

# Parking & Transportation Committee

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## 2019 Final Report

**DRAFT**

**5/1/2019**

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**Mission: The Venice Neighborhood Council, Parking and Transportation Committee (PTC) will evaluate existing and potential future conditions relating to Parking and Transportation, consider stakeholders' input, and propose solutions to the Board of Directors.**

**Introduction:** The Parking and Transportation Committee (PTC) of the Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) is comprised of community volunteers. The committee met on a monthly basis between August of 2016 through May of 2019 under the Public Meeting forum as described in the Brown Act. The Agenda items discussed and the Minutes from these meeting are available on the VNC website. All of the items described in this report were topics on the agenda, including this final report.

The committee focused on the quality of life for local residents and businesses while keeping concepts and recommendations in balance with public access to the beach. Community development is an important component to this balancing act, especially when it comes to transportation and related infrastructure issues such as parking, ride share services and pedestrian safety.

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## Overview

### Background

Venice has many public right-of-ways that fall into a few fairly well defined classifications, including streets designed for automobiles, bike lanes and bike paths, pedestrian sidewalks, alleys, and streets designed strictly for pedestrians (walk streets). The amount of land dedicated to these uses is fairly well defined and recorded in some of the earliest historic records of the Venice region. But these right-of-way dedications were not always intended for the use they are getting today. For example, more than 50% of the original Venice Canals were filled in prior to 1925 when the City of Venice was incorporated into the City Los Angeles and in the 1950's the last of the railroads were abandoned, leaving behind only the train tracks.

The number of individual private or public property parcels has not changed significantly since the inception of Venice of America, which comprised the land west of Lincoln Blvd, amounting to approximately two square miles of land (1200 acres). That is broken down with roughly 30,000 residents and approximately 160 acres of commercial and related parking uses (12% of the total land area is commercial as described in the CCC LUP). The various public right-of-ways make up about 4277 acres (as shown DPW Engineering GIS map, 186325542 SF) which computes to about 35.6% of all of Venice is dedicated to public right-of-ways dedicated to transportation uses.

The concept of "Quality of Life" for residents, businesses and visitors is directly related to the ease of access we all have to go to where and when we desire without being inconvenienced by gridlock or such heavy traffic that we have to provide large amounts of time to get to our destination on time. Ask yourself, is the traffic on the roadways in Venice being caused by local residents and the business that serve our community or is it more likely our small very old community is being impacted by outside forces? These forces might include the explosion of new job opportunities in our neighboring City of Santa Monica or by the huge residential expansion occurring in Playa Vista, Del Rey and Marina Del Rey. Consider this: Santa Monica to the north of Venice has created over 100,000 new jobs in the past decade while the three communities to the south have added over 50,000 residences during the same time period.

Then, to south of Venice, several factors have played into the massive traffic impacts Venice is suffering with on a daily basis. These include the conversion of the Del Rey industrial community into high density apartment and condo developments (20,000 residential units), the Playa Vista project (30,000 resident units) that converted mostly wetlands that were once occupied by Howard Hughes and his private airport. Finally, Marina Del Rey, which was a 1960's two story development of 3000 residential units and a small crafts harbor, has shifted into high gear and is now building out what is called Phase II Development, a growth increase to over 40,000 dwellings.

It's no wonder that Venice has been so badly impacted by massive amounts of commuter traffic; it is the only route between the jobs and residential units. Anyone who lives to the south (and keep in mind that a single residential unit is often housing more than one person) has three choices to travel: east to

Centinela to get north; wait it out along Lincoln Blvd to get north; or cut-through the neighborhoods of Venice to get to the jobs in Santa Monica.

Since the last Land Use Plan was started (not the Coastal Commission Certified date in June 2001, but the regulations that were adopted prior that were the basis of the adopted plan), a lot of things have changed. The streets of Venice have become parking lots during commuter traffic peak hours with neighborhood cut-throughs like never seen in history; bike and share devices which were entered as a new form of transportation but have now become visitor attractions to ride as though they were in an amusement park; cell phones with GPS and mapping applications that direct quickest route options; and street people encampments at all time record highs.

To address these staggering development facts while providing for present and future growth for visitors, Venice needs to find solutions to combat the adverse effects of this growth.

The City of Los Angeles is currently going through a long overdue process to revise the California Coastal Commission (CCC) required documents for the City to be able to issue Coastal Development Permits (CDP). One of the required documents, the Land Implementation Plan (LIP) was never created by the City. It was designed to address how the goals and objectives described in the Community and Land Use plans (VCP and LUP respectively) are to be carried out. The concepts and strategies described herein are offered to the City by the local community for consideration and inclusion into the final revised plans.

The existing CCC LUP lightly touches on Public Works policies, but leaves many issues such as right-of-way configuration and usage priorities open for anyone's interpretation. Since the City is in control of this public space which happens to be the largest area of land use within the CCC Coastal Zone, it is time for the local community and the City to define how these areas will conform to the California Coastal Act while maintaining a high Quality of Life (QOL) standard for residents, business operators and property owners.

Parking has always been an issue for Venice; the original Venice of America, a California City, was designed in the early 1900's to be served by high capacity railroads. Visiting the beach in those days meant taking a ride on the train or making the trip by horse through undeveloped farmland, a journey that could easily take an entire day in each direction. Hardly the way of travel for a weekend getaway, so as a result, many of the streets and most of the private properties in Venice were never designed with a mentality that every person needs their own automobile.

Once in Venice, there were a few options to get around. Abbot Kinney's son ran a miniature railroad that served for sightseeing as well as transportation. Very few people had cars; most people walked since much of Venice was designed for the person on foot.

Within the last fifteen to twenty years, several factors that impact community growth and traffic related issues are tied directly to innovations in technology. Such things as Smartphones, Global Positioning System (GPS), Uber, Lyft and other forms of Ride Share devices such as bikes and scooters, WAZE (a mapping application that optimizes neighborhood cut-thru traffic to avoid congestion) and Amazon online shopping that takes the yellow pages expression "Let your fingers do the walking" to a new level.

Electric powered vehicles are here to stay and driverless “autonomous driving” cars are being tested for wide scale usage within the next couple of years. All of these services and more have had a huge impact on transportation.

The time has come to rethink what makes Venice a special place and to look at our community roots: a visitor destination by the sea and a place to get away for a vacation in an innovative city where quality of life included streets designed for walkability and unique architecture. Abbot Kinney, who was the founder and visionary that created Venice of America, relied on railroad trains to bring visitors to the community. Once they had arrived, the primary means of transportation was walking, bikes and then later, the rich who could afford automobiles would drive slowly amongst the horse pulled carriages and wagons. It was a city designed for walkability and mass transit, not single occupant vehicles.

Today we are struck with many challenges which this document will attempt to identify and address with potential solutions. It has been divided into logical subsections that together make up a complete solution. Although each subsection can stand on its own merits, keep in mind while reading it that the sum of the parts when combined will create a greater solution.

#### Venice Parking Plan -- Key Points

Create solutions that improve public safety

Increase Visitor Access

Reduce Traffic Congestion

Propose Parking Opportunities

Integration of Share Services

### **Business Parking District**

The need for parking is sometimes a debate: some think that if we create more parking, more cars will come, while others believe that parking for private residential uses is required and, as long as visitors rely on automobiles to go shopping or visit the beach, commercial parking must be addressed.

Since the inception of the LUP, new commercial development projects have nearly ceased. The primary reason for this is the parking requirements by the State and the City codes which just about make it impossible to comply, given the smaller lot sizes in Venice. Consider on a typical Venice lot of 30 x 90 foot having to park to commercial code, the first parking space is 17 feet wide to comply with State ADA requirements and this handicap space is not allowed to be in tandem with another car. The ADA space took over 50% of the available lot width, leaving just enough space for one 8 foot wide parking stall. With a minor variance, the City might issue a permit to allow tandem commercial parking. So at best, a standard Venice lot can fit three cars. Now, depending on the intended use of the commercial project, the parking ratio defined in code will designate the maximum floor area that is allowed. For business offices, the floor area is 1250 SF per parking space, retail uses would be 1175 SF and a restaurant or any

sort of gym use would drop to 150 of floor area. No matter what the use, with the land cost somewhere between \$700-\$1000 SF, it makes it prohibitive to develop a property.

Many of the commercial streets have older buildings which at some point might have been used for residential uses. Back in the early days of Venice there were no requirements imposed by zoning conditions. A property owner could sell what they wanted out of a house and transform their building without going through any government monitored process. These older buildings for the most part do not meet residential parking standards, much less comply with the much more restrictive commercial requirements. This older structures also create a great deal of the charm and character which so many people love about Venice.

These conditions which exist in Venice are not new to many other cities around the world and more locally in Culver City, Glendale, Pasadena and even Santa Monica. The solution is to create parking structures near the commercial districts and, for those areas where parking is not possible, service them with a shuttle system. But for this to be possible, government will have to alter their codes to allow offsite parking to those properties that want to utilize this solution as an option to parking onsite. This raises many questions, but if the solution is considered as a global resource within the local Venice region, all the pieces start to make sense. Let's consider some of the issues.

