



Venice Neighborhood Council



LUPC APPLICATION

Contact Information:

Qualifying Stakeholder Address (*Dirección*):

Print Name/Nombre el letra de Molde : Steve Traeger			
	Venice	CA	90291
Street address / Dirección	City / Ciudad	State / Estado	Zip/ Código Postal

Mailing Address (if different):

Same as Above			
Street address / Dirección	City / Ciudad	State / Estado	Zip/ Código Postal

		N/A
Phone (Day) / Teléfono (día)	Phone (Evening) / Teléfono (tardé)	Fax Number
Steve.Traeger@venicenc.org		
Email / Correo Electrónico (very important)		

Contact Numbers:

I hereby certify, that I wish to serve on the Land Use and Planning Committee of the Venice Neighborhood Council and I am a Stakeholder within the boundaries of the VNC area.

Stakeholder Signature/*Firma*

[Steve Traeger](#)

Date

[December 09, 2012](#)



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*Note: Stakeholders that did not registered as a VNC Stakeholder in one of the last two elections should register with the Secretary of the VNC at the **December 18, 2012** Board of Officers Meeting. Please bring proof of stakeholder status with you to register.*



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Please answer all these questions and limit your answers to 200 words or less each. Email to rules@VeniceNC.org and Chair-LUPC@VeniceNC.org.

Questions:

- 1) Please explain why you wish to serve on the LUPC.

As a planning professional working for a neighboring jurisdiction, I found myself spending an inordinate amount of time and energy working on specific issues related to design review, code compliance, and policy goals and objectives for another community. As a stakeholder, living in Venice, I would very much like to stay involved to continue the LUPC work to date and make a positive contribution to the community in which I reside.

- a) Have you served before on the LUPC or other planning and land use related committees? If so, please provide some detail.

Yes, I was appointed to LUPC by the Venice Neighborhood Council in June of 2011. Having just concluded the appointed term and getting up to speed on many of the neighborhood issues and concerns, expressed by residents, I am seeking reappointment. More specifically, if appointed, I welcome the opportunity to continue serving on the LUPC to engage in neighborhood and community issues to (1) work to build community consensus and (2) help shape and guide the future of Venice.

- b) Please state any qualifications or related experiences relevant to this position.

Qualifications and related experience include a Master of Architecture Degree, approximately seven (7) years of experience working for a Pritzker Architectural Prize winning architect, and approximately six (6) years of experience as the Principal Urban Designer for a neighboring community. In my current professional work, I work closely with architects, designers, and developers to help "raise" the design bar and navigate the often complex and contentious City entitlement process. Current responsibilities include:

1. Overseeing the daily activities of the Urban Design section of the City Planning Division related to development review, historic preservation, and implementation of the City's urban design goals and guidelines.
2. Directing the design review of new construction and infill projects to ensure adherence to urban design goals and policies as specified in the elements of the City's established General Plan, Specific Plans, Local Coastal Plan, zoning ordinances, and environmental review processes.



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3. Providing leadership in the development and refinement of new and existing urban design goals and policies.

2) Please list the (2) most pressing planning and land use issues you feel are facing the Venice Community today. What would you like to see done in order to solve, manage, or improve these issues?

1. Circulation (traffic, parking, bicycles, etc.)

Traffic and congestion need to be aggressively managed. There is a compelling need to proactively manage congestion, reduce automobile dependence, and enhance alternative modes of transportation. The City, VNC, LUPC, and stakeholders should work together to institute programs to reduce vehicle trips, like employee transit incentives, car-sharing, vanpooling, parking policies, and public education programs. Additionally, LUPC should work with the community members and developers alike to transform Venice's auto-oriented boulevards into inviting avenues with improved transit, wider sidewalks, distinctive architecture, landscaping, and neighborhood friendly services.

2. Creating a Sustainable Future

Increased emphasis should focus on raising the design bar so that proposed projects, if approved, improve the built environment and add value to the community in a meaningful and sensitive manner. LUPC, in conjunction with the VNC, should work with the City, as necessary, to develop policies and objective standards that:

- a. Require new development to respect Venice's heritage with compatible and quality design, ensuring a sense of "place" where local residents will be attracted to shop, work and live.
- b. Incentivize and/or increase opportunities for more affordable and workforce housing strategically located in mixed-use sites near employment or public transportation.
- c. Encourage complete neighborhoods with shopping, services, and gathering places within walking distance of new and existing housing.
- d. Balance smart, sensitive, and appropriate development with the careful conservation of our neighborhoods and commercial areas. Public amenities should be provided to increase livability and sociability for all community members while maintaining Venice neighborhood "character."
- e. Increase open space and connectivity. Additional usable open space and vital community gathering places are necessary as are safe, walkable, and bike-friendly environments that connect "green" paths and routes.



