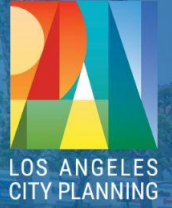




LOS ANGELES CITY PLANNING



Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor Land Use Concepts Outreach Summary

Summary of Feedback

Background

Los Angeles City Planning (LACP) is in the process of updating many of its community plans, three of which are in the Southeast Valley: Van Nuys-North Sherman Oaks, North Hollywood-Valley Village, and Sherman Oaks-Studio City-Toluca Lake-Cahuenga Pass. Each Community Plan consists of a policy document and a land use map. The policy document lays out the community's goals, policies, and programs, while the land use map identifies where certain uses (such as residential, commercial, or industrial) are permitted. Together, the policy document and land use map inform local zoning decisions. Proposed changes to the City's zoning are usually initiated through Community Plan Updates.

LACP is addressing the rezoning portion of the Ventura-Cahuenga Specific Plan Amendment as part of the Community Plan Updates underway in the Southeast and Southwest Valley. This approach will use the City's resources more effectively and allows for zoning that can be tailored to each community while supporting a holistic approach to land use planning for the Ventura Boulevard Corridor. The Community Plans seek to align land use with incoming infrastructure, respond to changing market conditions and demographic projections, and create opportunities for housing and employment. Including Ventura Boulevard in this effort is a logical step to create an integrated land use plan that reflects a collective vision for the South Valley. This document is a high-level comprehensive summary of community feedback on the proposed land use concepts along the Ventura-Cahuenga corridor that were unveiled in summer 2022.

Over the past year, the Southeast Valley Community Plan Update (SEV CPU) team has been gathering information about the Ventura-Cahuenga corridor. During the month of June 2022, the SEV CPU team hosted three webinars to share the initial land use concepts for the corridor. In July 2022, the SEV CPU team also held Office Hours sessions that were an opportunity for the public to be a part of guided conversations regarding the proposed concepts.



The webinars and Office Hours sessions were also opportunities for the public to provide input on the Guiding Principles for the SEV CPU. Since their release in 2019, these principles have been refined through community input and to reflect LACP's renewed commitment to equity. The Guiding Principles are as follows:

- Accommodate anticipated growth in a strategic, inclusive, equitable and sustainable manner
- Introduce strategies to address future and existing housing needs
- Encourage walkable neighborhoods that offer a range of amenities and destinations
- Promote a variety of employment opportunities to support a resilient and inclusive economy
- Support connectivity through a bikeable, walkable, and transit-accessible public realm
- Support a built environment with open spaces that sustain people, wildlife and ecosystems
- Raise design expectations and recognize unique development patterns
- Foster equitable neighborhoods that address historic patterns of exclusion

Feedback was received in writing during the webinar question-and-answer sessions, verbally during Office Hours, and from online surveys.

Webinar Format

LACP hosted three webinars, two in English and one in Spanish. Webinars were held at the following times:

- Tuesday, June 14, 2022, 5:30-7:00pm (English)
- Wednesday, June 15, 2022, 5:30-7:00pm (Spanish)
- Thursday, June 16, 2022, 12-1:30pm (English)

The meetings each consisted of an overview of the Community Plan Update process for the Southeast Valley, what has happened in the project to date, and the proposed land use concepts for the Ventura-Cahuenga corridor. During the webinars, staff provided a question-and-answer session to allow participants to hear directly from the team, and share their comments and suggested goals for the updated plan via Mentimeter.

