

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Planning Process

In planning for our community, we have to think about other Californians, in Riverside or Needles or wherever, that want to come to Venice and see Venice, because they have an image of Venice that is attractive to them, and in fact this is the case worldwide.

Our community planning must include remembering the history of Venice, because it was the people of Oakwood that built the Venice Canal that attracted the people that led to the quirkiness that now is known worldwide.

There are four different areas that are getting a community plan update, and the density is being increased, I'm assuming, in all of them. But I'm wondering about the neighborhoods that have very low density presently. Why is the density being pushed on to Venice when Bel Air and Pacific Palisades have so much room?

Zoning is a very rough tool that was introduced last century to control health, traffic and building heights as well as use. Times like today face some different challenges. Now climate and gentrification have become bigger problems, and they may need different solutions.

Everyone who attended the meeting is in agreement that the changes recommended for Oakwood are terrible.

The stories need to be spelled out. We need to actually have an absolute height. We need a really firm measurement. Stories is much too vague. We need transparency.

Residential

Oakwood is one of the most special, and it's one of the only intentional, communities of color out of our entire 840 miles or so of California coastline. And there is nothing like it in this world. And when we really think of Venice Beach and what everyone comes here for, and the movies and everything it is, it's not this new bullshit they're building. It's the soul, it's the character, it's the people that have been there. It's the craftsman houses. It's majestic...it's like a little fairy tale that's being destroyed. So, I just want to say, and I want to put on record that I like Oakwood exactly how it is.

So here, Venice is protecting Milwood, but here again not Oakwood.

I want to encourage any of you who haven't seen the changes that are impacting your neighborhoods, come to the 900 block of Marco and see what's happening when you have unlimited FAR. Because we went from three single story homes to eight double and more with a deck, there is no more skyline, the tree canopy is gone,

I live in north of Rose. I'm very concerned that the compatibility with the existing neighborhood and adjoining lots is completely being disregarded. Again, the city is only stating maxima, which are even more egregious and bigger than what they used to be without the existing neighborhood taken into consideration. I do like that we have the FAR ratio, because that is really something that we can compare ourselves to with adjoining lots and so forth. But a FAR of 1 and 3 stories proposed for my little street, which is Sixth Avenue, where we have primarily single-story houses...that is egregious. What the city is proposing goes against anything that we have and what Venice should stand for.

What is driving a lot of these changes is the requirement that's coming down from the state and from the city to provide a massive amount of new residential units because we have an incredible shortage of residential units. As a resident of Oakwood, I'm a little concerned that it seems like we are going to be tasked with providing the majority of those units, and we already provide the majority of RSOs and affordable units. I don't like the idea that we seem to be arguing between individual communities in Venice about what we don't want in the Canals, what we don't want in North Venice, so let's just shove the four stories and the increased FARs over to Oakwood.

I would ask for no lot consolidations anywhere in Venice above ground. You can put three lots together below ground, as you see on Market Street in the 200 block where they have ramped parking and they do all that underneath the building. They can tie them together so you can park more cars, but above ground it stays with the same architectural integrity we have throughout Venice.

The question is--where does the community want to go? Does it want to remain a bedroom community or, particularly in Oakwood, do you want it all to be large, probably three lot consolidations, because that's more economical, more profit for the developer?

I want to make sure that we maintain what is called transitional heights. You're going to see that in Venice on Lincoln Boulevard because next to Lincoln there is single family residential.

In Oakwood, there is a place where a large number of people moved into one little building with no parking. They just rent a room and then they all come with their cars and park in the neighborhood, and it's hard for the neighborhood to find any parking. I'm working on a project to redevelop our house. It hasn't had any work done to it since the 1920s and I'm trying to create two ADUs. The City is requiring me to create more parking, and it doesn't make any sense. How could a big box with all these people not have any parking requirements, but for somebody that's been in the neighborhood for so long, they require me to create enough parking for an extra ADU I need just so I can keep the lights on.

You hear the "realtor speak" about the Venice vibe. They talk a lot about the Venice vibe. And it gets me because all these proposed changes by City Planning are pointed to completely destroy the so-called Venice vibe, which is, as we know, folks who have been around here a while. Even with all the changes that we've seen, it's still mixed enough culturally and economically that it's interesting and vital and it still has some of that vibe. It's been diminished a bit, but it's still something. Yet everything that we're hearing about this plan and the density is the incentivizing of destroying all the rest of the existing affordable housing to build it out to these brand-new buildings that are going to be unaffordable. Everything's pointed to just destroy that completely

and create what we've all feared all along, which is the Laguna Beach-ization of Venice. That's kind of what I see this all as being. So, it's upsetting and I'm glad there's other people that are upset. We should be preserving the existing affordable and historic housing and not incentivizing the destruction of it.

We need to be sure City Planning keeps walk street height restrictions the same, at 28'.

Commercial

There is an 8.0 FAR on Lincoln. If you have an 8-story building and a FAR of 8.0, that means that the entire lot is livable eight stories high, which means you don't have parking, you don't have infrastructure, you don't have stairs, you don't have corridors, you don't have utility rooms, nothing. It must be a mistake.

Lincoln Blvd at 8 stories seems high, but where else can we put the needed units?

For commercial, the building can come up to the property line, zero setback from the sidewalk. Let's impose a setback so everybody can put out their chairs and have very European alfresco dining or breakfasting.

I'm very concerned about the city's proposed change from residential to commercial along Venice Boulevard. That's going in the wrong direction. Many of you know about the Mello Act, a state law in the Coastal Zone that prohibits demo or conversion of residential structures for nonresidential projects. So, under that law, I don't think the city can even do this. They're worried about people being able to walk to stores and services, but that area already can do that because they're right there by Lincoln. So, it doesn't make any sense to change to commercial there.

The new proposed Venice Blvd "neighborhood center," as depicted in pink, stretches a couple of blocks into the residential area adjacent to Venice Blvd. Streets like Brenta and Lucille north of Venice are quite narrow with small homes and some small (mostly 2-story) apartments. Anything higher/denser would be overwhelming. And streets like Victoria have older homes, some of which I would recommend for preservation. If the mixed use could be limited strictly to those facing Venice Blvd, that would be better.

Industrial

Presently the land use is all Light Industrial. The city proposes to make a lot of that space Hybrid Industrial, which means that you have industrial on the ground floor and then residential above. Now, a lot of those areas are warehousing, trucking and other things like that. And a lot of the lots they're dividing up within the property line. I've walked around this area and what they're proposing and what actually exists is a little bit in conflict. But the idea is that, where they can, they want to put residential above Light Industrial. In the 2001 Venice Land Use Plan they point out that Light Industrial is a very important resource within Venice that needs to be protected. However, in the meantime the City hasn't protected it, and now they're really cutting into the land that's now designated as Light Industrial.

Parking and Traffic

I'm concerned about the traffic that cuts through our neighborhood, especially Oakwood and Milwood. You have people going up Rose, down 7th, down Oakwood, and up Palms. And during

rush hours, it's bumper to bumper traffic half the time. So, I recommend the consideration of how to make our neighborhoods more of a maze so that people won't do cut through or some other type of maybe one-way streets or something to alleviate some of that activity.