The first question is from whom or where will the funds to implement such a program come from? The City has demonstrated over the past 30 years that they don't have the ability to collect In-Lieu Parking Fees and implement any real change with the fees they have collected. History shows they have not created one new parking space, operated a shuttle or otherwise followed the existing plan, which was enacted in the 1988 Venice Interim Control Ordinance and later carried over to the Venice Land Use Plan and Venice Specific Plan. Other cities have created Business Parking Districts (BPD) which are not solely government entities but rather more of a joint effort between businesses with government involvement and very much like a Business Improvement District, where the City provides structure and funding that is collected by the County as part of a property tax and then forwarded to the BID or BPD.

The BPD could be structured in many ways. One idea would be to combine the BPD fees with the Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) Use permit. With this concept, the Use demand could be offset by paying a fee into the BPD fund which, in turn, would provide parking solutions. The combined solution could be issued a Conditional Use Permit (CUP), much like what the City currently does for alcohol service uses or Conditional Use Beverage permits. Of course, LADBS and the City Attorney would have to have a very strong agreement with the business operator, one that allows the City to quickly shut down any operator that was not complying with their obligations.

The initial cost of setting up the BPD is twofold: one being setting up the operational systems that it would take to implement and manage such a solution; and the second part being creating the parking structures to serve the demand. Venice parking lots and/or the creation of structures are described elsewhere in this document, so there is no need to repeat it here. Other considerations include how to involve the typical visitor to Venice in these solutions. A smartphone application is one of the first solutions that needs to be considered -- a way to tell existing applications the best answer for present

parking. This will entail an automation solution that monitors available parking stalls at each site and reports back to a central system which, in turn, will notify all of the parking apps.

## Traffic Mitigation

The traffic impacts are the largest and most apparent issue affecting the Venice community. The conditions experienced today are the result of over development in the communities that surround Venice without responding to the traffic demands and addressing mitigation measures that would protect Venice from such staggering traffic impacts.

The weekday impacts primarily come from north / south commuters, whereas the weekend traffic is the result of beach visitors that primarily come from the east. These conditions suggest that there is not one solution that can address both patterns. The weekday impacts can be addressed by diverting traffic onto California highway Route #1, AKA Lincoln Blvd., or other north / south routes farther to the east. This measure can only be accomplished if coupled with other mass transportation solutions that will get people to their destination faster than driving their individual cars.

Additionally, these traffic impacts are coupled with a huge deficit of available parking. The City of Venice of America was developed before every property had at least one car, much less every person. For the most part, Venice was designed to have visitors arrive by passenger trains and then, once here, people would walk, ride bicycles or hop onto one of several shuttle services.

The solution is to return the community back to a time before these huge traffic impacts, and to do this, the original design of the community must be kept in close focus. The streets were not designed for 10's of thousands of cars every day, nor were the houses and businesses designed to park multiple automobiles for every property use. The answer is to reduce the trip count created by the commuters, which occurs during a morning peak period when workers are heading to their jobs and again in the afternoon as these same folks return to their homes. The weekend impacts can only be solved by providing more parking as far from the beach as possible, and offering mass transit to bring people to the beach where they can hop on one of the many alternate options described below. But the weekend solutions for parking, like the weekday solutions for traffic, must implement decisions that make the cost to not utilize the preferred options very expensive. Said another way, if you want to park at the beach rather than in a remote lot, be prepared to pay many times as much money for the parking space.

## Mobility Devices

For many years, the last mile of transportation has been an issue for mass transit providers: how to best get people riding the bus that last stretch to work or home from the local stop where they get on or off the bus. Within the last three years, a solution seems to have been introduced: pay as you go bicycles and scooters. For the most part, these devices are battery powered and rented to riders through smartphone applications. In addition, the Ride Share automobile has taken off by such service providers as Uber and Lyft. These services are also smartphone centric solutions that allow a user to request a pick up and set a destination through the application at a fraction of the cost of a conventional Taxi Cab service.



In Venice, this industry seems to have exploded with ten or more scooter solution providers, including such companies as Bird, Lyft, Lime, Jump and even Metro has introduced a bicycle solution. As the City implements general regulations for these devices, they need to address local issues that might not be required in other less popular riding areas of the City. Venice is a visitor destination and these devices have very quickly become a form of entertainment for a lot of people.

These device providers need to be commended for finding a last mile solution which ties back into getting people out of their cars and helps the transition to riding on mass transit. However, they need to be accountable for the devices they bring into community. When people get hit walking on the sidewalk and the scooter rider takes off in a hurry, who is responsible for the medical bills for the person who got hit? The providers need to step up and offer answers to the public how such issues will be dealt with going forward. This is not the Wild-Wild-West anymore, and to operate such a business within the public right-of-way needs to become a primary focus point for everyone involved.

Riding on sidewalks is outlawed throughout the City, but in Venice, where sidewalks are often heavily populated with pedestrians, the storage of these devices on the sidewalks needs to be restricted. Too many devices in one place prevent people access to the sidewalks. Therefore, regulations are required to control where these machines are stored, parking zones denoted on the surface of the ground or sectioned off in a corral out of the public's path of travel. These parking zones will also act as a way of controlling inventory of devices and thereby control the total number of devices that are allowed in Venice at any one time. Of course, controlling where service providers place these devices in the community won't inventory 100% of the scooters, allowing for increases by riders from other regions riding them into Venice, but the vast majority count of scooters will be tallied in the inventory data.

Location specific restrictions need to adapt to the intended use within a region, such as the Venice Canals or Ocean Front Walk (OFW), where public access is only possible on sidewalks. In such a location, device providers need to be able to warn their customers they are approaching a restricted zone, where power to the motor will be restricted or shut off to disable the device from continuing along the violation path.

The Ride Share automobiles will continue to play a larger role in local transportation models. These service providers at present utilize anybody as a driver with little or no training, other than having a recent four door model automobile, insurance and a driver's license. These drivers are notified by the smartphone application of a rider request for a pickup. The solution providers at present pay the drivers a percentage of the charge to the customer. The farther a driver must go to get the rider, the higher the rate of pay. In Venice, where a lot of these services are being used on a daily basis, the rider rates are very low. This condition will only get better as autonomous driverless cars are approved, because the solution providers will be able to stage cars in the area by modeling historic data patterns and not having to pay drivers for their time.

## Circulation

Over recent years the traffic conditions have changed considerably, particularly during commute hours. The housing boom to the south of Venice in the Del Rey, Playa Vista and Marina Del Rey neighbors has

created over 50,000 new residential units serving one or more occupants. Coupled to this new housing the explosion of over 100,000 new jobs in Santa Monica region which is to the north has virtually turned the streets of Venice into parking lots. These commuters create a flow from south to north in the morning and reverse the trip in the afternoons making local circulation in the community a frustrating experience for residents and business customers.

The solution is simply stated, but a bit harder to solve: remove the commuter traffic and return the charm and character to a local community service level. But the hard part is that the streets are public roads which must allow access to anyone that wants to use them. Sure, weight and number of axels of a vehicle can easily be restricted, but large delivery trucks know to stay out of the region during these periods so these controls won't help. The answer lies in controlling the direction of flow.

### Traffic Patterns and Flow Control

The controlled traffic region is defined by the logical area west of Lincoln Blvd. (WOL), which coincides with the original boundaries of Venice of America, a California City. California Route #1, AKA Lincoln Blvd., is under the jurisdiction of Caltrans, who will need to be involved and approve some of the traffic considerations proposed. The northern border of Venice starts at Marine Street, which is also the dividing line to the City of Santa Monica. The southern border is not as clear, with the Venice Peninsula stretching along the coast to Marina Del Rey and eastwards along Washington Blvd. For the purpose of defining the traffic control region, since no through streets exist in the Oxford Triangle area of Venice and because cut-through traffic is not an issue in this area, it is not included in the proposed traffic control area.

To reduce or eliminate cut-through traffic from commuters within the desired boundaries WOL, the flow needs to be diverted, while still allowing local residents, business customers and beach visitors to access at will. To achieve this, a traffic pattern that resembles a letter "J" must be implemented. The concept is fairly simple: divert all traffic by posting road signs in the direction that commuters travel to the main thoroughfares, thereby prohibiting them from entering the controlled region in their desired direction. As for residents and visitors wanting to enter the controlled region during the restricted hours, they will have to travel in the opposite direction of the controlled commuter flow. This sacrifice is necessary and means entering the controlled area will require the driver to go past the shortest route and circle back in the opposite direction of the commuter traffic.

The commuter hours in the morning are from 7am to about 9am and from 3-4pm to about 7pm in the evenings. During these times traffic signs will be posted that prohibit entering the perimeter boundaries for all vehicles (except buses and the Venice Shuttle) traveling in the direction of commuter flow.

Assuming that during the AM peak period, commuters are traveling northerly from home to work, a car coming out of Marina Del Rey at Via Marina at present has four lanes to choose from. There are two which turn left to travel west to Pacific or Dell and then continue north through Venice before arriving at their destination in Santa Monica. Or they could choose to go straight north up Ocean Ave, to Venice Way before connecting to Main Street or Pacific before ending up at their destination. The last of the

four lanes forces the driver to go east with a few more options to turn north on Wilson Ave., Mildred Ave., Oxford Ave. or Abbot Kinney Blvd., and then zig-zag through the community to their destination.