Office Hours Format

LACP hosted a series of 21 Office Hour sessions with residents, community groups, and other interested participants via the Google Meet platform. Office hours were held on the following dates from 10am to 1pm, 2pm to 3:45pm, and 5pm to 7:45pm:

- Wednesday, July 13th, 2022
- Thursday, July 14th, 2022



- Monday, July 18th, 2022
- Tuesday, July 19th, 2022

Each session was an opportunity for participants to learn more about the project, present questions, and offer comments and suggestions directly to the SEV CPU team. Staff at each session consisted of at least one presenter to facilitate the discussion and one notetaker to document feedback that would be incorporated into this summary. When signing up for Office Hours on the project website, participants were able to choose whether to attend a “1-on-1” discussion, which consisted of staff meeting with one participant, or a “Community Discussion” in which multiple individuals were able to engage with staff as a group. Community Discussions were also opportunities for stakeholder groups to provide feedback in one meeting rather than for group members to have to attend individually.

Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor Surveys

During the course of the outreach period, staff sent informational e-blasts to interested community members that directed them to the Ventura-Cahuenga Land Use Concepts Storymap, which provided background information on the Community Plan Update, the community plan update process, and a description of the Land Use Concepts.

Embedded within the storymap were two surveys soliciting additional feedback on the goals of the Community Plans, the Guiding Principles, and the Community Benefits Tool. The questions on the surveys were structured in a way for respondents to provide additional feedback that staff used to capture nuanced suggestions for the draft land uses. This feedback was collected leading up to the composition of this summary.

Additional Materials and How to Provide Input

To view the materials presented at the webinar sessions, please visit bit.ly/3VRGzKz.

We always welcome further feedback and questions. You can email us at planning.southeastvalley@lacity.org. Your thoughts and comments are important to us and we will consider this input as we refine these concepts in the future. As part of our next steps, we will use this feedback to continue updating the zoning plan during the next phase in the process (the “Consult” phase) and draft a General Plan Land Use (GPLU) map to be released late 2023. This map will be shared with the public through a GPLU workshop to further refine the land use concepts in later phases.



Sherman Oaks

For the Sherman Oaks community, staff heard from participants that the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor needs to accommodate future growth, though only in areas that don't abut single-family neighborhoods. We also heard recommendations for building features (such as preferred height, FAR, and sustainability enhancements) and community benefits (such as open space and accessible plazas) that should supplement new development. Participants also proposed multiple mobility enhancements that would help make Ventura Boulevard more vibrant and pedestrian-friendly.

Address development, density, and design

- Use higher FAR as an incentive to leverage more community benefits from developers. These benefits could include community parking, local shuttles, affordable housing, and senior housing.
- Apply the Village General Plan Land Use concept to the entirety of the Sherman Oaks area of the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor to give it more of a “hometown” feel.
- Incentivize moderate-income workforce housing, not just low-income housing.
- Mandate inclusionary zoning (in which affordable housing would be required for new residential development) instead of collecting Affordable Housing Linkage Fees.
- Allow for ground floor medical offices in mixed-use development.
- Consider how density and FAR incentives (such as Transit-Oriented Communities) within a half-mile radius of high-quality transit may change the character of neighborhoods.
- Preserve existing single-family zones and limit new development exclusively to non-residential sites.
- Limit the number of square feet for new development constructed within the neighborhood.
- Limit building height to a maximum of 45 feet.

Create conditions that would improve mobility

- Construct housing closer to Ventura Boulevard to make it more walkable, benefit local businesses from increased foot traffic, and reduce the need to drive.
- Implement the following concepts along Ventura Boulevard to improve the pedestrian experience:
 - Street lighting, pedestrian scale lighting, and accent lighting
 - Enhanced crosswalks and intersections
 - Covered sidewalks
 - Bus stops with shading devices and lighting
 - Public art elements
 - Seating elements with shading that faces the sidewalk
 - Wider Sidewalks
 - Permanent *al fresco* dining



- Explore areas that could accommodate community parking.
- Facilitate development in a way that the local community could benefit from public transportation.
- Plan for future transit investments along Van Nuys Boulevard (e.g. the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Corridor) and Sepulveda Boulevard (e.g. the Sepulveda Transit Corridor Project). Designate the area around these potential stations into a Regional Center and make it more transit-oriented and affordable.
- Prohibit drive-throughs in the Village GPLU concepts.

