

VENICE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Land Use & Planning Committee (LUPC) — Membership Application

2026–2027 Term

Applicant Information

Name: Jalal Awan, Ph.D.

Address: Venice, CA 90291

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Stakeholder Status: Venice resident [REDACTED] (Venice, LA, 90291)

1. Motivation - Please explain why you wish to serve on the Land Use & Planning Committee (LUPC) and what inspires your interest in land use, coastal policy, and community planning in Venice?

I live in Venice and want to help ensure that community voices are substantively reflected in land use decisions - not just heard at a meeting and forgotten. My background is in regulatory policy: I currently serve as an expert witness before the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) where I research how formal public comment processes work and what it takes for a community's input to actually reach decision-makers and influence outcomes. I know from direct experience the difference between comments that enter the record and shape decisions, and comments that are noted and set aside. Venice faces real and ongoing development pressure: short-term rental encroachment on housing stock, scale-of-development conflicts in the Coastal Zone, displacement of long-term residents, and a persistent gap between what community members say they want at public meetings and what eventually gets permitted (an example that comes to mind is the lack of transparency around the Venice Dell project). The LUPC is the channel through which residents' concerns can become formal recommendations. I want to bring discipline, data, and procedural knowledge to that work.

2. Prior Service - Have you previously served on the LUPC, another Venice Neighborhood Council committee, or any other planning or land-use related body? If so, please list the committee(s), role(s), and dates of service.

- Applied for VNC Board Community Officer position (2025 cycle); participated in VNC outreach and stakeholder meetings.
- President, Fulbright Association Greater Los Angeles Chapter (Sep 2023 – Sep 2024): led a 10-member board, managed programming with a \$30K State Department budget serving 100+ international scholars across Southern California.

- Volunteer community planning work in San Francisco's Mission District: participated in neighborhood planning forums and advocacy efforts on land use, displacement, and community-serving commercial retention.
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3. Related Experience- Please describe your professional qualifications, training, or other related experience relevant to land use, planning, architecture, development, coastal issues, or public policy.

My professional work sits at the intersection of quantitative policy analysis, public participation, and regulatory proceedings — directly transferable to land use review.

Expert Witness, CPUC (2023 – present): I represent California ratepayers in proceedings before the CPUC involving utility capital expenditure and grid modernization. This work requires reading and writing into formal administrative records — reviewing docket filings, submitting public comments structured to reach ALJs and commissioners, and presenting testimony that survives cross-examination.

Public Input Website (www.jones-awan.com): I built and maintain a public website tracking CPUC regulatory proceedings — designed to help members of the public find docket cards, understand pending decisions, and submit comments that are properly formatted to enter the official record. The site translates dense regulatory filings into accessible summaries for non-specialist audiences.

RAND Corporation, Policy Researcher (2017 – 2023): Six years of applied quantitative policy research for federal agencies, including benefit-cost analysis, risk assessment, and public health infrastructure analysis.

Education: Ph.D., Policy Analysis, Pardee RAND Graduate School (2023); M.S., Energy Systems, USC (Fulbright Scholar); B.E., Electrical Engineering, UET Lahore.

4. Time Commitment and Responsibilities - Serving on the LUPC requires attending meetings (typically two or more times per month), reviewing project materials, meeting with applicants, and drafting Staff Reports. Please confirm your understanding of these responsibilities and describe your availability to commit the necessary time.

I understand that LUPC service requires attending meetings at least twice monthly, reviewing project applications and materials in advance, meeting with applicants, and drafting Staff Reports. I work remotely and have the schedule flexibility to meet these obligations

5. Community Involvement - Please describe your past or current involvement in neighborhood, community, civic, or volunteer organizations—especially within the Venice area.

- Venice resident (90291); active participant in local civic life since returning to the area in 2024.
- Regular reader and occasional contributor to Venice Beachhead, SM Daily Press, and local community publications.
- Volunteer Judge, California Science and Engineering Fair (USC-hosted, 2018 – present): evaluating student projects in climate and energy categories for ~800 high school competitors annually.

- Former President, Fulbright Association Greater Los Angeles Chapter: organized beach cleanups, cultural programming, and community events across the LA area.
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6. Key Issues Facing Venice - From your perspective, what are the three most critical land use and planning issues currently facing the Venice community?

1. Development scale and Coastal Zone character. The Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan and Land Use Plan provide real protections, but enforcement and project review require active committee oversight. The LUPC appears to be the first line of review for applications that could incrementally erode the low-density, pedestrian-oriented character of this coastal city.

2. Housing affordability and displacement. Venice retains relative affordability by westside standards, but the rent pressure is real. Anecdotal evidence suggests short-term rentals in historically affordable pockets (Oakwood, Southeast Venice) are gradually displacing long-term residents and reducing the stock of community-serving rentals – need residents’ voice to ensure decisions reflect community input.

3. Public participation in land use decisions. Residents want to engage at community meetings in good faith, but lack the means to do so. A VNC app for public feedback could be a positive step.

7. Familiarity with Plan Documents and Regulations

I have reviewed the Venice Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (LUP), the Venice Community Plan (VCP), and the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan (VCZSP) in preparation for this application. I am broadly familiar with CA state coastal regulations. I am also familiar with the eight coastal subareas defined in the LUP, the policy framework governing residential density, commercial character, and open space, and the community participation requirements established under Government Code Section 65351.

On the California Coastal Act: I understand its structure as a framework for local coastal program certification, its Chapter 3 policy requirements (shoreline access, habitat protection, visual resources, new development siting), and the role of Coastal Commission oversight in certified LCP jurisdictions. My regulatory work at the CPUC gives me direct experience with California's administrative framework for complex multi-party proceedings.

I am committed to deepening my familiarity with all four documents through active participation in LUPC review work and continuing study.

Jalal Awan, Ph.D.

Venice, CA 90291 · [REDACTED] · [REDACTED]