This plan is very unnuanced. It doesn't show that streets like Broadway, Santa Clara, and Westminster are really narrow. Some of them are so narrow they're one way. Can you imagine Santa Clara with a four-story building, a five-foot sidewalk? Where are all those people going to walk? I live on Brooks, and Brooks, as it is, is a nightmare because it's one of the wider streets and we've got a lot of traffic, but we don't have enough room for trees. So, you're walking right next to all of this moving traffic. So, I'd really like to see this more nuanced.

Environment

We only have 15% tree canopy. One of the proposals you'll be hearing from the Venice Arbor Committee is that instead of doing bay windows that go out, you do cut ins off of the setback and you can do a tree there unless there's no setback and you lose opportunities to include trees in your planning.

Let's eliminate any possible discretionary adjustment out there so we don't remove setbacks that are actually critical for our greenery, for our mental health, and for our quality of life.

We accumulated three lots together and my wife was a florist and a landscaper. We built this huge garden. Isn't it ironic now as we reach the end of the line, our little paradise could be affected by a monster building they're putting up on a tiny lot next door.

Density

A little more density along the avenues might be nicer, like along 5th and 6th and 4th, potentially, because they're much wider streets. This proposed plan is so unnuanced. It's just like, slam, here, take it Oakwood, you're going to take all the density.

I'd like to suggest that in the plan we put a limit of a maximum unit size so that you can't have more than, say, a 2,000 square foot unit. And the way the FAR ratio will work with a maximum unit size might increase the number of units and maybe help solve the housing crisis that way.

I'm trying to balance density and scale and character with how we can provide more opportunities for people than just super expensive single-family units. So, I'm thinking that if the height is maybe a bit taller, like on the corridors such as Lincoln or some of those, maybe that's a way to get a bit more density.

What I see going on in our neighborhood is that we went from a neighborhood of families and a lot of people living in the buildings, to a neighborhood of middle-class transients, young people who can afford to rent their one bedroom for a year or two and then when it gets too expensive they move someplace else. Or they're really, really wealthy people who build these enormous houses that only have a few people living in them. So, the additional development hasn't increased the population density.

My kids can't afford to live in Venice. They're very hard working. How do you protect young people who want to create a community, families who want to live in a community and be part of

a community? That's a much more difficult question than simply giving developers a chance to build bigger buildings. Ultimately, I agree with the goal of providing more housing in the state, but just plunking it down willy-nilly in every community, so no particular politician has to bear the brunt of the blame, it doesn't really work for what you want to do, what you need to do.

When you up zone property, you increase the value of the property, which means the landlords sell, people lose their RSO housing, and it gets replaced with a different class of people. That is the economic reality of up zoning, and not equity.

It does seem incredibly unfair that Oakwood is getting the brunt of all the density.

Infrastructure

We need to think about the climate change impacts. I hate to see when developers don't have to really look into the environmental impacts. It's so, so important to consider those. I'm also concerned about people's utilities. Do we really have the pipes and stuff for the infrastructure?

Venice is the second most dense coastal community, I think after Hermosa. But we have tourism! Not only do we have residents, but we have tourism. So, our communities double in population on the weekends. Where is the infrastructure for all of this?

Affordable Housing

Will you please commit to having these affordable, thank you very much, affordable units specifically defined on these different planning sheets. On these plans from the city, affordable is just a generalized blanket statement.

If you have a density bonus, you should have it permanently for that property and not time limited. Also, there should be an increase in the amount of low-income rental unit requirements, not 10%, but closer to 25%.

It's not going to be a popular thing--but I would say either get rid of all RSOs or make every residential unit subject to the RSO restrictions, including inspections.

Average household income is an aggregate of everybody that lives here. So, you have to remember that when you bring in a lot of the new money, that ups the average income level. And what you have to think about when you up zone – and you put in 10 affordable units and 90 are at market rate – is that you now raise the average median income of your entire community. This is what will be used when they determine the rental cost of an affordable unit.

I love the low-income buildings in Oakwood, and the reason those fit in so well into our community is because they do have really large front yard setbacks. They have courtyards. I think those are model projects. There are three stories so they're not small, and I think they're pretty good neighbors.

As we see in Oakwood, housing for low income was achieved by a collaborative effort from government, neighborhood groups and developers receiving rent guarantees. As these guarantees run out a similar effort should be restarted.

We have the 15 buildings that are low income. We're going to start negotiating the contracts to be lifelong instead of 25-year increments. These are low-income buildings that service over 150, almost 200 families. We need your support. And we need letters from Ms. Bass and Ms. Parks to help us keep our community with the low-income housing on these 15 blocks. We need those low-income housing buildings. Making them market rate would put all those people out.

There was no real mention of affordability for or the need for apartments big enough for families.

There was lots of talk about development bonuses, but those bonuses should only be given to developers who are truly helping to solve LA's dire affordability crisis.

I'm a bit confused about what the city is proposing for the Plan because the law says that the Coastal Act and the Density Bonus Act, both state laws, must be harmonized. And so, we need to make sure that happens on a project-by-project basis, on a discretionary level, and not using the planning regulations.

Environmental Justice

What I see is institutional racism if they're going to do three lot ties in Oakwood. We all need to be treated the same. Why aren't three lot ties across the board? There's a problem here.

There was a large population of Mexican Americans in Oakwood. And that has dwindled because of gentrification, and people moving in with a lot of money and building these big monstrosities and not really giving back to the community, not even living in those buildings, not even being a part resident of those buildings, and not understanding the community, how we feel about it. They just do what they want, and we have to stand idle because the city is allowing it because they want money. That's all the city cares about is money. And what we care about is our community, our people, our folks. And I just want to see us get together and shoot down some of this stuff that seems pretty outrageous, like those bonuses and stuff. So, hopefully we come to a good future for Venice.

The City is pretending that we want equity, but they're not going to do it.

Below is the complete version of the Public Comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

(Times are from recorder used by committee)

[00:37:44] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** A lot of information, and I know there's a lot of questions because I heard a lot of murmuring in the background.

[00:38:28] **Lydia Ponce:** Lydia Ponce, Milwood. Scott Wiener is attempting to undo the environmental protection--NEPA, the National Environmental Protection Act--and attack the Coastal Act, for those who do not know...all for the name of affordable housing, which is a Trojan horse because that has to include the environmental protections. They're looking to build a hydrogen plant at Ballona Wetlands. What does that have to do with this? Beirut 2020. Remember that explosion? We have to be aware of these things that are coming through, and all of this is for

naught, but we have to put our two pennies worth, our opinions in here. We know too many developers who cried crocodile tears in the last 30 years about off-site units that they still owe. So, how are they going to build up higher and forget--convenient amnesia--forget what they owe the community, not just Venice, but at large, Los Angeles as a whole. This three-lot tie...thank you. Murez, Nunez, Newhouse and Reed, who are not here. They're not here because they already have a done deal. They've been talking behind closed doors downtown. Giving this kind of bonus to these developers who owe us still? It's too little. They're not giving up much. And lastly, if you want to read about how this whole thing started with the NEPA and the environmental protection and the way that they're going to bring in the Trojan horse housing, take a look at Mother Jones, Bill McKibben, "Yes, in my Backyard," back about six months ago, Mother Jones, Bill McKibben, because it's a whole nation and statewide campaign to really bring it the way that they want. Thank you.