But if in a traffic controlled pattern No Right Turn signs west of Via Marina were posted and east of Via Marina all these streets had No Left Turn signs during the restricted hours, there would be no more commuter traffic! The number three lane, which allows travel north on Ocean Ave. will need to be fitted with a more sophisticated electronic sign that displays a Do Not Enter message in the AM peak period.

However, before these traffic controlling modifications can occur, several other considerations described in this report need to be implemented. These include providing a park-n-ride lot and express bus service in the north/south directions on Lincoln Blvd. that can take riders into downtown Santa Monica. Parking fees and rider commuter times must be very good -- much better than someone driving their private automobile. Furthermore, electronic signage must be installed to tell commuters of the other options that are available along with outreach to all of the affected communities and major employers.

### Signage

The street signs will communicate the traffic controls. Most of these signs will be static in nature and do things like prohibit a left or right turn during particular times of the day. However, in some cases the signs need to be tied into an automation solution that is based on the desired traffic pattern on a particular day of the week and/or perhaps a time of day. These signs will be able to throw up a no left, right or straight ahead direction control message. Signs like these are already being used around large parking venues, such as Dodger Stadium, as well as in many other cities.

On Pacific Ave., Main St., Lincoln Blvd., Washington Blvd., Venice Blvd. and perhaps Rose Ave., overhead signage needs to inform drivers where traffic is being diverted to go. These message boards will face the commuter direction of travel and should be placed as far back as possible from the last point of decision. Refer to the map that shows the proposed locations.

### Network Interface

A smartphone application needs to be developed that will allow anyone to understand how to navigate into and through the community. The application needs to consider edge cases based on traffic pattern restrictions at any point in time of day or day of the week. The application needs to be able to map the directions and take the driver on the most preferred route within the legal restrictions. Assuming a driver is planning to visit the beach, go shopping or stop by a friend's house, the app needs to inform the user about parking and shuttle solutions that will save them time and money along with offering the traffic restrictions to their destination and where available parking options exist.

## Street Trees and Landscaping

The DPW is responsible for the street maintenance in Venice. There is even a Street Tree Division within the Street Services Bureau. Damaged trees or dead street trees need to be replaced with like species to the nearest size possible.

In the 200 Block on South Venice Blvd., the cleanup crews from a homeless encampment that existed on the sidewalk used chemicals that killed seven 25 year old Sycamore trees that are the designated street tree for Venice Blvd. About four years has passed and only seven foot tall dead tree trunks remain, after a City crew came through in 2018 and removed the tops to prevent them from falling on someone or something. Soil samples were taken to Wallace Labs in El Segundo about one year after the City crew had washed the sidewalks. They discovered an 8.5 pH level in the six soil samples that were tested after a full year of rain and daily sprinklers had already leached the soil. At the time of writing this report, no weeds or ground cover have started to grow in this area.

At least five other locations on Venice Blvd. have had car accidents that destroyed the parkway and median trees. The LAPD has taken accident reports when these accidents occurred. Yet years have gone by and still none of these trees have been replaced. On Abbot Kinney Blvd., one palm tree at the corner of Brooks Ave. was destroyed by a car accident and LAPD took a report, yet more than six years later this tree has not been replaced. Directly across the street, in front of the 916 building, LADWP sawed off the top of a palm tree which caused it to die and again nothing has been done to remove the remaining trunk or move the tree well six feet in either direction to create the clearance LADWP now requires.

Landscaping on Venice Blvd is basically a community joke now. The company that has been hired by the City to perform maintenance seems to believe in the “mow and blow” theory, where if they cut the ground cover and fill their truck with clippings, they are doing their job. A big problem with this concept is that the native grasses that were planted in the 1990’s as part of the Venice Landscaping Plan, approved and adopted by the City and the Coastal Commission, are only to be trimmed in the Fall season, just before the cold and wet weather of Winter. It kills these plants to be trimmed in Spring and Summer, which the company is doing. As a result, much of the original native grasses are gone and only dusty dirt remains.

Venice Blvd. between Lincoln Blvd. and the Pacific Ocean is documented in the City and State land use plans to be the Ceremonial Gateway to Venice Beach. As such, it is the primary corridor for visitors coming to the community. Both the street trees and other landscaping should be maintained to a level not only the local residents can be proud of, but the entire City. Venice is a visitor destination for people from all over the world.

## **Street Alteration**

### **Windward Plaza**

The downtown district of Venice of America was located in the region of Windward Ave. between Pacific Ave. and Ocean Front Walk. History shows a time when the sidewalks in the area were covered with arched columns and buttresses resembling the sculptures commonly seen in Venice, Italy. It was in this area where the passenger train from downtown Los Angeles would stop to allow riders to switch gears and start their stroll along the boardwalk or visit the canals or other amusement park amenities that made Abbot Kinney’s development city a world renowned destination for visitors. Many of these

qualities of a downtown district seem to have been lost over the past 75-100 years. At present, Venice does not have any area considered as downtown like so many of the neighboring communities; even our Post Office was sold to a private developer.

Several concepts have been kicked around the community in conversation that deal with how to return the feeling and functionality of a downtown district to Venice. At present, this first block of Windward has a mishmash of new and old architecture and no continuity of the original sidewalk covered structures. The street is lined with about 75 diagonal parking spaces which resemble the original street design of the early 1900's.

Today the primary means of visitor traffic to Venice is by the individual passenger automobile, a huge shift in transportation from those original days back in the early 1900's when almost everyone visited Venice by passenger train. The concept of trying to park community visitors in 75 spaces on the public street does not seem like a very good use of this land. If the parking structures and shuttle described in this report are implemented, these parking spaces will only disrupt traffic flow and the concept of concentrating automobile parking in a few high density locations.

If the street is converted into a walking plaza designed to restore some of the history of Venice, the properties along this street would need to contribute to the community shuttle to satisfy their parking requirements. The plaza area could be used to display art, hold outdoor events and provide picnic tables for visitors. The plaza concept is not new and could resemble that of Saint Mark's Square in Venice, Italy.

Furthermore, the City would need to make allowances for redevelopment projects that recreate the original covered sidewalk structures, where the buildings above the sidewalks were allowed to extend over the sidewalk portion of the public right-of-way. These considerations, along with restoring building height to resemble the original structures, should all be considered as elements that would be desirable in the downtown restoration.

## **Lincoln Blvd.**

Lincoln Blvd. is the highest traveled primary north / south highway west of the 405 Freeway, and is under the control of Caltrans. It is designated as California Route #1, and stretches along much of the State's coastline. It is considered to be a Scenic Route dating back in the history books to the early 1800 days of the Gold Rush. Today the portion which passes through the Venice community, from Mindanao Way on the south and Marine Street on the north, is also the eastern boundary of the California Coastal Commission's jurisdiction over the Coastal Zone.

Making alterations to this State Highway can be a difficult process due to the sheer number of players that are involved. Caltrans is proposing to improve the Culver Blvd. overpass, which will allow them to widen Lincoln Blvd. from the existing substandard five lanes of traffic with no median divider or pedestrian sidewalks to a much wider eleven lanes to match the abutting intersections at Jefferson Blvd. on the south and Fiji Way on the north. Both of these abutting intersections currently support eleven lanes of traffic.

This widening of Lincoln Blvd. will have a significant impact on the community of Venice. The intersection at Washington Blvd., which is about one-half mile from the proposed bridge improvement and only one quarter of a mile from the termination of the Caltrans 90 West Freeway, currently becomes the bottleneck where the lane count is reduced to seven lanes. This street width continues north into the City of Santa Monica where, at the 10 Freeway, Route #1 merges with the freeway and continues north.

The proposed alterations to Lincoln Blvd. include installing overhead traffic condition electronic message signs, and creating a dedicated Express Bus Lane that would be intended to help get individuals out of their cars and into mass transit solutions that would relieve congestion and reduce travel times for riders. The electronic traffic conditions signs would be used to alert drivers of conditions they can expect in their direction of travel and suggest alternatives that would improve their journey. These messages might compare trip time of individual cars vs. riding the Express Bus or instructions where to park as the lots in Venice become full.

The traffic condition signs will help mitigate the negative impacts of the proposed bridge and, therefore, should be considered in any plan by the State or the City to widen Lincoln Blvd. The signs should be located in several places along Lincoln Blvd. prior to all major intersections that might flow westbound traffic into the Venice community. Additionally, signs need to be located prior to Lincoln Blvd. on the major cross-streets including, but not limited to, the 90 West Freeway, Washington Blvd., Venice Blvd. and Rose Ave. These placements will help reduce cut-through traffic entering into the Venice community and improve public safety as a result.

The proposed Express Bus Lane will offer commuters an alternative to driving their individual cars from the housing developments in the Del Rey, Marina Del Rey, and Playa Vista neighborhoods to the job centers in Santa Monica and West LA. The lanes should only be active during peak traffic periods and only in the direction of travel of the commuter. In the morning, the commuter is traveling from the south to the north, which means the parking lane on the east side of Lincoln Blvd. would be dedicated to buses only. In the afternoon, the parking lane on the west side of Lincoln Blvd. would be taken for bus only use.

