Right now on Walgrove there are a ton of pot holes in a very newly asphalted area. That should be lasting for many years. It already has problems and it's a 2-lane street, a major artery. It's due to poor construction.

38:05 Valerie Bono, lives on Walnut Ave, 1 block east of Penmar, since 2009—I'm trying to follow your presentation. I want to be responsible in filling the survey out. What is the maximum square footage for a single family home now? Is it possible for us to go through the survey together. [The current height limit is 30' or 3 floors on Rose. The maximum square footage for a home is .45 of the square footage of the lot.]

49:35 Sarah Waters—we should simply say no density bonuses in our neighborhood. It's too much uncertainty.

52:20 Paola Pini, a member of EVNA and am on the Westside Community Plan Advisory Board but am here as an individual. There's no vision for Venice in the plan. It's a cookie cutter plan that can be used anywhere. They use very aspirational words--share, enhance, promote--but there is no actual policy that protects us from anything etc. To me, climate resiliency should be the primary goal and standard against which everything is measured. Every policy and code must respond to it. The City should set measurable goals to be checked in 5-10 year intervals to assess progress and adjust goals if necessary. Data, data, data, we've been asking for data for the past 5 years. They ask us to make recommendations but we don't have the information in order to make recommendations. The City needs to provide current housing capacity given TOC, ADU, SB 9, etc. There is one chart in this 100+ page policy—a 2045 SCAG projection, we're now at 34,100 and will grow to 45,700. The SCAG projection tells us that in the next 10 years we're going to grow by approximately 10,000.

We need to create a map of our community that identifies things we want in Venice and to transmit to future generations, such as parks, public art, memorials. And those maps would be used to actually create a plan that proposes sustainable growth, public spaces, pedestrian and bike routes, public parking, open spaces, and community amenities. Right now what they are proposing is the same thing everywhere. They're proposing mixed use—call it corner shops, call it villages, they have all these beautiful, cute names. It's all the same, commercial, with housing on top. Only when we know what we want to preserve and celebrate can we come up with a

sustainable way to grow. Housing--every new multi-housing infill development should have 56% affordable housing, which is according to SCAG's income level housing allocation for Los Angeles. Parking—at least one off-street parking space per unit, which cannot be converted to an ADU. All off street parking should have AV chargers.

57:37 Lisa Bartley, East of Rose/Lincoln—want to reiterate what everybody has said, I think we're all saying similar things. Sarah is a rockstar. The green spaces are so important to me. I can see the trees from the golf course, which brings me joy, grounds me. When we hear stories about inner cities and how they're trying to find shade for schools that are east of here and downtown....we have shade and green spaces, let's keep them. We need public spaces that are open to people. Kids need to be able to be safe and walking around. Maybe on some busier streets, maybe there's mixed-use building. At the elementary school, we met with City Planners and talked about Rose East of Lincoln. They thought it was like it is west of Lincoln where there are apartment buildings and stores, but east of Lincoln is a neighborhood. That's very important. It's a neighborhood with trees, children, sidewalks and families. We all bought or rent there for those specific reasons.

1:00:12 Daniel Wojack, homeowner on Rose Ave—we're definitely opposed to what they're planning for Rose/Penmar or Penmar Park neighborhood (I don't call it E. Venice neighborhood). It seems like the City tried to sneak in some commercialization a few years ago—big giant posters hanging from the light posts with ads, used for LACMA—big giant 30' things hanging down from the posts. They're now doing a Coachella West on Friday nights at the golf course. I didn't mind during COVID but now every weekend with 2000+ under 25's roaming the neighborhood intoxicated, it's getting kind of old. Where grew up in Chicago, had little corner taverns, corner stores. That was great because people didn't own cars, we all took public transportation. But as we know, brick and mortar is dead. We don't need more stores, we're got vacancies up and down Lincoln Blvd. We've got the Fox Theater. If you want to build one of those big multi-story panel houses, up 15 floors, like where some of my relatives used to live, we called it the rabbit cage. And where are the cars going to go? Riding a bike on Venice Blvd without the plastic cones is dangerous. We don't want this commercialization and change in the E. Venice neighborhood at all.