[00:40:42] **Sarah Mahar:** Sarah Mahar, Venice. Born, raised, conceived and hopefully I'll die here. I love the Oakwood community. And I just want to say, out of all the communities, and I'm probably going to get a lot of flak for this, I feel like Oakwood is one of the most special. And it's one of the only intentional communities of color out of our entire 840 miles or so of California coastline. And there is nothing like it in this world. And when we really think of Venice Beach and what everyone comes here for, and the movies and everything it is, it's not this new bullshit they're building. It's the soul, it's the character, it's the people that have been there. It's the craftsman houses. It's majestic...it's like a little fairy tale that's being destroyed. So, I just want to say, and I want to put on record that I like Oakwood exactly how it is. Thank you.

[00:41:55] **Janet Smith:** Hi, I'm Janet Smith. I live on a walk street in Venice and have done for 35 years. It's a six-unit courtyard building, and I want to encourage any of you who haven't seen the changes that are impacting your neighborhoods, come to the 900 block of Marco and see what's happening when you have unlimited FAR. Because we went from three single story homes to eight double and more with a deck, there is no more skyline, the canopy is gone. And we are now--our property, which is a lovely courtyard with a beautiful low-rise building--we're now up for sale. And so, please come and take a look at what the difference is when your canopy is gone, and your skyline is gone. And follow us on Instagram: friends of Marco Court. Thank you.

[00:43:13] **Eileen Archibald:** Hi, I'm Eileen Bryant Archibald. Oakwood is my home, but I live in Presidents Row. What I see is institutional racism. If they're going to do three lot ties in Oakwood...we all need to be treated the same. We live in Venice of America. We don't live in Marina del Rey or Playa del Rey. I mean, I put in my zip code 90291 today and I could only get Playa Vista! I bought in Venice of America. So that's institutional racism. Why isn't it across the board? Three lot ties. There's a problem here. The height is ridiculous. The heights. And then, I'm a clinician. I worked in mental health for over 32 years. I've been reading the research on the people that are living in these buildings. They're not doing well. It's too institutionalized. There is not enough green space. There is not enough green space.

[00:44:34] **Inge Mueller:** Hi, Inge Mueller again. I'm also a long-time resident, even though I'm not born here. I came from Germany. I've been here 22 years in Venice, and I live in north of Rose, like I said. I'm very concerned that the compatibility with the existing neighborhood and adjoining lots is completely being disregarded. Again, the city is only stating maxima, which are even more egregious and bigger than what they used to be without the existing neighborhood taken into

consideration. I do like that we have the FAR ratio, because that is really something that we can compare ourselves to with adjoining lots and so forth. But a FAR of 1 and 3 stories in my little street, which is Sixth Avenue, where we have primarily single-story houses, and now a developer is planning a 12,000 square foot, 4 story, gigantic gigantrum that we're currently appealing to the city...that is egregious. And so, what the city is proposing goes against anything that we have and what Venice should stand for.

[00:45:46] **No name provided:** Who is the developer? LLC?

[00:45:47] **Inge Mueller:** The developer is a Westwood developer. An Armenian name. I can look it up for you. I can't remember right now, but he built like 8 story, 10 story tall buildings in Westwood and now he's putting it on our street in Venice. At least that's what he's trying to do every time. 6th Avenue north of Rose, 250 6th Avenue. Thank you.

[00:46:17] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** I'm hearing a lot of what we don't want. Please talk to us about what you do want. Please talk to us about what your preferences are for the area in which you live. This is Venice--Oakwood and Milwood. So, I'm hearing you about what you don't want. The plan focuses on land use, open space, and housing. Please talk to those areas specifically but say whatever else you want about what might be happening that you don't want. But since the plan focuses on those main areas particularly, then let's hear what your preferences are for those areas as it relates to what they propose, or even if they don't propose it, what it is that you would prefer. Thank you.

[00:47:08] **Bruce Birch:** Hi, I'm Bruce Birch. I live in Oakwood. Been there for three, four decades. I wasn't really planning on saying anything, but I guess what I want to bring up is I believe that what is driving a lot of these changes is the requirement that's coming down from the state and from the city to provide a massive amount of new residential units because we have an incredible shortage of residential units. As a resident of Oakwood, I'm a little concerned that it seems like we are going to be tasked with providing the majority of those units, and we already provide the majority of RSOs, we already provide the majority of affordables. And I don't like the idea that we seem to be arguing between individual communities in Venice about what we don't want in the canals, what we don't want in North Venice, so let's just shove it all over to Oakwood with the four stories and the increased FARs. I would like to see more equity from the rest of Venice, as an Oakwood resident. I'd like to see the rest of you guys step up because we're tired of carrying the water. And RSO properties are in the least enviable position to provide good quality housing because we have far more restrictions than a brand-new property that's being built. And personally--it's not going to be a popular thing--but I would say either get rid of all RSOs or make every residential unit subject to the RSO restrictions, which means every rental unit is subject to inspections, every Airbnb unit is subject to inspections, every ADU unit is subject to inspections. And where do ADUs fall into these planning changes and where do the vacation rentals fall into this? Those are my concerns.

[00:49:06] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** Thank you. If you want to speak, you're going to come over here and stand to my right. I'm asking Richard to speak a little bit because the gentleman brought this up. The state has mandated 465,000 units of total housing for the city of Los Angeles. And each council district has to allocate or look for what areas within their district that they're going to place housing. So, it's something for you to think about in terms of Venice, all of Venice. And I will say

that when I grew up, Venice was a 1.5 square mile area. It was not all of Venice as we know now. Venice for the community that I grew up in was from Lincoln west, California to Rose Avenue to Abbot Kinney or Main Street. That was it. That was the restricted covenant area wherein people of color, particularly African American people, could live, so the rest of Venice did not exist in our lives at that time. The 15 apartment buildings that you see [in Oakwood], or that you may not know were low-income apartment buildings if you're new to Venice, started to be built in 1970 as a result of Project Action, collaborating with HUD and private industry to build low income, very low-income apartment buildings in the Venice community. And one reason it was supported is because...and Richard's going to talk a little bit about that.

[00:51:19] **Richard Stanger:** In 1972, the citizens of California approved Prop 20, which was a coastal protection measure. And over the next three years, it required that California study the coast and point out both natural and man-made resources that needed protection. That report was made available in 1975, and in 1976, the legislature passed the California Coastal Act. The important point was that this study named 13 communities along the coast that were exceptional man-made resources that needed protection. And one of them was Venice because of its uniqueness. In the California Coastal Act, it basically says that these man-made resources should be protected for all people of California. So, although we're planning for our community, we have to think about other Californians, in Riverside or Needles or wherever, that want to come to Venice and see Venice, because they have an image of Venice that is attractive to them, and in fact this is the case worldwide. So, our community planning includes remembering the history of Venice, because without Oakwood, Venice probably would not exist because it was the people of Oakwood that built the Venice Canal that attracted the people that led to the quiriness that now is known worldwide.