In addition to public buses using these lanes, private businesses that offer their employees rideshare services or carpool rideshare vehicles with passenger occupancy greater than ten persons shall also be allowed to utilize these lanes so long as they do not impede the public bus system. Express Bus Stops should be limited to no more than three locations in either direction within the Venice region, and only where connecting mass transit routes intersect with the Lincoln Blvd. corridor. Furthermore, all non-express services shall be timed to not impede the primary functionality of the Express service, which might mean local services need to turn off Lincoln Blvd. or change lanes in advance of an approaching Express Bus.

In evaluating this solution, trip times were researched using Google Maps. The travel times at different times of day were compared. The results included traveling on Lincoln Blvd. during commuter times ranging from 45 to 90 minutes to make the journey from the 90 West Freeway on the south to the 10

Freeway on the north, a distance of about 3.5 miles. In comparison, a driver making this same trip at 3AM in the morning was able to cut the travel time down to 6 to 8 minutes, depending on red vs. green lights and staying within the speed limits. The goal of the Express Bus on Lincoln Blvd. is to make the same journey in 10 minutes, which allows for three 45-second stops for passenger loading.

### **Ocean Ave.**

This roadway between Washington Blvd. and Venice Blvd. is one of the most impacted residential streets in the entire Venice community. It has become the de facto commuter cut-through for all the people departing or returning to Marina Del Rey. On the south side of Washington Blvd., Via Marina width includes seven traffic lanes, whereas Ocean Ave. north of Washington does not meet the minimum requirements for the “Avenue I, II or III” street designation as defined by LA City, Public Works Department, Engineering Bureau. The street width is 60 feet, thereby classifying it as a “Local Street – Standard” with a 36 foot street allowing parked cars on both sides of the bidirectional traffic lanes.

During commute hours, this stretch of street becomes a stop and go, bumper to bumper parking lot. To improve these conditions, besides diverting commuter traffic, one consideration might be to remove one parking lane to allow a bidirectional bike lane to exist. This will make the street friendlier to a slower and lower impact mode of mobility which, in turn, may help return this residential neighborhood’s quality of life to a time when cars were not the priority.

On weekends and holidays, when visitor traffic consumes the roads of Venice, a dedicated Shuttle only lane would reduce visitor traffic on this street since peak commuter traffic would not exist.

### **Pacific Ave.**

This street was designed for trains that connected Venice of America to the rest of Los Angeles County before there was much more in the region other than farmland. Santa Monica existed to the north, which accounts for the north-south direction of some of the original tracks, but other than a small dirt access road along the sides of the tracks, cars were not driven on Pacific Ave. Fast forward 120 years, Pacific Ave. seems to have become a substandard secondary highway (LAMC standards). The sidewalks do not comply with any disability regulations and the lane widths are squeezed so close together that making a turn into many of the alleys requires turning across lanes to enlarge the corner radius.

The neighborhood west of Pacific Ave., for the most part, is very under-parked with none of the older apartment buildings having any onsite parking spaces. This region of Venice has the majority of Walk Streets, right-of-ways that were designed during the inception of Venice of America to provide only pedestrian access, no automobiles and have since become a major contributor to the history and character of the community. So these two factors have resulted in a huge parking deficit in this area which must be addressed.

In order to increase public safety and walkability, the sidewalks need to be widened. Where they currently exist at three feet, if one traffic lane was dropped, leaving three lanes, and the width on the dropped lane was added to the sidewalk width, the result would be about an eight foot wide walkway

on both sides of the street. The remaining three lanes could then be configured to meet the demands of traffic flow, which suggests several options are possible.

Assuming commuter traffic is diverted as described in this document, the traffic that remains is either local residents or visitors to the community. During normal times of weekday usage, one lane north and one south, with a center lane for turning into alleys or cross streets or for delivery trucks would exist. Then on weekends, the street usage could be reconfigured to serve a greater visitor population by closing the street to all but emergency vehicles and the Venice shuttle. Local residents who live west of Pacific would be allowed to utilize the street to exit the area but not to enter. The entrance for these individuals would be from Speedway. (Speedway is proposed to be altered in part to address the Pacific reconfiguration.)

The overall reduction of traffic on Pacific Ave. that will exist from these alterations will make the street more friendly to locals and visitors, while returning the quality of life to those who live in Venice. The wider sidewalks will be able to support street trees that one day could make a shade canopy covering the street. The watershed from rainwater on Pacific Ave. could be stored in underground cisterns that were designed to reinject the groundwater. These attributes would bring this old right-of-way up to the state of the art in roadway designs.

The existing nightly parking on Pacific Ave. which will be lost as a result of this reconfiguration will be offset by the proposed parking structure on Venice Blvd. (LADOT Lot 731), Main Street (LADOT Lot 740), the Metro Hub and the proposed lot on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. These lots will all be serviced by the Venice Shuttle, which will run 24/7 service on Pacific Ave. and other streets throughout the Venice region. First Responder access times are expected to be considerably reduced for both LAPD & LAFD 63 by this reconfiguration plan.

### **Rose Ave.**

Rose Ave. is now the fourth business district, following Ocean Front Walk, Washington Blvd. and Abbot Kinney Blvd., in Venice. This region over the past forty years has started to return to its original days of serving local residents with basic amenities. These services include a grocery store, a pharmacy, several restaurants and retail stores that both address resident needs as well transiting to visitor servicing uses.

But the parking and walkability of this street is very lacking. The sidewalks are too narrow and most of the businesses don't have ample parking. One solution is to depend more on a local shuttle and remove one traffic lane and, with the space of the removed lane use, widen the sidewalks by five feet on each side of the road. The remainder of the roadway would then be able to serve one traffic lane in either direction with a center turn and delivery lane. This configuration would rely heavily on remote parking and a shuttle service or other forms of transportation into this business district.

### **3rd Ave., Between Rose and Sunset Ave's.**

This street is not being used for much, if any, transportation functionality at present, and only serves four properties' access to a public right-of-way. The property titles are held by three owners, two on the east and one on the west side of the street. If the 3rd Ave. right-of-way was removed, only two lots



would be landlocked, but those could be tied to a corner lot which is also owned by the same property owner, thereby giving all the lots on this street access to other roadways.

Without relinquishing the City's underlying dedication rights to the street, a parking structure could be constructed in what is now the right-of-way. The thought is that a parking structure is still considered under the dedication rights a transportation use. The amount of area is approximately one acre of land which assumes property line on the west to property line on the east. Assuming standard sized cars with a 24 foot drive aisle, about 170 cars per level could be parked between Rose Ave. and Sunset Ave. Continuing down this path, the height limit in this area of Venice is 30 feet with a flat rooftop. This amount of height would allow an above grade structure to have four levels of parking, which translates into over 600 new parking spaces being added abutting the business district of Rose Ave.

The abutting property owners who own the fee title to this land and would be giving up their rights to street access on the 3rd Ave. side of their properties would all need to agree to such a proposal. Some sort of exchange might be required to get these owners to agree; a parking reduction on their sites comes to mind as a good trade for both parties. This project might need to be considered as a joint development project between the owners of the abutting properties and the City. But clearly, creating a parking structure of this size at this location would benefit the entire community.

### **Speedway & Alleys West of Pacific Ave.**

For many years, the City has offered an Adopt-an-Alley program through the Department of Public Works. Basically, the programs allows an alley to become semi-private and closed at all times to the general public, only allowing public service vehicles (trash truck, etc.) to enter. All of the abutting property owners also have unlimited access. The thinking here is to turn all of the alleys west of Pacific Ave. into private alleys.

Assuming Speedway was no longer open to the general public, traffic in the alley would be greatly reduced to the point that only the neighbors would be using the road on any regular basis. The width of Speedway, which is mostly 20 feet wide, is not enough for bidirectional traffic and wider than one way traffic requires. To address a related nearby problem along the Ocean Front Walk, where scooters and bicycles are prohibited, Speedway offers a parallel solution. But in its present configuration, traffic only flows in one direction, north to south. To solve this shortcoming, a reverse-direction scooter / bike lane could be painted onto the asphalt.

Access to Speedway would be controlled by several means that would include some high tech and some low tech solutions. For example, if a hotel or perhaps a restaurant visitor wanted to enter the restricted zone, they might use their smartphone to access a Venice Parking App that, assuming they had rights to enter, could release whatever sort of gate or bollards were installed to keep out the general public. A keypad at the entrance or a clicker in car, similar to a garage door, could also be options for providing access. License plate tracking is another solution that is used around the world and fairly inexpensive these days. With this option, a computer camera captures the value of a license plate and, if it is registered, would open the gate as the car approached. But license plate tracking could also be used to count the cars that have entered the restricted zone and when someone opened the gate to more than

their allotted share, such as a parking lot might do, LADOT could be alerted to get the excessive cars out of the roadway.

The automobile streets that dead end at OFW will need a small amount of space to be taken from the intersections at Speedway to allow a three point turn-around. This implies all of these streets will need to support bidirectional traffic and those at present that are too narrow with parking on both sides of the street will have to lose parking on one side to allow return traffic to flow. This loss of public parking will be offset by the parking structures on LADOT lots 731, 740 and the proposed lot on 3rd Ave.

## **Dell Ave.**

The Venice Canals are considered by the City and State as Waterways and the houses that abut the canals front on the water side. The alleys are all referenced as Courts and provide access for residents and service and utility vehicles. Dell Ave. between 28<sup>th</sup> Ave. and South Venice Blvd. runs perpendicular to the canal alleys.