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- f. Preserve Venice's character and create complete neighborhoods with local services within walking distance.
 - g. Maintain our quality of life; support a sustainable economy; encourage creative arts and small businesses; increase mobility for all who live, work and visit here; and ensure the long-term social, economic, and environmental sustainability of our community.
3. Mass, Scale, and Character

Change is often difficult but generally healthy and positive in the long run. While conserving neighborhood character and preserving specified historic resources has positive impacts, neighborhoods should evolve and be permitted to change over time. Policy goals and objectives should strive to maintain neighborhood scale and character while allowing for neighborhoods to transition and change for the better. To ensure the quality of the built environment, LUPC should establish design policies and guidelines to shape new projects so that they enhance Venice's character. If appointed, to help ensure neighborhood compatibility, I look forward to working with the Ad Hoc Committee on Mass, Scale and Character to develop policies and objective standards that require new buildings:

- a. Be of a compatible scale and character with the existing neighborhood.
 - b. Provide respectful transitions between new and existing structures.
 - c. Conform to building envelopes that preserve access to light and air, require appropriate setbacks along neighborhood streets, appropriately transition in size and scale toward surrounding residential structures.
 - d. Provide ground level open space.
- 3) Under what kinds of situations do you feel it to be appropriate to grant exceptions or variances to the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan or other LA City Planning codes? *(Note the findings regarding these entitlements are listed below)*

Projects, in general, should be consistent with applicable rules, codes, and guidelines until such time as they no longer work. When this is the case, they should be revised to reflect changing community values or a variance granted. This is not to say, that the granting of a variance should be taken lightly. Where appropriate, when the findings can be made in the affirmative, a variance should be granted when minor relief is required to benefit the project and community as a whole. That is, due to some special circumstance or condition not applicable to other properties in the vicinity, minor relief should be granted provided that it does not constitute a special privilege or preferential treatment and does not adversely impact the surrounding community. If minor relief truly and genuinely significantly improves a project thereby benefiting property owners and/or the community, it may be appropriate for a



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variance to be granted. As neither the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan nor the LA City Planning codes can anticipate every circumstance or condition, decision makers and stakeholders should be reasonable and flexible in an effort to remedy the issue(s) on a case by case basis.

- 4) Please review the Venice Coastal Zone Specific Plan and the Venice Land Use Plan (which was certified by the California Coastal Commission) and comment briefly on both your knowledge of and your opinion of each.

The VCZSP and the Venice Land Use Plan appear to guide development and take reasonable measures to preserve neighborhood character, scale, and mass without being overly prescriptive. Based on land use designations, development parameters are defined to establish maximum allowable heights, density, use, and setbacks (curiously, FAR and step backs requirements do not appear to be referenced). Within the defined building envelope, the VCZSP provides architects, designers, and developers with the flexibility to design creative and innovative architecture.

Access VCZSP at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/specplan/pdf/VenCoastal.pdf>.

Access Venice Land Use Plan at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/complan/othrplan/OPAREA/VENLUP.HTM>

VARIANCES AND SPECIFIC PLAN EXCEPTIONS

Sec. 562, Los Angeles City Charter

The Area Planning Commission may permit an exception from a specific plan if it makes all the following findings:

- (a) That the strict application of the regulations of the specific plan to the subject property would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purpose and intent of the specific plan;
 - (b) That there are exceptional circumstances or conditions applicable to the subject property involved or to the intended use or development of the subject property that do not apply generally to other property in the specific plan area;
 - (c) That an exception from the specific plan is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property within the specific plan area in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships is denied to the property in question;
 - (d) That the granting of an exception will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to the property or improvements adjacent to or in the vicinity of the subject property; and
 - (e) That the granting of an exception will be consistent with the principles, intent and goals of the specific plan and any applicable element of the general plan.
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Los Angeles Municipal Code, (LAMC)
Chapter I, General Provisions & Zoning.
Article 2, Sec. 12.27, Variances



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D. Findings for Approval. The decision of the Zoning Administrator shall be supported by written findings of fact based upon evidence taken, written or oral statements and documents presented, which may include photographs, maps and plans, together with the results of any staff investigations.

Consistent with Charter Section 562, no variance may be granted unless the Zoning Administrator finds all of the following:

1. That the strict application of the provisions of the zoning ordinance would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purposes and intent of the zoning regulations
2. That there are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity;
3. That the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of the special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, is denied to the property in question
4. That the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located; and
5. That the granting of the exception is consistent with the principles, intent and goals of the Specific Plan.