

BOARD MEMBER MOTION: Sarah Mahir and Lisa Redmond

TITLE: Immediate action to preserve, restore, and enable continued cultural vitality of Venice Beach Boardwalk — focusing on historic Pagodas and support for street performers

DESCRIPTION: Venice’s Ocean Front Walk (“Boardwalk”) is not only a jewel in the City of Los Angeles’ crown but one of Southern California’s iconic public-spaces and the second-most visited tourist destination in the region, attracting approximately 28,000–30,000 visitors per day and roughly 10 million per year.

Along the Boardwalk stand the historic “Pagodas” — hexagonal umbrellas/pergolas — originally constructed in the early 1930s under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), giving Venice Boardwalk a distinctive architectural and cultural character. These Pagodas have been long-cherished as landmarks, and have been repaired or rebuilt in earlier refurbishment efforts, But now **all** Pagodas are reportedly in disrepair — some fenced off — and at risk of permanent removal, despite strong community support for their restoration. The Pagodas’ deterioration threatens not just physical structures, but the very aesthetic, historical, and social fabric that makes Venice Beach globally unique and beloved.

Of late enforcement and cleanup actions along the Boardwalk have disrupted street performance culture. Recently, a longtime Venice street performer (the “Venice Piano Man,” Nathan Pino) had his pianos destroyed/impounded during a multi-agency sweep, despite decades of performing on the Boardwalk — an action that struck many in the community as undermining Venice’s cultural legacy. The Boardwalk’s cultural vitality — including street artists, musicians, performers — contributes significantly to Venice’s identity, draws tourists, supports local businesses, and fosters community life.

With upcoming major global events — notably the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles — tourism and visitor demand in Venice is expected to surge significantly.

MOTION: The Venice Neighborhood Council (VNC) respectfully communicates to our Councilmember Traci Park (CD-11), the Los Angeles City Council, and Mayor Karen Bass that Venice is not only a neighborhood community in Los Angeles — it is an internationally recognized symbol of creativity, freedom, diversity, and unique public-space culture. The Boardwalk, its historic Pagodas, its street performers, and its distinctive social fabric are integral to that identity. As the City prepares for major events and rising tourism, there is a profound opportunity — and responsibility — to preserve what makes Venice irreplaceable.

Therefore, the VNC requests that the City:

- Immediately prioritize the restoration and reopening of the historic Pagodas along Ocean Front Walk — providing funding, permits, and resources via the relevant city agencies (e.g., Department of Recreation & Parks, Bureau of Street Services, Office of Historic Resources) to refurbish, repair, or, where necessary, rebuild the Pagodas to original or appropriate historically sensitive design standards.
- Undertake formal designation of the Pagodas as a protected historic and cultural resource (e.g., Historic-Cultural Monument status), to safeguard them against demolition or neglect.
- Develop and implement a Boardwalk cultural preservation plan that supports street performers, buskers, and other independent artists — recognizing their role in Venice’s character and tourism appeal. This should include a transparent, fair, and culturally sensitive enforcement and permitting framework that allows performers to continue contributing to the Boardwalk’s vibrancy, rather than displacing them through sweeps or blanket confiscations.
- Engage with the local Venice community, stakeholders, and cultural advocates to co-design improvements to Ocean Front Walk that balance public safety, cleanliness, and respect for Venice’s historic and cultural identity.
- Recognize the strategic importance of Venice Beach as a global-destination neighborhood and allocate resources in advance of the upcoming international events (2026 FIFA World Cup, 2028 Summer Olympics) to ensure the Boardwalk’s infrastructure and cultural amenities are maintained, accessible, safe, and welcoming.

Be it further resolved, the VNC urges Councilmember Park, the City Council, and the Mayor to act now, decisively, and collaboratively to safeguard Venice’s cultural heritage, restore its historic landmarks, and support the community of artists and performers who make Venice come alive.

Additionally, upon passage of this motion the prepared letter will be sent.