[00:53:36] **Mark Ryavec:** Hi, my name is Mark Ryavec and I've been here for 35 years. I grew up in Santa Monica and I live in the Lost Canals district on Andalusia and Rialto. But I spent the last year with my friend Sarah and others planting trees in Oakwood, and they've gotten really a much better feel for that community. And I'd like this group and this panel to consider that in Venice we have several remaining bedroom communities. Oakwood is one, Milwood is one, Silver Triangle is one, and Oxford Triangle. And they are relatively low rise, relatively un-dense, and with the exception of those buildings you refer to, they are not large, three and four lot apartment buildings. This plan will do to Oakwood what those HUD buildings did to Oakwood. You will move from being single family residential over a period of years to being massive apartment buildings. Two things are going to happen, and I think Sarah alluded to one of them. We only have 15% tree canopy. If you allow this lot consolidation... Imagine that this is a footprint of a building. One of the proposals you'll be hearing from the Venice Arbor Committee is that instead of doing bay windows that go out, you do cut ins off of the setback and you can do a tree there unless there's no setback if it's just three buildings together. So, you lose opportunities to include trees in your planning. The other thing I would ask, if you want to know what I want, is no lot consolidations anywhere in Venice above ground. You can put three lots together below ground, as you see on Market Street in the 200 block where they have ramped parking and they do all that underneath the building. They can tie them together so you can park more cars, but above ground it's single family. It stays with the same architectural integrity we have throughout Venice, with the exception of those buildings. So that's the question--where the community wants to go. Does it want to remain a bedroom community or, particularly in Oakwood, do you want it all to be large,

probably three lot consolidations, because that's more economical, more profit for the developer. Thank you.

[00:56:29] **Andrea Stern:** Hi, I'm Andrea Stern. I've lived on Marco Place for 35 years. I'm really grateful for this effort and this committee. So, thank you so much. And forgive me for being somewhat cynical, but we've been trying to get our voices heard about what we want in Venice for many, many years now. It all falls on deaf ears. And you want to know what I want? What I want to know is how are we really going to get our wishes heard? That's what I want to know. How do we encourage or make some... I mean, these ideas are ridiculous. Most of them. And how do we influence what's really going to happen here? Because we haven't been able to in the past because look what's happened. Thank you.

[00:58:03] **Paola Pini:** Hello, my name is Paola. I don't live in Oakwood or Milwood anymore. I used to. I've lived in Venice for 25 years. I lived at the beach, North of Rose, Milwood, and now East Venice. What I want to see for our community is two things. First of all, let's not be fooled by sandbags. We know plenty of developers that ask for adjustments. So, let's eliminate any possible discretionary adjustment out there so we don't remove setbacks that are actually critical for our greenery, for our mental health, and for our quality of life. Second of all, I want to make sure that we maintain what is called transitional heights. Only the people that live next to a commercial corridor would know what that means. You're going to see that in Venice on Lincoln Boulevard next to Superba, the beautiful new building that is down on low ground still, is going to have to step back. Like it's going to be like a wedding cake because next to it there is single family residential. That only happens when you have single family residential or duplex. So here, Venice is protecting Milwood, but here again not Oakwood since it's zoned for multiple housing. What else? Another thing in commercial. Right now, the building can come up to the property line. So, zero setback from the sidewalk. Let's impose a setback so everybody can put their little chair and be very European alfresco dining or breakfasting. Finally, there was a comment from a lady about equity. I think here again, they're pretending that we want equity, but they're not going to do it. We heard last week from a lady that worked for developer. Our developers don't actually need to put in the affordable units in the building in the Venice community, as they can pay to put them somewhere else, they can go anywhere or maybe never because there is zero accountability for it. So, again, we need accountability. We need setbacks. We need green space. We need transitional light. We need equity back at the forefront. And of course, climate change. But that we all know is the biggest of all time. Thank you.

[01:00:20] **Kate Scanlon Double:** Good evening. My name is Kate Scanlon Double, and I've lived in East Venice for about four decades. And thank you, panel, for taking on this very serious and important committee work. It's really important. I've been looking at the community plan for about five years now. But my comments tonight go to the stories. They need to be spelled out. We need to actually have an absolute height. We need a really firm measurement. Stories is much too vague. We need transparency. And secondly, talking about bonus densities and again, I'm struggling right now with the community plan and how the community plan is supposed to drive ordinances. I mean, this is what we've all contributed to so that we should see ordinances or laws or planning regulations and requirements follow what it is we say we'd like to have in our community and what we've agreed on. And then finally, accountability. So, you have a plan, you have policies, you have an ordinance matched to those policies. And then you need accountability. You need follow up. You need people checking that things are being done. And when I see density bonuses, my

concern is this--we need to build some accountability in so that RSO units that may have been displaced for this new building, that those RSO units are replaced in those units in a new structure, and you don't get any bonuses until you do that. That's your baseline time. And then you add housing, both. Thank you.

[01:02:44] **Ronald Ruda:** I'm Ronald Ruda. I've had my house on Oakwood Avenue in Venice for 47, going on 48 years and rented before then. A couple of things I'd like to suggest--one is that in the plan we put a limit of a maximum unit size so that you can't have more than, say, a 2,000 square foot unit. If you have a density bonus, you should have it permanently for that property and not time limited. In the 70s, the Coastal Commission would grant density bonuses for as long as people built extra units for about 15 years. After the 15 years, it became the benefit of the owner and no longer was affordable units. Also, I think there should be an increase in the amount of low-income rental unit requirements, not 10%, but closer to 25% or something like that. The city of Los Angeles once had a 15% ordinance which was qualified by, "if feasible." Nothing happened. That's why we have our problems now. If we had 15% throughout the city, we wouldn't have the housing issues. So, those are my basic issues and how the FAR ratio will work with a [max] unit size for the units. Maybe it'll increase the number of units and maybe help solve the housing crisis that way. Thank you.

[01:04:24] **Eileen Archibald:** Hi, it's Eileen Bryant Archibald. I started living in the Oakwood area 50 years ago. I'm in President's Row now. I want to talk about this income level of \$120,000. I don't know about you guys, but I never made \$120,000. And people that live and work here that we visit every day, they don't make enough money for \$120,000. And also, digging down to make those parking lots...six feet down by my house is water. What are we looking at here? And honestly, I raised my family in a 1,200 square foot house. We don't need these big places. Thank you.

[01:05:09] **Alix Gucovsky:** Can I just speak to that income level for a second? I just want to speak to the income level. This is really important. Average household income is an aggregate of everybody that lives here. So, you have to remember that when you bring in a lot of the new money, that ups the average income level. And what you have to think about when you up zone--and this has happened in Koreatown, and just hear me out because this is important for you guys to understand--and you put in 100 more units and only, let's say, ten of them are affordable, but 90 are now at market rate--is that you now raise the average median income of your entire community. So, it's a big Trojan horse. And I want you all to really think about it. And again, don't shoot the messenger on the numbers. I am simply telling you what is out there. This isn't an Alix number. This is what will be used when they determine a price of an affordable unit. They'll go look per area. And that's the hard reality of what we're at, even though we see something different, and we know something different with our own eyes and experience. So, I hope that's helpful. Thank you.