Allow for more greenery and open space

- Provide more street trees and parking lot trees.
- Reduce building setbacks to make way for more open space.

Facilitate environmentally equitable and sustainable communities

- Design climate-conscious buildings with covered walkways and shading devices that would be allowed beyond setbacks.



Studio City

Most participants from Studio City were concerned about impacts such as traffic congestion, lack of parking, and construction-related noise. To mitigate these impacts, participants proposed solutions such as measured development and keeping building heights lower. In light of concerns over parking impacts, residents also offered different solutions that would either reduce parking demand (such as reducing required parking stalls for new development) or increase the supply for parking spaces. Additionally, participants presented a suite of recommendations to make the Ventura-Cahuenga corridor more pedestrian-friendly and with less reliance on personal vehicles. Other concerns included the lack of tree canopy, the current lack of green space and accessible parks, and impacts on local wildlife from potential new development.

Address development, density, and design

- Prioritize high-density, mixed-use development while mandating or incentivizing additional affordable housing to make the area more hospitable for renters. Additionally, high-density developments should incorporate more affordable housing than what is currently permitted.
- The areas along Ventura Boulevard between Vineland Avenue and Woodrow Wilson Drive should have the same incentives as the western part of the plan area near the Interstate 405 freeway. Limiting height to no more than 3 to 7 stories in this area would inhibit potential growth opportunities.
- Allow affordable units to be larger in size so that tenants feel encouraged to live in them long-term.
- Cater planning to each neighborhood's specific needs rather than apply a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Development along Ventura Boulevard should be slow, measured, and kept at low density. Additionally, consider how more density may negatively impact the neighborhood if it isn't proposed in the right location.
- Retain the small-town feel on the south side of Ventura Boulevard adjacent to the hills.
- Mandate a tax that would disincentivize keeping rental housing vacant.
- Consider adjusting the proposed maximum height along portions of Ventura Boulevard in Studio City from 7 stories to 6 Stories.

Address homelessness

- Address homelessness along the LA River, Mulholland Drive, and Cahuenga Pass.

Create conditions that would improve mobility

- Make the corridor a more walkable and attractive area for pedestrians. Improvements should include: allowing outdoor dining; prioritizing uses that have high-foot traffic;



disallowing places that are only open by appointment; and heightening standards for building frontages so that it is more pleasant to walk along the corridor.

- Lower parking requirements to provide more land area for future development.
- Situate all parking behind, rather than along, Ventura Boulevard.
- Redesign streets to accommodate increased traffic resulting from higher density development.
- Construct parking structures to increase local supply and convert private parking to public parking.
- Consider how higher density would impact traffic along the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor, including the inability to evacuate the area in an emergency. Reducing parking spaces for new development may also inhibit neighborhood circulation since it could force more residents to park on the street.

Improve connectivity along the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor

- Explore opportunities to expand protected bicycle lanes along the LA River and close gaps in the bicycle path network.
- Establish a better transit connection from the eastern to the western side of the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor and shift priority from cars to public transportation.
- Create a better transit connection between Ventura Boulevard and the B Line (Red) station near Universal City so that the station isn't as isolated.

Allow for more greenery and open space

- Create more neighborhood-serving open space that's accessible to young children and elderly individuals. Consider pairing these spaces with coffee shops and other locally-serving amenities.
- Prevent the decrease of neighborhood tree canopy resulting from new development. Trees should also be listed as a community benefit that developers would provide in exchange for bonus height and density.
- Expand opportunities for more open space along the LA River.
- Allow for open space and green rooftops on new residential buildings since apartment residents wouldn't have their own yards.
- Refrain from installing artificial turf and invasive flora in open spaces.

Facilitate environmentally equitable and sustainable communities

- Consider the impacts of denser development on the hillside's natural topography and biodiversity, specifically the woodland area that hosts a mountain lion south of Ventura Boulevard between Whitsett Avenue and Coldwater Canyon Avenue.