LA City, Public Works Department, Bureau of Engineering, Standard Street Dimension, Standard Plans No. S-470-1 adopted 10-21-2015 expresses what to expect of a right-of-way based on the width of the public dedication. The standard plans describe the improvements such as sidewalk width and lane count for each of the classifications. These classifications are then used to define traffic control and speed limits, or at least as a starting place which can be modified if a traffic engineer studies the conditions and determines if changes are appropriate.

In the case of Dell Ave. in the canals area, the right-of-way is classified as an Avenue which, based on the definitions in the Standard Plans, suggests a misclassification. The right-of-way in both ZIMAS or Navigate LA show the width to be 60 feet of width at 28<sup>th</sup> Ave. narrowing down to 40 feet at the start of the southernmost alley. Assuming the true width is 40 feet, Dell Ave. does not qualify for any Standard other than Hillside Limited Standard, which is described to have a minimum width of 36 feet. But forget about this standard, the real width of Dell Ave. must be measured at its narrowest point to determine the true and valid classification.

The four bridges that cross over the canals south of Venice Blvd. (not including the fifth bridge in the LADOT Lot 731), are some of the oldest historic features of Venice of America dating back to as early as 1901. These bridges are registered in the California Historic Registry and called out in the California Coastal Commission Certified Land Use Plan. These bridges connect the islands within the canals and have been labeled as Dell Ave.

Although the Dell Ave. right-of-way may be defined on paper as being 40 feet wide, the reality is the bridges measure just under 15 feet on the interior of the side walls. In reviewing the Standard Plan, the text (No.7 on Page 4) states that alleys shall be a minimum of 20 feet in width. Continuing to read down the same page, No. 13 describes that a "Shared Street" shall provide a dedicated pedestrian access route. Neither of these conditions exist because the width of the bridges are much too narrow.

The canals are a tourist attraction and a destination for visitors from around the world. But the canals are also the residences of over 300 homes and serve the local community as a pleasant place to stroll

through nature. Fast forward to another reality: transportation in all forms seem to seek out Dell Ave. as a cool place to cruise and take in the sights. But the roadway conditions don't lend themselves to this sort of traffic. The bridges all rise up over the waterways causing total blindness for what exists on the downhill side of the bridges. To add to the safety concerns, although the roadway is marked One Way with a speed limit of 15 MPH almost no one follows the laws and especially people walking, pushing baby strollers, riding bicycles and scooters all regularly travel in the opposite direction to vehicle traffic. Furthermore, when one car stops on the top peak of a bridge everyone else behind that car gets upset and starts honking, breaking the quiet peaceful atmosphere of this very special residential neighborhood.

The solution is fairly simple: change the classification of the road from an Avenue to a Court, thereby making the portion of Dell Ave. in the canal area to be considered an alley. Once this classification is complete, the property owners of the canals can apply to Public Works for their Adopt-an-Alley program. This program has been in place for several decades and allows alleys to be closed to the public. In the case of the canals, they are a community historic resource, so complete closure would not be possible, but gating off Dell Ave. either with a swinging motorized gate or automatically retracting bollards embedded in the roadway would be acceptable so long as pedestrian traffic was still allowed to access the road.

The resident and service vehicles would have one or more ways to open the access points. These solutions could include automatic license plate scanning which, for registered property owners and special plates on government owned vehicles, would automatically open the gate or another option might be a smartphone application that could grant access if a valid code was entered. The combination of both solutions would allow the canal associations to monitor who gave out an access code to a car that blocked a neighbor's property without permission.

This solution would not stop scooters or bikes from riding over the bridges in the wrong way, nor would it stop people from standing in the middle of the bridges and stopping traffic. But what it would solve is keeping uninvited visitors from driving through or over the canal bridges.

suggest the dedication is 40 feet wide which we can assume is true but even if not at least as far as the Street Standards define an Avenue to be defined. Although the right-of-way is 40 feet wide, the historic bridges are much narrower and measure almost fifteen across the roadway width.

<dellAve\_BridgeWidth>

## **Miscellaneous Issues**

The following issues were considered by VNC PTC in meetings as items worth including in this report.

## **Rose Ave. / Main St. Corner**

The sidewalk width of the southeast corner at the intersection of Main St. and Rose Ave. is very narrow compared to both the width of the sidewalks on Rose Ave. and/or Main St. The abutting owner (current tenant Rose Café) is encroaching into the public right-of-way with a chain link fence by over fifteen feet. The DPW should investigate if such an encroachment is at the best interest of the community or if the fence should be moved to allow a wider sidewalk more in conformance with current standards for Main St. and Rose Ave.

## **Abandoned Driveways**

For many years, DPW has not enforced returning abandoned driveways back to standard curb and gutter configurations. This condition has reduced public on-street parking opportunities which allows LADOT to selectively issue parking tickets and tow cars when someone blocks a driveway.

This condition prevents the City street sweepers from properly cleaning the gutters and, because of the machine used which has a rotating brush turning into the curb, ends up throwing street trash onto the sidewalk while passing one of these abandoned driveways.

## **Walk Streets**

One of the very special characteristics of the original Venice of America and a historic artifact of the Venice community are the pedestrian only Walk Streets. These public right-of-ways exist all along the coastline in the North, Central and Peninsula subareas, as well as in the Milwood subarea of Venice. They have been documented in the CCC Land Use Plan and must be preserved as a significant feature of the history and character of the Venice Community.

The DPW has a long standing rule of not maintaining public sidewalks, as well as a policy of not maintaining alleys. These policies for over 75 years have been unfair to the property owners of the Venice Walk Streets who, like all other property owners paying taxes, pay property taxes of which a portion is allocated towards maintaining the streets in front of their homes. Many of the alleys behind the walk streets are in total disrepair, and the reason for this is assumed to have been caused by having large trash trucks with heavy loads traveling on these surfaces which were originally installed in the early 1900's.

It does not seem fair to the Walk Street property owners to have no vehicle street in the front of their homes while the City collects tax monies and has a policy to not maintain the sidewalks and alleys. The City should provide maintenance to the alleys of the Walk Streets, which is where the City provides utility and trash collection services to these properties.

## **Westminster Ave.**

In the block between Main St. and Riviera Ave., the street width is about 40 feet. The existing traffic pattern is bidirectional and has parking on both sides of the street. Assuming North Venice is able to increase parking by construction of the Parking Structures described in this report, it would follow that all parking should be removed from both sides of this street during the day. This would allow temporary School Bus parking on the north side which abuts Westminster Elementary School. In turn, the reserved

parking spaces on Main St. and Abbot Kinney Blvd. could be returned to a visitor-serving parking solution. Before and after school hours, Westminster Ave. could then serve the local residents within a preferential parking zone on the northern side of the street. The northern side is being recommended because the sidewalk width is greater on this side, and there are fewer driveway interruptions, thereby allowing more parking spaces to exist. This proposal would improve parking and traffic conditions for the immediate neighbors while creating a safer environment for the school children because they would be loading on a much less busy street.

### **Market St./Grand Blvd./Cabrillo, Rialto, Riviera, San Juan & Windward Ave's**

These seven streets were once Venice of America waterway canals. They were filled in around 1925, when Venice became incorporated into the City of Los Angeles. The street widths reflect a time in history when boating was the primary form of recreational transportation in this central area of Venice. Those days are long gone, but the street widths which are in excess of present or future traffic demands still remain.

- Cabrillo Ave 70 Ft x 1900 Ft
- Grand Blvd 100 Ft x 1800 Ft
- Market Street 80 Ft x 1000 Ft
- Rialto Ave 80 Ft x 1400 Ft
- Riviera Ave 70 Ft x 1000 Ft
- San Juan 70 Ft x 550 Ft
- Windward Ave 70 Ft x 1100 Ft

These streets listed above are in strictly residential neighborhoods mostly zoned RD1.5. However, when looking at the DPW Street Standard Plan, one could easily draw the conclusion based on street width that these neighborhood streets were designed to be Secondary Highways of Class I thru III. Going down this road, so to speak, the speed limit for secondary highways can easily exceed 40 miles per hour.

In recent years LADOT has added bicycle lanes on some of these streets, but these streets are only a block or two long, and then they terminate into a cross-street that does not have a bike lane. This seems like a silly use of the street width. The City has also created medians on some of these streets by painting yellow lines in the middle of the street but, again, what is the purpose? It turns out there are several motivational factors for these efforts, including increasing the total amount of bike lanes offered by the City and, by painting median, the engineers are hoping to slow speeders down.

These solutions are not working well to improving the quality of life for residents in the community. The shortage of parking in this area, which is only a few blocks to the beach, is a huge issue for most people living here. If permit parking were adopted, increasing the opportunities for residents to park in this area would be a huge benefit.

Perpendicular parking on overly wide streets throughout the City, including on Rove Ave. between 3rd Ave. and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. and on Windward Ave. and Washington Blvd. west of Pacific, has been very successful at creating higher density parking solutions. The ratio of two to three to one can be expected when 90

degree perpendicular parking is utilized over parallel parking. A projection based simply on the linear distance of each street suggests the sum of these streets (8750 Ft) at present can store 336 cars (assumes stall length of 26 Ft) whereas, if parked in a perpendicular direction, the total stall count will increase to 972 (assumes a stall width of 9 Ft).