[01:06:43] **Frank Murphy:** As of the 2020 census, the median household income for the Venice California community plan area was \$88,124. That, over a 60-year period, adjusted for inflation, is a 60% increase. So, yes, it has increased. It's not \$120,000 per the census data. It might be per some other data.

[01:07:12] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** And that's the median that you're speaking about?

[01:07:15] **Frank Murphy:** The median household income, not the average, correct. Anyhow, I just wanted to point that out.

[01:07:23] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** So, yeah, that was good information.

[01:07:26] **Stanley Nowak:** My name is Stanley Nowak. I've lived in Venice since 1966 and in Oakwood since 1980. And here's the scary thing for me. We could have all these rules and stuff and yet next door to my house, which is on the property line, is a mixed-use building. 13 and a half inches away is a little 550 square foot house, sitting on a lot less than 1,000 square feet. Our LUPC approved eight to nothing this project giving it all these bonuses, reduced side yards, extra high. On top of a three-story building is a roof deck that encompasses the entire roof area. And when my wife and I would be in our third-floor bedroom (our feet are 22 feet above the street), we'd be looking at the ankles of the people on this roof deck. And all around this house are vintage or remodeled buildings. Right behind the house is a building that was remodeled with five-foot setbacks. And yet this guy is getting reduced setbacks, density bonuses, or whatever. The bottom line is, is we could have a lot of stuff, but if we have a cancer from within where people... I was given, in three virtual meetings, 180 seconds, or about three seconds a year that I've lived here, to protect my house against this thing. And where does it end? On March 5th, there's a hearing for this project starting at 10:30. It'll be a virtual hearing, unfortunately. I invite...if anybody wants to start fighting this kind of stuff, I invite all of you to phone in and register. I asked C.J. Cole if she would, as she speaks so eloquently about this problem. If you buy a tiny little turd box and then whine that, oh, it's tiny so I need a roof deck because I have a yearn, why don't you buy a bigger lot and have your yard. So, I'm concerned about all this. We started R3 in Oakwood. It was R3 when I first came. That got knocked back to RD1.5 so we could have rules and stuff, but how it gets executed by our own neighbors. Give me a break. I don't know.

[01:10:11] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** What is the name of that hearing?

[01:10:17] **Stanley Nowak:** This is at 1338 Electric Avenue. My wife and I live at 1336. Now, I'm not going to gripe. We accumulated three lots together and my wife was a florist and a landscaper. We built this huge garden. Isn't it ironic now as we reach the end of the line, our little paradise could get bought by somebody and aggregated into a monster building. Scary to me in that way.

[01:10:53] **Ruben:** Hi, my name is Ruben. I've been in the Oakwood area. My and my family's lived in the same house since 1957. We own that house. So, they started doing these developments in my neighborhood in Oakwood, and I've seen a large number of people moving into one little building. And basically, they just rent a room and then they all come with their cars and stuff and park, and it's hard to find any parking, stuff like that. But I'm working on a project to redevelop our house. It hasn't had any work done to it since the 1920s. I try to create two ADUs, and they required me to create more parking, and it doesn't make any sense. How could a big box with all these people not require any parking for them, but for somebody that's been in the neighborhood for so long, they require me to create enough parking for just an extra ADU just so I can keep the lights on, because it's so expensive to live here like the average, you said the average is 120, or the median or whatever. But for struggling Mexican Americans, my family are Mexican Americans, there was a large population of Mexican Americans in Oakwood as well. And that has dwindled because of gentrification, and people moving in with a lot of money and building these big monstrosities and not really giving back to the community, not even living in those buildings, not even being a part

resident of those buildings and not have to understand what the community, how we feel about it. They just do this. And we have to stand idle because the city is allowing it because they want money. That's all the city cares about is money. And what we care about is our community, our people, our folks. And I just want to see us get together and shoot down some of this stuff that seems pretty outrageous, like those bonuses and stuff. So, hopefully we come to a good future for Venice. So, thank you.

[01:13:01] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** So, if you've already spoken, we need to have time to hear from our city reps, and I also want time for our committee members to speak at the end of the meeting. And in about 12 minutes, you're going to hear an announcement from the library that's going to keep us from talking for about 3 or 4 minutes. So, I just want to be cognizant of the time. So, if you've spoken already or if somebody's already said what you were going to say, just don't echo what they're saying. And so Marian, I want to hear from you and Sean.

[01:13:35] **Inge Mueller:** I just have a question. First of all, thank you for putting this together because it's really informative. And I'd like to know where we can get a copy of this presentation.

[01:13:47] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** It's on the website.

[01:13:50] **Inge Mueller:** And then also the survey because a lot of my neighbors couldn't come tonight, and I'd like them to weigh in as well. How can they submit a survey?

[01:13:59] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** We're going to let you know. We'll post it on the web page as well. But that's something. I guess you missed our discussion about it earlier, that we're going to talk about as a committee and figure out a way to make that happen, so that we can at least manage. So, you can also leave your email address. But we're going to see how we can do that and still manage for what area the people are talking or giving their comments about. But we have not dismissed it. We do hear what you're saying, but if you want to leave your email in the back, then we'll make sure of that. Are you going to try to give them additional copies?

[01:14:40] **Richard Stanger:** If you want to, there's going to be an online version of this paper. And everyone will get it whose email address VNC has. So, if your friends want to fill this out, then they need to go to the Venice Neighborhood Council website and add their email address and they'll get a copy of the online survey.

[01:15:36] **Regan Kibee:** Hi, I'm Regan with Venice Moms and I live in the house across the street. I guess it's Southwestern Venice, 900 square feet, 1926 house. From Santa Monica originally, in Venice about 35 years, first as a renter, now with the house. I just wanted to say that most of my time in Venice I was a renter, and I was really super lucky because I lived on Thornton in a really tiny studio that was super cheap. But most people, like single people now or people like my kid, couldn't live in Venice. So, I'm also, of course, trying to balance our density and all that kind of stuff, scale and density and character with how we can provide more opportunities for people than just super expensive single-family units. So, I'm thinking maybe if the height is maybe a bit taller, like on the corridors like Lincoln or some of those, maybe that's a way to get a bit more density. But I also want to think about the climate change, like Lydia mentioned, the climate change impacts. And I really hate to see when developers don't have to really look into the environmental thing because I think, what are they going to build this? And then a tsunami or they're just going

to... It's so, so important to consider those. And I just wanted to say I'm also concerned about people's utilities. Like do we really have the pipes and stuff for the infrastructure.