Cahuenga Pass

Participants from the Cahuenga Pass area were primarily concerned about the impacts of new development on vehicular traffic, quality of life, and property values, while some were interested in incorporating more by-right development along the corridor. Other participants requested for the plan update to include land uses that would assist individuals experiencing homelessness. In regards to locating housing near quality transit, some participants called for a more well-connected transportation system to accompany new development. Staff also heard requests for more open space and greenery along the corridor, specifically community gardens and shade trees. Lastly, participants also wanted staff to consider potential climate change mitigations for new development so that residents would be able to efficiently utilize local resources.

Address development, density, and design

- Allow more housing to be built by right.
- Allow for more hotels near tourist destinations such as Universal City since they would:
 - offer more variety of vacation options without having to travel by car, and
 - prevent homes from being turned into vacation rentals (such as AirBnBs).
- Consider how new development may impose impacts such as construction noise, lack of available parking, large-scale buildings affecting the view from the hillside, and decreasing property values.

Address homelessness

- Allow for mental health and drug rehabilitation facilities that would serve the needs for unhoused individuals living along the Ventura-Cahuenga corridor.

Create conditions that would improve mobility

- Explore ways for emergency services (such as ambulances and fire engines) to efficiently access the Ventura-Cahuenga corridor during high traffic periods.
- Create and implement a traffic mitigation plan before increasing neighborhood density, specifically in areas such as the segment on Ventura Boulevard between Laurel Canyon and Carpenter.
- Consider how seasonal traffic congestion increases around Universal Studios.
- Consider the parking needs of local residents when allowing for more density since local neighborhood streets are narrow, were built for single-family households, and may be unable to accommodate more parking demand from new development.

Improve connectivity along the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor

- Create a well-connected and expanded transportation system that would support new development.



Allow for more greenery and open space

- Incorporate zoning for community gardens.
- Explore how land owned by the Los Angeles Conservancy could be used for open space.
- Plant more shade trees along the corridor.

Facilitate environmentally equitable and sustainable communities

- Implement more climate change mitigations so that the community would be able to utilize more resources. Certain aquifers in the valley, for example, are being cleaned so that the community would be able to use more locally-sourced water.



Corridor-Wide Comments

Some Office Hour participants did not specify a geographic area of interest and their comments were documented as applying to the entire Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor. During these meetings, staff heard concerns over new, more dense development such as over-crowding and distribution of resources (such as water) to new residents. Staff heard various mobility recommendations including methods that would reduce reliance on cars or not decrease the number of required parking spaces for new developments. Most participants were widely concerned over the lack of available open space and declining tree canopies, with a few of them advocating for impervious surfaces along the corridor that would help absorb groundwater.

Address development, density, and design

- Incorporate more density into the plan, specifically along Ventura Boulevard, Lankershim Boulevard, Vineland Avenue, and on underutilized parking lots.
- Allow for small-lot density and duplexes in residential areas that allow lot splits (i.e. the division of one lot into multiple lots).
- Create a more streamlined and financially feasible process to develop affordable units. Additionally, construct more affordable housing near transit.
- Add more mixed uses on parcels that are adjacent to commercial zones.
- Keep Ventura Boulevard a pleasant, walkable area with the addition of new structures, storefronts, and outdoor dining.
- Improve the architectural quality and overall appearance of the corridor.
- Match the transitional height conditions that are exhibited in NOHO West.
- Consider how allowing for 3-7 stories of residential development may not go far enough to support storefront uses on the ground level.
- Consider the risk of new development displacing tenants who benefit from rent-controlled apartments.
- Preserve R1 parcels and existing neighborhood aesthetics while retaining the open feeling of the Valley that residents find desirable. Additionally, consider how high-density, growth-accommodating development in the Valley may impact community character.
- Consider how California Senate Bill 9 - which allows the construction of accessory dwelling units by ministerial approval - could possibly make neighborhoods over-crowded and over-populated.
- Refrain from allowing more than 3-4 stories in new construction due to possible issues such as increased noise, parking, traffic, law enforcement, overall cleanliness of areas along the LA River, reduction of property values, and loss of neighborhood identity.
- Construction on flat areas should be limited to 60-70ft, while those against the hillside shouldn't exceed the crest line by more than 10ft.
- Consider how new developments being built up to the property line could potentially eliminate privacy for existing residents.