1:02:50 Linda Poddich, live in E. Venice—I agree with what everybody has said. Is there, counting backwards, an idea of when the City Council plans to vote? I understand you're all getting input from the various Venice areas, you'll give your recommendation to the VNC, the VNC will make recommendations [Naomi—they will endorse our recommendation and move it forward]. That can take a lot of time. Then we propose something to the City Council. What's the chance they're going to just blow you all off? [Naomi—we're not going to let them blow us off.] [Robin--Our own council office will be involved.] I just want to make sure we meet the schedule. And when it's time to go in front of City Council, call on us to come out and speak.

1:05:00 Melissa—Lincoln Place is 35 acres in the middle of E. Venice, behind Ralphs. A few RSO units are there right now. It set vacated for 10 years. Each section/pod is 4 units, 1-2 stories. One section is 3 stories. Those are really nice and I don't see why they can't continue that

throughout the 35 acres. Doesn't take up any green space, that extra floor on the top. It has parking. Why can't they develop it more? It seems like a logical place to add units [Committee: but it's historic and can't be changed].

1:06:50 Sean O'Brien—The whole idea about affordable housing that the City is selling us is a joke. They use a formula to cap the beginning rent. In Venice, it's over \$2,000 per month per 1-bedroom unit. When they say it's affordable housing, to me it's actually market rate.

1:08:00 Sean Silva, Council Office—there's no direct schedule yet for City Council review of the Plans. We're expecting that by the end of this month, or sometime next month, the release of the third set of draft maps that reflect the community plan update process. Those maps in the presentation were from a previous iteration from the summer. Since that time, we got a lot of community feedback--for the last 4 months of the year his office held listening sessions where they invited members from the 4 communities that are going through community plan updates and asked them to tell the Council Office what they want to see and what they see that they do or don't like. The upshot of that is they're going to be releasing this third set of maps. Ideally, it will require more tinkering, but ideally it will be reflective of what the community has already asked for. They gave a report on that to Vince Bertoni. This is a process that is ongoing. When they get through these third plans, we still need to provide input. At some point they will start the environmental impact report. That is a separate but parallel process that can go on even as they're making changes, because the EIR doesn't analyze specifics but takes the total amount of units or commercial and industrial zoning and analyzes the impacts of that. Whereas the Plans are free to keep being changed, as long as we stay within that maximum. The Plan process can continue with feedback back and forth while the EIR happens. This process was started in 2018 and was delayed heavily by COVID. You can look at the recent City Council vote for the Boyle Heights Community Plan, which took 8 years. With our COVID interruption it will be more like 10 years before the Plan is actually finished. That's conjecture but this is not a fast process, fortunately or unfortunately.

1:12:35 ??--Just want the trail around the golf course to be opened up again. They said they were trimming the trees, they got the homeless people out, and now the ugly fence is there. No one can walk their dog over there or appreciate the beautiful golf course we have right there.

1:13:20 Chris, lives in E. Venice—if we agree to some of these minimal changes, which seem like will happen either way and have a negative neighborhood, will the neighborhood receive anything from the City or state in terms of extra funding for the parks, streets, schools, bike lanes, etc. in the neighborhood?

Committee comments:

1:14:52 Frank Murphy—would like to re-emphasize, in the survey there are questions about the context in which the survey is being asked. There are many issues pertaining to housing....not the least of which are homelessness, housing availability and gentrification. The City has been

tasked with adding more dwelling units. We need to be aware of the broader issues, what Venice was and is, in order to shape what Venice could be.

1:17:44 Alix Gucovsky—environmental issues can't just stop at the trees. We need to remember the birds, the ocean...the algae bloom. And if we put in too much density the Hyperion plant will have issues. Our frustration is being echoed throughout the City. I believe we need affordable housing but don't believe we have a housing shortage. There are a million vacant units in California and the population is expected to decline. It's about how we create a vibrant community—it means we have children and young people, places where they can meet, green space, housing for our young single people....diversity across the board, not just one bedroom units to service the kids who are making \$150K a year.