The reduction in street width for vehicle traffic will force speeds to be reduced, making them safer for pedestrians.

In 2004, Los Angeles Department of Transportation proposed a design for Grand Blvd. with perpendicular parking. The plan was never adopted due to lack of community support and funding restrictions that existed at the time. The community was concerned that increasing parking for beach visitors might have a negative impact on the community and that the City, who has traditionally not enforced littering laws, much less clean up after a busy beach-goers weekend, might leave the trash for local residents to clean up. Assuming preferential parking was implemented prior to altering the parking design, the community's worries about beach parkers making a mess of the community would be removed. The LADOT 2004 design (Doc No. A-3963, Project No. 68746) is attached for reference.

### **Street Use Permits**

The DPW is responsible for street maintenance and controls temporary use permits which allow private parties to occupy the street for special events and construction staging. At present, when these use permits are issued, there is no local control in the process or involvement of the neighborhood council. Construction contractors need to be limited to how long they are allowed to occupy the streets with their dumpsters, staging materials or installing temporary "K" rails that impact the community by taking access to the public right-of-way away from the general public. At present, the permits are so cheap that such intrusions have been allowed to remain on the streets for years on end while the contractors take their time to complete their use of the street.

### **Venice Grand Prix**

Back in the early years of Venice of America, the City hosted a road race where normal people from the local area could come out for a few days a year and test their mechanical skills and driving abilities behind the wheel of a race car. The cars, for the most part, were built with little or no budget and incorporated all sorts of crazy design ideas. It was a point in time when automobiles were considered start-of-the-art machines, and many people did not believe they would ever replace the well-established horse and carriage ride.

In the spirit of yesteryears and the fun and excitement of sponsoring local events, the streets of Venice should once again return to hosting an annual ceremonial road race. Such an event should inspire people to create vehicles that offer innovation with a focus on priority issues facing the world, such as environmentally sustainable solutions. The entry categories need to promote solutions that local folks can achieve with a playfulness trophy at the top of the rankings.

All vehicle entries will be zero pollution powered, suggesting solutions be human or all battery powered, and no fossil fuels will be allowed unless such entry is offering innovations in technology not available or

common place in the current or past markets. Entries must be classified by budget, where corporate sponsored entries are not competing with backyard or home garage projects. School entries need to also be classified into age groups, along with resourcefulness in design.

This event needs to promote uniting the community and demonstrate how being creative can help make Venice a safer, cleaner and fun place to live, work and visit. With this vision in mind, a grand prize trophy might be awarded to the entry that has removed a worn out couch or sofa bed and converted it into a decorated dream machine that doubles as a funny looking mobility device.

## Parking Opportunities

For nearly 100 years, Venice has suffered from a lack of parking mostly as a result of changes that have occurred in transportation. The original design of Venice of America by Abbot Kinney, the founder and developer, back in 1904 was a city based around mass transit in the form of a passenger train that brought visitors and residents from all over southern California to his vacation city by the sea. In those days, Henry Ford was just introducing the Model T, the first mass production automobile, a four cylinder 20 horsepower car with 3 inch wide tires that stood 30 inches tall with enough ground clearance to navigate over the bumpiest of dirt roads.

By the mid 1950's, the car manufacturers of Detroit convinced Los Angeles City Council and the Mayor to abandon the trains and shuttle systems because they claimed that the passenger cars were the future of transportation. In the mid 1970's, Los Angeles Department of Build and Safety added requirements to the municipal code requiring all new structures to include parking garages for the first time. It was not until June 2001 that the City identified that the North Venice subarea was short over 1200 parking spaces for the existing uses that were documented as part of the Coastal Commission Certified Land Use Plan.

In 1988, the Venice Interim Control Ordinance was adopted by the City of Los Angeles to control construction requirements until the Land Use Plan was written and approved by the Coastal Commission. This ordinance controlled development standards and, in almost all cases, doubled the parking requirements over the rest of Los Angeles. Commercial standards for parking became the most stringent in the City, requiring one stall for every 225 SF of retail. This was further coupled with Beach Impact Zone parking that attempted to add extra spaces to make up for the shortfall that had existed for a long time. But what was not considered, or at least never documented in the ICO or the LUP that followed, was the impact this would have on the long term development of commercial and industrial property in Venice.

An In-Lieu of Parking Fee was documented, but never implemented. The intent was if a building project could not construct the required parking, the applicant could buy their way out. The funds went into a special Parking Trust Fund and the City was to use these funds to pay for the construction of parking structures. Fast forward 30 plus years, many projects have paid into the fund but, though the City records show the funds that have been collected, they have not constructed a single parking space, much less a structure, to make up for the lack of parking that exists.

The result is that very little commercial or industrial development has occurred, and many of the properties that should have been developed to create local jobs have rather been built up as high-end luxury condo housing. The reason is simple: only two parking spaces per residence are required. This short-sided thinking lost the benefit of the long-term financial impacts of commercial development. The revenue stream that should have occurred includes building entitlements, property taxes and business taxes. But the commercial fabric that makes a healthy community does not exist. In 2018, more than a dozen properties in Venice that had been operating as retail stores were shut down by Building and Safety because they did not have proper certificate of occupancy permits; but these properties are historic structures and have been retail for many decades.

While this lack of parking in Venice has existed for a very long time, the City has failed to comply with State regulations to provide preferential parking within the coastal zone. This condition and a proposed solution is described on page <page link> of this document. But in short, Venice needs to provide a lot more public parking before the demands for parking start to taper off as alternate solutions come online and the parking structures can then be repurposed into office buildings and possibly residential apartments.

Autonomous driverless cars are coming in the near future, which will change the demands for visitor parking. It is still too early to know how these vehicles will affect private property owners living within Venice. On the one hand, a visitor might get dropped off and have their car go park blocks or miles away in a public structure where ample parking is being provided, but local residents who need to carry their groceries into their house or unload the kids will most likely still want a garage to store their car in.

The service of providing autonomous driven cars to people will most likely still have a high demand on parking structures. Although these fleets of driverless cars are forecast to spend a lot more time on the road, staging cars in high demand areas will be required to reduce traffic on the roadways and decrease long wait times. These staging facilities will need to be able to provide services such as battery rechargers and possibly cleaning capabilities for shared vehicles.

Bottom line, as long as individuals can afford to ride in vehicles that are not considered mass transit buses, there will be a demand for parking structures. They might be used by local residents as much as visitors, but having someplace to store large numbers of single occupancy cars will best be done in automated parking garages where the efficiency of stacking vehicles by a robot optimizes the required space.

To entice drivers to use public transportation for the last mile, the parking lots must become more expensive as they get closer to the last locations – the beach lots. A primary goal and a partial solution to reducing traffic is to get people to park as far as possible from the beach and use mass transit for the last part of their journey. The most remote parking lots being considered in this plan include using land at the 90 W Freeway and the MTA Expo parking structure at the Bundy station.

## Time of Use

The concept is based on the hours a project requires parking is actually operational. The operation period is defined by when people occupy the project. The people occupying the space may be further



refined to type of individual and how they impact the project from the standpoint of transportation related uses. For example, an office use might have ten workers between 9a-5p, three visitor meetings at random times during the workday and a cleaning crew of two that come in after hours. These three types of people described in this example have related parking demands with nuances that suggest the sum of people at any one time does not define the true parking requirements since all the people are never in the office at the same time. The parking obligations therefore need to be flexible so as not to be a burden on the operator that will need to pay into the BPD a fair amount proportional to their demand on the parking and shuttle system.

## Shared Parking

This definition allows two users access rights to the same physical space by staggering the hours each user has to park in the individual space. For example, user “A” has an office building with a parking demand during the workday. User “B” operates a restaurant that is only open for dinner. Assuming the demand time of these two uses, they could share the same physical space without creating a negative impact, so long as their two uses do not overlap.

The concept of shared parking is nothing new. There is language in the 2001 Coastal Commission Certified Land Use Plan (LUP) (Chapter II, Policy II. A. 11) which permits shared parking so long as it does not negatively impact coastal access and does not utilize the three beach parking lots located at the ends of Rose Ave., Venice Blvd or Washington Blvd.

## Existing Conditions

The list below shows the existing conditions of the public parking lots within the Venice area west of Lincoln Blvd. An asterisk “\*” mark denotes that the lot is considered in this plan for repurposing and is described following the list.

- LADOT 740, Rose Ave. at Main St. (surface parked 41 stalls) \*
- LADOT 613, Pisani Pl. (surface parked 53 stalls)
- LADOT 616, Electric Ave. / California Ave. (surface parked, metered 30 stalls)
- LADOT 617, Electric Ave / Milwood Ave.(surface parked, metered 30 stalls)
- LADOT 760, Tabor Ct / Milwood Ave. (surface parked, metered 50 stalls)
- LADOT 761, Windward Ave./ Pacific Ave. (surfaced parked, metered 14 stalls) \*
- LADOT 701, Venice Blvd. / Dell Ave. (surface parked, attendant managed,150 stalls)
- LADOT 731 Venice Blvd. / Pacific Ave.(surface parked, attendant managed, 177 stalls) \*
- Venice Beach / Rose Ave. (surface parked, attendant managed, ??? stalls)
- Venice Beach / Venice Blvd. (surface parked, attendant managed, ??? stalls)
- Venice Beach / Washington Blvd. (surface parked, attendant managed, 380 stalls)
- MDR / 4220 Admiralty Way (surface parked, metered,183 stalls)

The following sites are proposed new structures. These sites have been identified as publicly owned properties in locations that could serve the community and make a high impact in helping to solve the huge parking shortages that exist for Venice to serve both visitor and local residences alike.