- Consider how the number of fire hydrants has not kept up with the increased building density, which would reduce the effectiveness of fighting fires.

Create conditions that would improve mobility

- Expand sidewalks within commercial areas and create ways for pedestrians to cross wide roads more easily in order to access local amenities.
- Encourage better, more accessible alternatives to driving and reduce dependence on personal vehicles by half. Methods could include incorporating bus lines with shorter lead times, dedicated bus lanes, and new bike lanes on Ventura Boulevard. Allow for subway stations to be built on Ventura Boulevard.
- Block travel for cars and trucks at the LA River along Cahuenga Boulevard, forcing traffic to use Lankershim Boulevard instead.
- Explore tools such as enhanced networks and first/last mile improvements (such as shade and trash receptacles at bus stops) that would enhance the transportation experience along the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor.
- Employ stronger transportation demand management strategies for bonus affordability projects, such as applying penalties for developers that provide excessive amounts of parking.
- Reduce the number of surface parking lots by locating parking behind (rather than along) the Ventura-Cahuenga corridor, situating parking underground to make room for more walking and biking space, and constructing centralized parking garages that would encourage people to walk to their destinations.
- Eliminate parking minimums and enact parking maximums to reduce the need for massive parking lots or structures. Alternatively, refrain from decreasing the amount of required spaces for new development.
- Refrain from taking away mixed-traffic lanes when incorporating bicycle infrastructure.
- Consider how new residents may not utilize the local public transit network if they perceive it as unsafe.

Incorporate more community-serving local amenities

- Allow creative public studio spaces that would host activities and tools that otherwise wouldn't be permitted in an apartment. Examples include woodworking, painting, ceramics, and 3D printing. The plan can also allow for community spaces such as indie bookstores, craft stores with community workshops, and tag walls.
- Plan for more schools, healthcare facilities, and libraries.
- Create spaces for local community centers that would contain publicly accessible meeting rooms for civic organizations like Neighborhood Councils.
- Plan for more safety enforcement, especially along the LA River and the Metro B Line (Red).



Improve connectivity along the Ventura-Cahuenga Corridor

- Facilitate a connection from the LADOT DASH system to the Metro B Line (Red) Station.

Allow for more greenery and open space

- Require fees from developers that would be directed towards park improvements or new public spaces. Additionally, new developments should prioritize the creation of green space rather than parking spaces.
- Use additional FAR as an incentive for developers to provide green open space or require development fees that would go towards the creation and maintenance of open space.
- New development should not happen within the 500-year floodplain unless it's open space or an adaptive reuse project being turned into open space.
- Prevent the decrease of tree canopy from unregulated tree trimming and over-trimming of trees. Additionally, provide developers with clear instructions for tree removal during construction.
- Require native trees to be planted in community areas.
- Consult with Neighborhood Councils to identify appropriate areas for open space and determine which areas would be ideal to incorporate pocket parks should funds become available.
- Plan for more green space in the transition zone between new developments.

Facilitate environmentally equitable and sustainable communities

- Require new buildings to be energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable.
- Employ electric buses and other forms of energy-efficient public transportation.
- Reduce impervious surfaces by 30% and replace them with permeable pavement in areas such as parking lots.
- Cater pavement and landscape permeability methods based on the needs of specific neighborhoods.
- Incorporate more bioswales and vegetated medians rather than planter boxes as methods of low-impact development.
- Extend the Wildlife Ordinance to the south side of Ventura Boulevard in portions near Whitsett and in the Cahuenga Base.
- Consider how the city would sufficiently distribute groundwater to new residences if development is densified.