

VENICE LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM (LCP)

MASS, SCALE, AND CHARACTER PUBLIC WORKSHOP TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2017

Transcribed Public Comments

Group 1:

Exercise #1 "Our neighborhood" Map exercises

- Mass, Scale, Character committee prepared a plan that was not adopted by VNC
- Specific Plan was meant to be complementary to Land Use Plan, but is not working the way it's supposed at implementing plan
- # of precedents (projects) that have been denied by APC or Coastal Commission, but DCP will approve similar project
- "Neighborhood character is a preservation issue" should take into account residents living there
- Old growth trees are being knocked down + neglected with construction
 - Trees are part of neighborhood character
- Speculation is happening, sometimes buildings are torn down and replaced w/a building used for short-term rentals
- 100 ft notification radius for Coastal Development Permit seems too low
- Why is there no notice for Coastal Development Permit Exemptions?
- Lower lot coverage desired → more open space
- Discourage roof decks
- Adjacency is an issue → sun + shade impacts of tall buildings next to one-story homes need to be mitigated
- Don't want to prejudice LCP and want other departments to understand the importance of the plan
- Corner buildings are important "introductions" to a street
- 2001 density should be baseline density
- Multi-family neighborhoods should stay multi-family
 - Shouldn't be able to decrease # of units that were existing on a lot
 - SF should as stay SF
- Bungalow typology is charming and neighborhood would like to see more
 - Walk Streets are also positive aspect of Venice character
- Big boxy structures are really a problem for neighborhood character
- Venice is one of few communities in coastal zone that is designated to be protected, which makes it unique
- Venice needs to make low-income housing available to attract artists back to the neighborhood
- Non-residential compatibility issues exist too
 - Tech companies are turning Venice into corporate campus
 - Have turned restaurants, cafes into cafeterias for company
- Need to protect pedestrian experience
 - Blacked out windows which make streets unfriendly
- Don't let projects take medians away → decreases feeling of open space
- Preserve existing industrial land

- “All the things that made us want to live here are leaving”
 - Abbot Kinney is no longer the local neighborhood center it used to be
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Group 2:

Exercise #1 “Our Neighborhood” MAP Exercise

- In the LUP[,] language should not be subjective - it should have metrics
 - Not just “compatibility”
 - Can we get rid of this metric of “character”? Maybe - Maybe not
 - The “Evolution” one seems to be the most accommodating
 - Preservation. Yes. But the ship has sailed. Maybe in the lost canals, it’s ok to preserve
 - PPL [People] in Venice have eclectic tastes
 - Allow people to do what they want on their property - we can’t control everything - but there is a happy medium.
 - Transformation seems extreme. But it makes some sense since the value of the land is so high.
 - Is Preservation fair? People pay a lot for this area and they have some needs, but the community is important, too.
 - Historic designation... it messes with property values, it lowers my land value → it limits what I can do on my land
 - Problem with SurveyLA is that it wasn’t a public process. And there was a lot of mistakes. The City shouldn’t stop projects that were identified in SurveyLA
 - There are already a lot of changes in Venice
 - The thing I never want to see change is the Venice Canals
 - Increased property values allow some people to see increased value in their home value, which is good
 - MSC Topic beings - (reading defs)
 - Mass - missing: above-grade volume matters, not underground volume
 - Don’t talk about FAR
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Group 3:

Exercise #1 “Our Neighborhood” Map Exercise

Ground Rules for Focus Group Discussion taped on notes

- How do we preserve?
 - Anticipate sea level rise
 - Traffic mitigation
 - Mass, Scale, Character
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Group 4:

Exercise #1 “Our neighborhood” Map Exercise

- 20 years too late
- Stopping development (current)

- Preserve Oakwood

Exercise #2 “Mass, Scale, Character”

- Character
 - Has not been identified
 - So much development]
 - Walkstreet(?) → ??? context
 - Not just the block
 - Varies by neighborhood
 - Reference to original character
 - Rooflines
 - Architecture styles
 - Building materials
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Group 5:

Exercise #1: Our Neighborhood

- Preserve: restore and improve, but do not tear down old, existing buildings (or maintain character)
 - Example: Addition in back in okay, but not in the front
- All of Venice should be made historical
- Coastal Act says to preserve
- Huge buildings incongruent: should never have been built
 - Due to lacking an Implementation Plan, City is not stopping these constructions, so residents appeal to the CCC
- Keep diversity, No on huge buildings
- Buildings should have front yard and front door
- No fortresses, which are common in Oakwood
- Yes to pedestrian-friendly, transparency to see neighbors
- Maintain social fabric
- Character should include housing types in definition
- Affordable housing?
- CCC “adult” in room
- I am concerned about backdoor deals and corruption
- Does not like City employee saying “Box houses fit in character because they already exist on street.”
- Developments should have max FAR
- Do not like apartments disappearing for a more homogeneous demographic (in terms of economic, wealth, and ethnicity); losing too many units
- VNC definitions are still subjective and need parameters.
- Planning terms are a little too technical
- Need to balance economic value and preservation
- What to do if all houses are already developed, but new regulations restrict what is has not been developed yet?
- Do not like developers buying a house to build a larger one
- Walls defeat purpose of the area: you live in the canals to see the canals, not walls.
- Concerns with Airbnb and using residential as a business
- No 3-story buildings.

- No measure height from St. Cente???
 - Open space must be front or rear facing.
 - No compounds! Mandatory front door.
 - Building **one** 3-story building perpetuates more 3-story buildings
 - Anecdote: house was bought and wall was built up to yard property line, now she can see her neighbors and also feels a lack of privacy due to closeness of their wall to her own backyard; she can see her neighbor go from room to room and it makes her uncomfortable.
 - No illegal accessory units. Example: bridge continues front and back
 - Unit above garage was built after the permit inspection
 - Keep single family homes and apartments. Keep out ugly boxes and rich people.
 - Propose Cap on 2500 ??? for new construction
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Group 6:

Exercise #1 - Our Neighborhoods

- Significant development in Venice occurred between 1972-today-~~60s~~-~~10s~~ [is] an important period in Venice architecture
 - Not 1900's - 1940's
- Definition of character, mass, + scale should be revisited
 - Unpopular in community meetings
- 3 categories in Venice: small, old; contemporary; new, bigger
- SurveyLA, Historic Preservation
 - Competing values; diversity AND history should be respected
- Building shadows are becoming a concern
- Venice SP already defines mass + scale
- What was the intent of classifying Venice as a unique coastal community?
 - What was intended for preservation? (why boundary at Lincoln?) This should be clearly established.
- Are we trying to maximize mass + scale?
- PPT provided perception that one example was acceptable and not the other; both examples though can be considered acceptable
- Developers denied permits because community didn't like design - that is wrong
- Character of pedestrian community should be preserved (setbacks, etc.)
 - Pedestrian oriented character shouldn't be only for a corridor, it should be for a whole area
 - There are multiple characters in Venice (Golden Triangle vs. Silver Strand)
- Mass definition: remove portion of definition on building as viewed from street

Part 3A

1. Community not very livable (terrible sidewalks, "like a jungle" → tall fences)
 - a. Community should be safer (overgrown landscaping)
 - b. Too many powerlines (conflict w/trees)

3A #3

- Many of iconic neighborhoods have distinct front yard setbacks
- Venice is urban neighborhood, why are suburban solutions being proposed?
 - In small lots, there are setbacks, garden areas + living space (this makes community

unique)

- 3ft/5ft setbacks not enough living space
- Intimacy w/neighbors is important
- Balconies create intimacy
- Key is whether you see people or not
- Plain boxes are concerning - articulation is important
 - Articulation through zoning can be a disaster
- Accessibility + friendliness
 - Garage placement may be disruptive
 - What does accessibility portray about neighborhoods?
- Landscaping should not be used to build fortresses

3A #4

- Multi-family, multi-family duplexes should be better represented
- Ocean Front Walk was down zoned
- Community needs underserved
- single-family areas could be conserved, should not be focus for all Venice though
- Oakwood/Ocean Front should allow multi-family
 - Nearly all of Venice could accommodate more multi-family
- 10,000 sq ft single family should not be allowed
 - No lot consolidation to accommodate large single family

#7

- Venice SP is good, new zoning options concerning
 - Allowance for multi-family is important (new multi-family zoning tools a plus-ex:occupancy/density)
- Reduce parking requirements - design for people, not cars
- Hard to address parking considering traffic issues