[01:17:22] **Isabelle Duvivier:** Hi, my name is Isabelle Duvivier. I live in Oakwood and I'm also on the Arbor Committee. I have three things I want to say, really, is that it does seem incredibly unfair that Oakwood is getting the brunt of all the density. I have no problem with density. I grew up in a wonderful apartment in Dogtown in the real Dogtown in Ocean Park. The second thing I want to say is the reason my apartment was so great is because we had a wonderful front yard setback, and we had a beautiful courtyard that had trees in it so there were lots of kids that lived there, it was really great. I love the low-income buildings in Oakwood, and the reason those fit in so well into our community is because they do have really large front yard setbacks. They have courtyards. I think those are model projects. There are three stories so they're not small, and I think they're pretty good neighbors. And then the other thing, the third thing I wanted to say is that what I really hate about this plan is how unnuanced it is. It doesn't show that streets like Broadway, Santa Clara, Westminster are really narrow. Some of them are so narrow they're one way. Can you imagine Santa Clara with a four-story building, a five-foot sidewalk? Where are all those people going to walk? I live on Brooks, and Brooks, as it is, is a nightmare because it's one of the wider streets and we've got a lot of traffic, but we don't have enough room for trees. So, you're walking right next to all of this moving traffic. So, I'd really like to see this more nuanced. I think a little more density along the avenues might be nicer, like along 5th and 6th and 4th, potentially, because they're much wider streets. They have bigger parkways. They could accommodate it. Maybe a little more density around Oakwood Park so there are more eyes on the park. A little more density along Venice. Yeah, all of that's fine. But this is so unnuanced. It's just like, slam, here, take it Oakwood, you're going to take all the density. Thank you.

[01:19:37] **Brad O'Connell:** I'm Brad O'Connell, I've lived on Westminster with my wife for 35 years. I just want to say that what I see...the big picture here, I think, from the state and the city, is to create more housing for people. What I see going on in our neighborhood is that we went from a neighborhood of families, and a lot of people living in the buildings, and we've created a neighborhood where middle class transients, young people who can afford to rent their one bedroom that Rubin described for a year or two, and then it's too expensive and they move someplace else. Or they're really, really wealthy people who build these enormous houses that only have a few people living in them. So, you haven't increased the population density in these new projects. And I don't see anything up here that really addresses that. My kids can't afford to live in Venice. They're very hard working. How do you get young people who want to create a community, families who want to live in a community and be part of a community? That's a much more difficult question than simply giving developers a chance to build bigger buildings. And I think that ultimately, I totally agree with the goal of providing more housing in the state. I think just plunking it down willy-nilly in every community, so no particular politician has to bear the brunt of the blame, it doesn't really work for what you want to do, what you need to do.

[01:21:10] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** Thank you. So, Sean and Marian, can we get you to talk a couple of minutes. Do you want to introduce yourself and just talk a little bit.

[01:21:36] **Marian Ensley:** Good evening, everyone. My name is Marian Ensley, and I'm your west area representative for Mayor Bass's Office of Community Engagement. I am no expert on planning. It was really just important for me to be here tonight to really hear from you, understand

your concerns. I was back there taking a lot of notes. I want you all to know I am very happy and willing to speak with anyone individually. I have had the opportunity to be on various planning calls and meetings with other communities. So, I can certainly bring some of these concerns back to the Planning Department, make those various connections. But again, for me it was just really important to hear what your concerns are because I can see that a concern in Oakwood might be very different than a concern in Venice. And that's not something that I'm going to really understand unless I'm really planted here and hearing from each one of you. So, I'm here. I work very closely with Councilwoman Park's office, and Sean as well. So, this is something that the Mayor cares about. So, again, I just wanted to come up and introduce myself--I do have cards--and be able to assist in any way that I can, So, thank you.

[01:23:01] **Sean Silva:** Thank you, Marian. It's always great to have the Mayor's team here with us. My name is Sean Silva. I take it that many people know me in the room. I'm from the office of Councilman Traci Park. I'm the Venice deputy for that office. So, I am your local representative here in Venice from our office. And it's great when we have the Mayor's team with us because the Mayor's team can't be everywhere as it's a citywide responsibility. But when we have Marian Ensley in the house, you know that she's going to take this back to her leadership team with the Mayor and really discuss some of these things that we heard. And might I say, this was a really good meeting for her to attend. Lots of people, despite the rain. I've been coming to every one of these meetings since January 10th, when they did their first one. And I've been hearing how each neighborhood has been expressing their own unique concerns, as well as the overarching concerns that every neighborhood has. So, if I were to take just two more minutes, I want to say that we work very closely with the Planning Department, and we have since we got into office, knowing that Venice is one of the four community plan areas that is set to receive a community plan update in this cycle in our district. So, other than the other neighborhoods, which is Palms/Playa Vista, Del Rey, Westchester/Playa, and then Venice--those are the other three, and then Venice is the fourth--we are kind of overseeing throughout our district a lot of these community plan discussions. And while the Planning Department is charged with getting the feedback and more or less taking in what people are saying and revising plans as they have done now twice, and they're getting ready to release the third set of draft maps by the way, in this next week or so, maybe into March, we're kind of playing it by ear. At any rate, we are getting a briefing on that from the planners soon. So, although they are going to release new maps, the time for feedback is not over. In fact, when the new maps come out, we expect that people will have more feedback and this committee will continue to be an extremely important place for you to voice your concerns, so they make their way through VNC to our office. But I want you to know that you can also speak directly to us, and for that matter, you can speak directly to the planning team too.

[01:25:10] **Sean Silva:** And that's been the case this entire last year and three months that we've been in office. So, if you have questions or concerns or specific things that you want to see happen, maybe you didn't get a chance to speak here or you didn't think about it till later, you can always reach out to us. We will connect you with the planners who are working on your community plan. And our office has also held its own listening sessions in the past. We did that from September to December of last year and put together a listening session report, which we've transmitted to the VNC, and it's publicly available. So, if you have any questions or you want to see the result of us meeting with 100 plus people over those four months and dozens of groups across the four areas, feel free to ask. And then finally, while the planners are working on this, they're also working on the EIR. Generally speaking, there's an EIR for this process as well because it's essentially the

equivalent of a massive project. Right? So, that process will be unfolding on a parallel track while the community plan keeps getting discussed. So, that would be my general pitch up here. After the meeting if you want to talk to me. I know you had a question, right?

[01:26:11] **Sarah Wauters:** I have two questions. One, why aren't the planners in the room is the question.

[01:26:16] **Sean Silva:** Well, because there's a meeting here every week. So, I think they can't...

[01:26:20] **Sarah Wauters:** So? I come every week.

[01:26:22] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** We're not going to argue the point. We can't answer questions.

[01:26:25] **Sean Silva:** The important thing here is that the planners are listening to it. And we're a conduit for the planning department because there are meetings weekly here. And we make our best efforts to be here.

[01:26:34] **Sarah Wauters:** That's fine. That's a good enough question, but I just want to ask it because I think probably everybody in the room is thinking, how come? The second question is... Although I don't know, the committee may be able to answer it as well. There are four different areas that are getting a community plan update, and the density is being increased, I'm assuming in all of them. But I'm wondering about the neighborhoods that have very low density presently. Why is the density being pushed on to Venice when Bel Air and Pacific Palisades have so much room along Sunset where you can build plenty of... So, how do they interact those two planning pieces, when they're talking about adding the total 450,000 units to the entire city?