- Metro Div.6 Transportation Hub (proposed underground structure, 320 stalls per level) \*
- Westminster Park (proposed underground structure, 1000 stalls) \*
- 3rd Ave. (proposed above ground structure, 600 stalls)
- Caltrans 90W Fwy Transportation Hub (proposed surface or structure, 2000 + stalls) \*

### **LADOT 740, Rose Ave. at Main St.**

This site has particular importance to the community because of its proximity to several historically significant structures including, but not limited to, the original Venice of America Fire Station, the early 1900's Gas Company building, the Jonathan Borofsky's "Ballerina Clown" on the Venice Renaissance building - Harlan Lee developer, L&M Tobacco Distribution building and the Jay Chiat Advertising Co. Binocular building designed by Frank Gehry, AIA.

The present site was constructed by the MTA in the early 1990's when they needed offsite parking for their employees at the Sunset Ave. Bus Yard. Before that, it was a dirt lot with abandoned railroad tracks that, to this day, are still exposed in the sidewalk and street on the northern border of the property. The lot was never permitted for construction by the Coastal Commission or by LA City and is out of conformance with LAMC in many ways. It has a capacity of 41 cars parked at strange angles, many on a steep incline. The minimum landscaping, headlight wall, safety lighting and perimeter sidewalks all have never been brought up to current standards. The chain link fence looks like a cheap solution that might have been installed for the MTA's temporary use. The circulation for this lot includes one automobile entrance on Little Main St., a one way street on the west side of the lot which starts on Rose Ave. and exits onto Main St. This circulation pattern is not ideal for people parking in the lot nor for traffic passing on Main St. Because of the steep slopes and irregular shape of the property, a large portion of the site is underutilized. It is presently metered and normally is full.

With all of the other notable structures within a couple hundred feet of this site, a structure on this site will require special consideration to make it architecturally compatible with the other notable uses. If this site is developed into a proper parking lot, the City should consider a fully automated parking structure which could provide in excess of 200 parking spaces. Assuming a building structure was designed from the ground up for this purpose, it could be a work of art displaying the inner workings as a form of mechanical and engineered architecture. Picture a partial glass structure with a brightly colored steel frame and robots working to move cars around like a symphony. What comes to mind is a landmark building in Paris, France, the "Pompidou Center", which houses modern art in a building that appears to have been turned inside out, with all of the engineering and mechanical features exposed on the exterior.

### **LADOT Lot 761**

This lot is located on Pacific Ave. between Venice Way and Windward Ave. At present, there is parking for 14 cars in an on-street one way drive-through configuration. This site can be better utilized to

provide a bicycle corral and shuttle bus stop, thereby removing all of the automobile parking. The concept for this site is described in more detail under the Venice Shuttle section of this report.

### **LADOT Lot 731**

This lot, located between north and south Venice Blvd., spans between Dell Ave. and Pacific Ave., with the northern end of the Venice Grand Canal dividing the lot. The present configuration of the lot includes the main entrance on North Venice Blvd., about 100 feet west of Pacific Ave., and has three exits: two on South Venice Blvd. (one of which is about 50 feet West of Pacific Ave) and a third exit on Dell Ave. This configuration is not ideal for traffic circulation, and cars waiting to enter the lot are staged on Venice Blvd., at times bringing westbound traffic to nearly a complete standstill. When this occurs, traffic frequently backs up all the way to Abbot Kinney Blvd., and causes delays to even emergency first responder vehicles.

The concept here would be to build a multiple parking lot on the portion to the east of the Grand Canal. The structure would be built to the height limit and would be designed to be a fully automated lot served by two or more freight elevators to move the cars between floors. The concrete floors would be constructed as flat horizontal planes with the idea in mind that if parking requirements should decrease in the future, starting with the top story and working downward, parking floors could be converted to possible residential units.

Assuming the lot entrance and exit would be on Dell Ave., the first 150 feet after driving onto the lot would be reserved for staging cars before entering the structure. This area would also allow taller and other oversized cars to be in an area without a rooftop. The structure will terminate 25 feet away from the eastern bank of the Grand Canal to maximize afternoon sunlight and reduce morning shadows.

The western side of the Grand Canal will be converted into a public park with direct access to the historic Grand Canal History Bridge (California registered) predating the 1904 opening of Venice of America. Cultural affairs to participate in art installations along with Rec and Parks and a possible water feature. Abutting the park area on the western-most end of the median, a pass-through lane would allow cars traveling on westbound Venice Blvd. to cut through to eastbound Venice Blvd. without having to wait for the traffic light at Pacific Ave. Finally, between the Venice Blvd. cut-through and Pacific Ave., a Shuttle Bus station would be designed and constructed to give riders a place to safely wait out of the sun.

This parking structure would serve to allow preferential parking in the southern portion of the Canals, North Beach and Central areas of Venice. It would also provide additional visitor access to the beach.

### **Metro Division 6 Transportation Hub**

This site has served the Venice community as a place of transportation since the inception of Venice of America. In 1902, prior to opening Venice as a visitor-serving destination beach, California City, Abbot Kinney, the founder and developer of Venice of America, signed a contract with the Los Angeles Railroad Company granting them this site for a passenger train service in exchange for \$1.00. The site was designated a rail house and used to turn the engine car around before making the return trip of pulling the passenger cars back to Union Station in downtown Los Angeles. In the mid 1950's, as the local train

and shuttle services were being dismantled, the property transferred ownership to the Rapid Transit District (RTD), who used it for bus maintenance. In the early 1990's, the RTD was dissolved and morphed into the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, who now owns the property.

At present the MTA is designing a long term plan for the site, which includes some sort of development project that might include a mix of uses on the site. Because of the history of this site, which includes the original grant restrictions to the Los Angeles Railroad Company that required them to provide passenger transportation to Venice, it only follows that the MTA help to solve the transportation problems facing Venice today. It does not seem feasible to reintroduce a train service to Venice because the railroad right-of-ways have all been sold off and long since been developed, however as described in this report transportation needs and solutions are changing and this site is an ideal location to help foster positive enhancements that fit into the bigger transportation needs of Venice.

The site is about three acres, as described in the 2012 Westside Mobility Plan, Venice In-Lieu Parking Fee Study prepared by CDM Smith under contract by the City of Los Angeles, DOT. The report details that this site could be used to make up some of the shortfall of visitor parking that exists in Venice. It goes on to describe a surface parking lot that could store 320 cars and a shuttle service that stopped at this site that could service both residents and visitors and serve to meet the off-street parking requirements for the community to be able to get preferential on-street zone parking permits. The report stops short of considering the MTA's goal of developing the site with a mixed use project that would most likely force parking to be constructed underground. Although the site is two blocks to the beach, and the water table in this area must be considered when proposing underground parking options, other projects in the area, including the Venice Renaissance a few hundred feet away and the Binoculars Building across the street, both have three stories of underground parking structures that used standard height ceilings for self-parked lots. This suggests that, with reduced ceiling heights required for automated parking structures, the MTA site might be able to have as many as four underground levels of parking and still stay above the underground water table. In this configuration, an underground lot on this site could house over 1200 cars.

### **3rd Ave. (proposed new structure)**

The right-of-way from Rose Ave. to Sunset Ave. could be developed into a multiple story parking structure. The site is about one acre and abuts M1 zoned properties on both sides. The width of this street and its current use are out of scale with the existing community, and this last block of 3rd Ave. is not utilized nor needed for automobile circulation.

The backs of all the properties but one face 3rd Ave. Eleven parcels exist on the east side of the street, with four having street access. Of these four, only one has a building that currently accesses 3rd Ave., and the other three have driveways. Of these four properties, two property owners show up on record as owners, and the other parcels have all been tied back to these two owners. On the west side of the street, only one property owner owns the eleven abutting lots.

Based on the lot size and creating a conventional structure with ramps, this site should be able to park over 600 standard size cars. This projection has taken into account circulation aisles and 90 degree perpendicular stalls.

The primary purpose of this lot would be to provide parking to the Rose Ave. and Sunset Ave. business districts, as well as the north of Rose residential area and the northern portion of the North Beach and Oakwood neighborhoods. Further investigations need to be made to determine the feasibility of converting this 60 foot wide right-of-way into this use, both from a legal standpoint and from a safety point of view from LA Fire Department. Some deed considerations to the abutting property owners may also be required, since such a project would restrict their access as it is known today. In conversation with the owners, they are open to discussing the concept and feasibility of this proposal.