1:19:55 Mark Mack—zoning is like a jackhammer going over the City. There are examples in other countries where neighborhood zoning, "fine zoning," can work. A good example is the Venice Canal overlay that happened. It increased the value of the area. The primitive methods of zoning need to be revised. I don't like what's happened in the last few years in a developer driven market where big boxes of no distinction are created all over the place, and those are by right kinds of developments. They don't initiate any variances but are allowed under the zoning. We should work on finer zoning grains or areas. Zoning based on solar is a good example.

1:22:30 Robin Rudisill—I especially want to recognize Paola for the work she's done. Very concerned that the first draft of the Venice Community Plan is so cookie cutter and hoping that with the input gathered from the communities by the council office we'll see something very different. I think there has been a huge overreaction by the state legislature, not only with the RHNA numbers but with the parking regulations. Sean O'Brien said it—in a few years we're going to look back and say this was a huge mistake and then we'll be knee jerking the other way. It's so short-sighted. I agree with 56% affordable housing as per SCAG as the current percentages required for Density Bonus or TOC projects are never going to get us enough affordable housing. Commercialization of our residential neighborhoods is just wrong as affordable housing will be lost. We need more housing, so it makes no sense to change things on a residential block into commercial, especially near Lincoln with all of the underutilized commercial.

1:24:30 Richard Stanger—with these 8 community meetings and with the online survey that should go out to 6-7,000 people, we hope to have enough data so that when the planners ask what people want in East Venice or Southeast Venice, etc., we have more than enough information. We can tell them we know what they want. Until we catch up with what they are doing, they're ahead of us. Once we get this information and evaluate it and put it into usable form, then we'll be ahead of the process. That's why these meetings we're having are so important.

1:25:40 Ed Ferrer—the City wants more money to run the City and looks to take advantage of Venice. Case in point—what happened to Culver Blvd. The City moved into the swamp land and

they said people wouldn't drive. But now there are traffic jams on Lincoln as well as the short cuts. I do hope that the City will hear us.

1:25:45 Steve Williams—a couple things stood out for me. Alix told the story of the 9 RSO units getting knocked down to become 77 units with only 7 affordable units—only 10%, with a net loss of 2 affordable units! We're having an affordable housing crisis, not a housing crisis. We're going to have to make some choices to have more units on major thoroughfares, where it's already built out a bit. Venice is special, that's the other thing. We're not just any other generic town. This is a special community, the history is very unique, and the integration of different cultures and communities here is huge. We want to preserve what's left. We've lost so much in the last 15 years, through gentrification. Let's try to slow down and hold onto what's left and even make it better. We don't want another Playa Vista, from Lincoln to the sea.

1:29:06 Dr. Naomi Nightingale—I was raised in Venice, and my family has been here since the 40's. Even though we're talking about what we don't want, some of this is already happening. So, be involved right now. When there're land use issues going on, planning permits being approved and things happening in our communities that we don't want, let's attend these meetings, let's hear our voices being raised, not just for the future but for what is happening right now, every day. The planning dept. is approving reuse and tearing down buildings and building oversized houses in our communities. Let's be active now, let's talk about what we want. I do believe in the power of the people. I was raised in the 60's. I don't mind kicking in doors, but the reason I got a PhD is that I learned that I needed to try a different method--to learn how to articulate and speak with a loud voice and leave the big stick at home. We must continue to come together and work together on the issues that you're raising that are all important. Yet, we're going to have a battle--the City has a Plan and as Richard said they're a little ahead of us on what they would like to see...but it's our community. And when we talk about buildings and houses and mixed use and traffic...I'm talking about the people and the culture of our communities and families. It's culture and tradition and neighborliness, it's knowing your next-door neighbor and being able to embrace relationships that have been there for years. I appreciate the opportunity to listen to you and talk about the work we're going to do together. I believe we're going to win!

1:32:20 ?? No tourists will want to come to Venice if we're a bunch of boxes and high rises.