[01:27:28] **Sean Silva:** Yeah, that's a good question actually. They do these in waves because they don't have the staff to do the entire city at once, and they're trying to basically balance, as they go through each area, a plan that will span for two decades. So, they're considerate of not putting too much density, or they're considerate of when people tell them that, hey, this doesn't really work here or there. We've taken them on drives through other parts of the district when that was requested by those people. Again, every area that's going through a community plan update has a committee somewhat like this, thankfully, or at least their PLUM or whatever kind of is taking this on. When the planners have gone and made themselves available at specific moments for that, periodically they've gone on to hear things and change things and iterations of the plan. So, the question is really for them, I'm sensing, how do you balance the citywide mandate that comes down from the state and is part of the charter of the city is to update the community plans periodically. So, I'm not going to answer that. I will say, though, if you have questions about how or what is happening or why, let us know. We will literally connect you with them.

[01:29:01] **Laddie Williams:** We have the 15 buildings that are low income. We would love for Traci Park and Mayor Bass... We're going to start negotiating the contract to be lifelong instead of 25-year increments. These are low-income buildings that service over 150, almost 200 families. We need your support. And we need letters from Ms. Bass and Ms. Parks to help us keep our community with the low-income housing on these 15 blocks. So, I wanted to put that to you now because we're going to start fighting again. I see Amber is here. I've got to talk to her, but we are going to start once again, Ms. Naomi, who helped create Project Action. We need those low-

income housing buildings, and they're dying to make them market rate. And that would put all those people out. Because nobody can afford \$3,000 for one bedroom that are currently in those buildings.

[01:30:17] **Sean Silva:** Maybe you can share with us more on this. They can also share with you, but sure.

[01:30:23] **Laddie Williams:** So, I would like for you to take that back. And, if you could let us know, I've written many emails (Laddie Williams) so you guys can get in contact with me, because we're going to start this fight, and we've got to get to Ben Allen and Ted Lieu.

[01:30:38] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** OK. Sounds good.

[01:30:50] **Lydia Ponce:** I'd like to request both offices to help us recover the promised units 20 miles off site. Because we've sat through so many meetings and the crocodile tears I'll never forget. They promised because they couldn't afford to build the unit that was owed by Mello. And all I know is that I'm pretty sure that Robin has a list better than the LA City Department of Planning. And the second thing is, will you please commit to having these affordable, thank you very much, affordable units specifically defined on these different sheets. And these things come from the city because affordable is just a generalized blanket statement. And we're already causing grief over here with our representatives. I'm just going to say thank you for now. I can put a name to the face. Thank you for showing up.

[01:31:55] **Marian Ensley:** Yes. No, I mean, I would love to give anyone in here my cards, but I just specifically want to speak to you all again. I think for me, a lot of these questions obviously go to our planning team. But as Sean said, we can connect you. I was just on a call with someone from a different area because I wasn't able to answer those questions. And we got a lot of questions answered. I'm not going to say it's always the answer you necessarily want to hear, but we were able to get those different answers. So, I'm willing to work to facilitate those type of conversations where appropriate.

[01:32:50] **Judy Branfman:** I just wanted to ask about this process where they have maps coming out before the input is here. And so, I'm a little confused. Maybe you can explain why this is happening and how it's being allowed and exactly how our feedback is going to be... Because as you heard before, people are really worried that it all goes in one ear and out the other because we've been here for 30, 40, 50 years and this is what's happening. So, this process doesn't look very respectful, let's put it that way.

[01:33:27] **Sean Silva:** So, you're asking how the maps exist without feedback already?

[01:33:34] **Judy Branfman:** Yeah. How you figure this is a respectful process to make maps that look kind of final before there's even any kind of real...

[01:33:43] **Sean Silva:** I will not use the word respectful, because I'm not even sure if that's the right word for it. That doesn't mean that it's disrespectful, but I just don't think that word has any bearing on the conversation. There're rounds of feedback that have already been taken into account by the Planning Department. But as a matter of fact, our office believes and we've said so

publicly, that it wasn't adequate. That's why we ran our own feedback program. So, to us it's not a question of how could they get to this stage without talking to us. Well, actually, they've been in some form of getting feedback since 2020 about this very same plan. And the reason that these iterations come out is so that the community can analyze them and periodically make statements to the planning department, to their representatives and the council office and the Mayor's team. And the new maps that are being released are reflective of the last round of engagement they've gotten since 2021 through now. So, again, it's kind of an ongoing thing, and there's really no way to start without starting somewhere and then saying, what do you think about this? Does this make sense to you? So, that would be how I answer that question. And we're definitely not letting it kind of go in one ear and out the other. We're trying to capture it. Again, we did our listening sessions, we did a report, we gave it to the planners. We've met with the Director of Planning, Vince Bertoni. And so yeah, there's a lot to this.

Committee Comments

[01:35:11] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** There's a lot that's been said, and really, believe me, we don't have to have just one meeting. The city has been in the planning process for a long time. Back in 2020, I've gone to many meetings from the City Planning Department talking about what we should do in the Venice community. And I've said this before, but what's happening in the community now is from the last strategic plan from 20 years ago. So, when people ask the question, how are we going to enforce, empower or ensure--this particular approach of having these subarea meetings by one committee has not happened in this community before. This has not happened in this community before. So, this approach is to try to narrow it to particular areas so that we can see and hear and understand what's needed in a particular neighborhood, and then to look at it globally over our entire region. And you ask the question of how is this going to be presented? We are gathering this data, this information, as we go along. We're seeing what the common threads are. We're seeing what the common issues and concerns are in particular communities as well as across the broad spectrum of the Venice community.

[01:36:47] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** You ask, how will you know that it gets the message across? I'll speak for myself and the rest of the community. I just don't imagine that it won't. I just cannot imagine that sitting in this room with everyone that comes in here to speak their mind and their concerns and their passions about their community, that this information will not be conveyed. What we need from the city, and I'll say this from my own experience, is that there is a disconnect with the Planning Department. So, what we want to have built, and then even what gets put in a plan that gets approved, that should not be approved because it's against their own ordinances, it's against their own policies. The Planning Department and the Building Services Department have different definitions for the same thing. It's true. And so, when you talk about what remodeling means for City Planning and what it means when it actually gets built or by the building department, they're two different things. So we have to put the pressure on the Planning Department, not just on the Community Development Department. And when I say organize because, well, I'm a 60s child. I just have to say that "no" is just not a word I understand when the passion is there and it should happen. So, I'm just saying that no one area, no one person can make it happen. But if there's a consolidation and coalition of resources from people that come to these meetings that say what you want--we don't want taller buildings, we don't want three lot ties, we want front yards, we want back yards, we want side easements. Those are the things that you're

saying that you want, but you just can't come and sit here and, in the meeting, say what you want and go home and watch TV. No.

[01:39:01] **Dr. Naomi Nightingale:** So, it's an action that's required that doesn't just start with the meeting, but this is the opening. This committee is very serious and committed to ensuring that this information gets to where it's supposed to be. And so, I want you to know that we hear you. We're documenting what it is that you say. We'll come back to you with a formulated draft or whatever it is or however it is. We're still pulling things together. But I can tell you right now that I'm not ready to take no for an answer.