### **Caltrans 90W (proposed new structure)**

The Caltrans 90 West Transportation Center needs to be developed with several regional considerations in mind. The site was purchased under eminent domain with the restriction that the land be used for transportation serving uses. The abutting roadways include Lincoln Blvd. on the west and Culver Blvd. on the east. Marina Del Rey is across the street and Venice is less than ¼ of a mile to the north. This freeway, in turn, ties into the 405 freeway and Slauson Blvd., which means people traveling from the east or south into Santa Monica will most likely exit here and continue their route along Lincoln Blvd.

The transition offramp road from the end of the freeway up to Lincoln Blvd. is a divided highway with a median that is currently occupied by bushes and shrubs on the eastern end, with a commercial garden center at the intersection of Mindanao Way. Continuing westerly on the transition roadway, there is the remains of what was once a group of tennis courts, which has long since been converted into an RV storage yard. As the divided road comes together, the Caltrans property is occupied by a Toyota car dealership on the southward side of the eastbound highway.

This transition roadway was purchased by Caltrans to be used for transportation purposes. None of the current uses, with the exception of the streets themselves, are being used for what the land was intended.

The transition highway partition of the 90 W Freeway is a perfect location to construct a transportation center. Such a center could provide a secure park-n-ride parking lot, a stopover for express bus routes and a pickup/drop off for one or more local shuttle services. The Lincoln Blvd. and Culver Blvd. Express buses could make this a stop on their routes, while local shuttle service into MDR and Venice would also gain benefits from the park-n-ride lot and transfers to the Express services.

### **Westminster Park (proposed new structure)**

This site, if properly developed, could serve as a major parking structure in Venice. This could be done without disturbing the existing trees and could even retain the dog park and community center on the surface of the site. The lot size is about 2.25 acres, which translates into about 1200 parking stalls per level (assuming 100% coverage). Because the goal would be to maintain the park setting on the surface, the projection of number of cars on the ground floor should be reduced by 50%. Assuming an automation solution was designed to store the cars, the natural contour of the hillside could be

maintained, which would reduce the number of cars as the height of this underground lot approached Pacific Ave. Also, to maximize the value of the land for this use, a new community center would need to be built on top of the underground lot. This community center could be a multiple story structure and offer the community a cultural center, a theater, an emergency shelter, a day care center and even recreational and technology rooms for the local community.

This underground parking lot would serve the northern part of the Abbot Kinney Blvd. business district, the southern portion of North Venice, Central Venice and the Windward downtown and Circle shopping districts.

## **Emergency Considerations - Evacuation**

Being prepared for a major emergency disaster will save lives and property. The question is not when it will strike, but being ready will make all the difference. Venice is directly exposed to several potential disasters, which include a Tsunami wave from the ocean, an earthquake that will not only shake but could well cause portions of the community to sink into the dry ground as the water table rises to the surface during a liquefaction event. There is also a very real potential of a huge explosion and/or fire breaking out from one or more capped oil wells releasing trapped gasses deep underground.

The disaster plan needs to take into account the worst case analysis conditions: a windy weekend day when high tides and storm waves exist, when the Santa Ana winds are blowing and temperatures are in the 90 degree range, and the beaches are packed with visitors. How does the community get away from the growing path of disaster? What other communities will be adding to the evacuation routes, which will compound the traffic impacts? It must also consider how first responders will get into the community while everyone else is trying to escape. What a mess!!

In 2017-2018, the City convinced Caltrans to relinquish portions of California Highway 187, AKA Venice Blvd., starting at Lincoln Blvd. eastward to the 405 Freeway, and then in 2019, LADOT adopted a permanent "Road Diet" lane reduction plan that interrupts traffic through the Mar Vista community. This lane reduction narrowed the roadway by one lane but the configuration causes a two lane reduction when a car is trying to park, leaving bumper to bumper traffic jams during normal times. Venice Blvd. is the number route eastward out of the Venice community, and City needs to redesign the current evacuation route with projections that consider the worst case disaster scenario occurring.

## **Preferential Parking District (PPD)**

The concept of preferential parking is not new to the Venice region. Each time the City has asked the Coastal Commission for this consideration within the Coastal Zone, the Commission has responded the same way: "Show us where you will replace the public parking that is being removed from the streets and we will allow your program to exist". Some cities call it Zone Parking. The concept is simple: people who live or work within a parking district are issued permits to park within a particular region. All others will be ticketed for violations of parking in the restricted areas.

For this sort of permit system to be deployed throughout Venice neighborhoods, the City must increase the parking capacity at a one to one ration where, for every parking space on the street within the preferential region, a new parking space must be created off-street. This will require parking structures to be constructed.

This sort of program should be an opt-in solution because it costs money to implement and maintain. The City currently uses 2/3 of property owners on a block to approve creating restricted parking before they will install the signs and start enforcement. People with permits still have to move their on-street cars for street cleaning postings. Visitor one day passes are available through LADOT.

## Venice Shuttle

The Venice Shuttle service has been promised in one form or another for decades, back to the Venice Interim Control Ordinance which was adopted in 1988. Since then, the City of Los Angeles has introduced a Dash bus service in other portions of the City, including downtown and the Hollywood areas. The Playa Vista project was approved with a condition to bring a shuttle into Venice, but low ridership quickly caused this service to be ceased. So, after 30 plus years, the community again needs to make a push for a local shuttle.

The shuttle service needs to improve the single passenger vehicle access to local destinations when walking or taking a bike or scooter is infeasible. To achieve this goal, a shuttle needs to visit all of the local destinations that both visitors and residents frequent. Employees who park in remote structures will want a shuttle that gets them to work on time and back to their car at the end of their work day. The cost of the ride needs to scale to the frequency of the rider, meaning if an employee parks at a remote parking lot 5 days a week, the trip cost for them should be very low or free, whereas the visitor who buys a day pass should pay more.

The shuttle needs to be attractive and, when serving visitor traffic, offer interesting historic information about points of interest in the community. The interior and exterior of the shuttle needs to project an image of Venice, a beach town with a lot of characters living in a fairly dense region.

The cost of the shuttle in part needs to be incorporated into the Venice Business Parking District (described in this report).

## Routes

There needs to be several routes that all tie together to provide Venice with a service that allows people to leave their car at home if they are local residents or at remote parking structures for those who work, shop or just visit for the day. The traffic impacted areas include everything west of Lincoln Blvd., but the level of impacts seems to get worse at the end of the road as the beach gets closer. This follows the logic that as there become fewer options to turn and get out of traffic, the traffic backs up more and more.

To address this pattern of traffic, a shuttle which makes frequent stops along the most impacted area of Ocean Front Walk would serve the highest number of passengers. This would be known as the beach

route and would travel on Pacific Ave. and make stops at all major crossings, and then terminate at the Metro Hub at Sunset Ave.

A broader reaching route would need to include the business districts of Rose Ave., Lincoln Blvd., Abbot Kinney Blvd. and Washington Blvd. This route might be divided into two routes, with Venice Blvd. being the common corridor. These two loops would both travel in the clockwise direction to take advantage of the proposed express bus line on Lincoln Blvd. These routes would stop at all parking structures and optionally, during peak periods, the southern loop would detour to the 90West Caltrans Park-n-Ride station.

The Metro Hub would include a route that offered an express bus service from the end of the Expo Line in Santa Monica to a southern express line that made one stop at the 90 West station before continuing to LAX. The trip time of this service would have to be able to offer better than passenger car performance and, once at LAX, have a transfer station that could take passengers to the terminal of their choice. No intermediate stops would be permitted to offer the best service to the riders that were traveling longer distances.

### **Metro**

The Metro's property at 100 Sunset Ave. between Pacific Ave. and Main St. will act as the central transportation hub for the Venice community. All intersecting routes will service this site, along with underground parking opportunities and ride share resources. The hub should allow passengers short term storage, refreshments and restroom services that might be required before leaving Venice or returning to their destination. This station, along with the parking, could be located underground.

### **MTA**

The scale of MTA buses needs to be tailored to meet the ridership demands of the routes they travel. The larger bi-folding buses are out of scale to the streets and routes west of Lincoln Blvd. Smaller bus services that travel more frequently need to be established west of Lincoln Blvd. These routes should frequent the Metro Hub and include transfer stops at Venice Blvd., where the north/south express buses and the Venice Blvd. east/west express buses run.

### **Blue Bus**

The primary service for the Big (little) Blue Bus in Venice will be to make a stop at the Metro Hub. Some local service might augment the Venice Shuttle to improve business traffic from the Santa Monica downtown shopping district into some of the local business districts. Also, neighborhood services along the eastern boundary of Venice on 23<sup>rd</sup> St. / Walgrove Ave. and stopping at Penmar Park would fill in services out of the range of the Venice Shuttle.

### **Culver Green**

This route will be a primary service from the eastern end of the Caltrans 90W Park-n-Ride station where service will start on Culver Blvd., continue north on Lincoln Blvd., stop at Washington Blvd., before continuing west to Pacific Ave. and terminating at the Metro Hub.



## **LADOT**

The newly 2019 introduced LA Now service will act in many ways as a local shuttle service for Venice. The small scale buses they circulate are appreciated for the scale of Venice streets. Their capacity of about 24 riders seems to be scaled to the projected level of ridership if the frequency of trips is often enough. These buses will serve all local business districts as well as many of the residential neighborhoods. They offer on-demand service through their online application making them a perfect fit for a public ride share service.

## **Conclusion**