[01:39:46] **Ed Ferrer:** So, one of the themes for us is our community. As Richard has told us the Coastal Commission has recognized Venice as a resource to be protected, versus our experience that all our friends are leaving because they can't afford to stay. Families are breaking up because they can't afford to grow here. And I do hope that the city will listen to us because... Juliet Oh, the Planning Department, always finds a way to give the gifts. Only she can give gifts. And I'm sure the developers know how to get to her. But I always tell people she reflects the Mayor's office. The Mayor's office can tell her what to do. And certainly, the Coastal Commission has gotten weaker, both by the appointments and by the laws, thanks to our Democratic majority in the state. So, that's all I'm going to say.

[01:41:04] **Robin Rudisill:** I'll be quick. I'd first like to thank Brian Averill for appointing Dr. Naomi Nightingale to chair this important committee. And check our web page in a few days, and you'll see a summary of this meeting and all of your comments. I don't know if others agree with this, but I love Bruce's idea to make all rental units subject to RSO, that'll be on the front page. I'm very concerned about the city's proposed change from residential to commercial along Venice Boulevard. That's going in the wrong direction. Many of you know about the Mello Act, a state law in the Coastal Zone that prohibits demo or conversion of residential structures for nonresidential projects. So, under that law, I don't think the city can even do this. They're worried about people being able to walk to stores and services, but that area already can because they're right there by Lincoln. So, it doesn't make any sense. Oakwood--the name itself shows that it's about the trees. So, we need to protect those trees, or we'll have to change the name of the neighborhood, which is not acceptable. And lastly, density bonus. I'm a bit confused about what the city is doing because right now for the Coastal Zone, the law says that the Coastal Act and the Density Bonus Act, both state laws, must be harmonized. And so we need to make sure that happens on a project by project basis, on a discretionary level.

[01:42:38] **Frank Murphy:** We need to be proactive, as I've said at every meeting, and everybody up here agrees, as far as how we respond to the Planning Department. But also, we have to respond respecting the overall needs which, Naomi alluded to, is the 465,000 dwelling units that we need to supply citywide through one means or another. So, that being the case, let's not be too afraid of change physically.

[01:43:00] **No name given:** That's what's wrong now!

[01:43:10] **Frank Murphy:** I know people don't like that. But having very little change...we've had a 6% increase in Oakwood of dwelling units and a 65% loss in the black population. 65! We had in Venice as a whole, a 5.2% increase in dwelling units over 30 years, and a 45% decrease. There's a

14% increase citywide with a 31% decrease. These are numbers you can't escape. We've got to stop being afraid of change.

[01:44:10] **Lydia Ponce:** Try 500 years of change.

[01:44:14] **Alix Gucovsky:** You guys know me, this is Alix. I'm going to get a little feisty on that last one. The reason that we have lost the African American community and community of colors in Venice is because predatory developers looked to buy them out of their homes. [Cheering.] So that is a fact. My husband's Asian, some of you guys know him. He's been here since the 50s. This was called Appalachia by the sea. And the metro police came in here and said, we don't want to see an African American community by the beach. Fact. Laddie knows it. I look at these maps and I get really irate. And I've said this before. I'm sorry, my blood is boiling. Are we a commodity or a community? And every time I look at these maps at each and every meeting, I see the commodification of this community. And they are not called the commodity maps. They are called community plan maps. And I think we need to scream that loud, loud, loud. The RHNA numbers and the density--I don't believe in density bonuses. We shouldn't have them. We have over a million vacant units in Venice [Los Angeles?]. Two plus two is not five. We need to address that. And when you up zone property, you increase the value of the property, which means the landlords sell, you lose your RSO housing, and you replace it with a different class of people. That is the economic reality of up zoning, not equity.

[01:45:59] **Alix Gucovsky:** And I suggest that everybody look into California YIMBY and Abundant Housing and look who their financiers are, because then you will understand why we have single people in these homes. Some of you heard this statement before--in Oakland, which was number five in building units, they built over 8,000 units and their number of people per household declined. So, they lost density, they lost families. I still am heartbroken over a project in East Venice that was a density bonus project. They Ellis acted out families, Hispanic, Latinx. I'm sorry if I'm using the wrong terminology. Families that had been there for generations and they replaced it with 70 units of one bedroom and studio apartments. That is not creating a community. And I hope the city is hearing this loud and clear. The other thing that these maps don't address in terms of density--number one, Venice is the second most dense coastal community, I think after Hermosa. But we have tourism, right? Not only do we have residents, but we have tourism. So, our communities double in population on the weekends. Where is the infrastructure for all of this? My rant is over! Thank you.

[01:47:36] **Steve Williams:** So, one thing that kind of always comes back to mind for me in these discussions, you hear the "realtor speak," that this is kind of like, ooh, the Venice vibe. They talk a lot about the Venice vibe. And it gets me because all this is pointed in completely destroying the so-called Venice vibe, which is, as we know, folks who have been around here a while. Even with all the changes that we've seen, it's still mixed enough culturally, economically that it's interesting and vital and it still has some of that vibe. It's been diminished a bit, but it's still something. Yet everything that we're hearing about this plan and the density and the incentivization of destroying all the rest of the existing affordable housing to build it out to these brand-new buildings that are going to be unaffordable if they're not even affordable. Everything's pointed to just destroy that completely and create what we've all feared all along is like the Laguna Beachization of Venice or something. That's kind of what I see this all as being. So, it's upsetting and I'm glad there's other people that are upset. And I think we should be preserving the existing affordable and historic

housing and not incentivizing the destruction of it, which is what I see here. There's a lot of beautiful duplexes, multifamily buildings existing that when the owner dies or whatever, it's just gonna get run down.

Mark Mack (in writing): I will echo the suggestion made that planning codes shall be more fine grained and differentiated according to adjacencies. Zoning is a very rough tool that was introduced last century to control health, traffic and building heights as well as use. Times like today face different and some of the same challenges. Now climate and gentrification have become bigger problems, and they may need different solutions. As we see in the Oakwood district, housing for low income was achieved by a collaborative effort from government, neighborhood groups and developers receiving rent guarantees. As these guarantees ran out a similar effort should be restarted. Along with preserving as many of the existing housing, that may be underdeveloped, yet they already exist. As a former participant of the architectural and building community I also know that the construction industry is one of the biggest polluters of our environment. We shall carefully plan and choose between what exists and already serves the community vs the new, the denser, the higher and the not affordable solutions presented by advocates hoping for financial upgrades.

Mary Jack (in writing): Need to be sure City Planning keeps walk street height restrictions the same, at 28' -- no changes. I somewhat agree on the Venice Blvd "neighborhood center". As depicted in pink, that zone stretches a couple of blocks into the residential area adjacent to Venice Blvd. Streets like Brenta and Lucille north of Venice are quite narrow with small homes and some small (mostly 2-story) apartments. Anything higher/denser would be overwhelming. And streets like Victoria have older homes, some of which I would recommend for preservation. I'm not as familiar with the neighborhoods on the south side of Venice Blvd. If the mixed use could be limited strictly to Venice Blvd, that would be better. Everyone who attended the meeting is in agreement on the terrible changes recommended for Oakwood. Lincoln Blvd at 8 stories seems high, but where else can we put the needed units? And there was no real mention of affordability or apartments big enough for families. There was lots of talk about bonuses, but those bonuses should only be given to developers who are helping to solve LA's dire affordability crisis.