

Meeting Summary

Westside Community Plans Advisory Group (WCPAG)

Planning the Westside

Meeting 2: June 5, 2023, 5PM-7PM

CONTENTS

Overview.....	p 1-2
Main room summaries.....	p 2-4
Breakout session 1 summaries.....	p 4-7
Breakout session 2 summaries.....	p 7-14

Overview

On June 5, 2023, Los Angeles City Planning's Westside Community Plans Update team hosted the [Westside Community Plans Advisory Group's](#) (WCPAG) second meeting via Zoom.

The meeting opened with a staff presentation and summary of the topics previously discussed at the first WCPAG meeting held April 3, 2023, including a summary of the feedback received. The second meeting also included a more in-depth presentation on the [new code](#). The new code presentation included an overview of the modular features of the new zoning including Form, Frontage, Development Standards, Use, and Density.

At this meeting the Advisory Group was tasked with providing feedback on the overall vision for westside commercial corridors, Draft Commercial General Plan Land Use (GPLU), and Commercial Zoning Strategies.

The 52 WCPAG members represent organizations and individuals from the following four Westside Community Plan geographies:

- Palms - Mar Vista - Del Rey
- West LA
- Westchester - Playa Del Rey
- Venice

Composed of a diverse group of community leaders, residents, students, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, business leaders, neighborhood councils, and housing development experts, the Advisory Group serves as a sounding board to assist planning staff in evaluating land use policy and zoning at different stages of the [Westside Community Plan Update](#) process. The next WCPAG meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 7, 2023.

Please review the [WCPAG announcement letter](#) for a full list of selected members to the Advisory Group. For more information on the Westside Community Plan Update and the WCPAG, visit the [website](#) for resources and to sign up for updates.

WHERE AND WHEN

Monday, June 5, 2023, 5:00pm - 7:00pm
Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Background

Members of the Advisory Group have the opportunity to serve as a community sounding board to provide feedback on draft materials shared by planning staff. Each member of the Advisory Group brings with them a unique perspective, set of experiences, and expertise. The Advisory Group is not a decision-making body and supports planning staff in evaluating initial draft community plan materials – such as new Draft General Plan Land Use (GPLU) maps, Zoning, and Draft Policy Documents.

Structure of 2nd Meeting

The second WCPAG meeting consisted of three parts: (1) presentations from planning staff on various topics and relevant materials, (2) small, staff-facilitated, breakout group discussions to allow for more focused, in-depth dialogue, and (3) large group report backs that allows all members to hear what other groups discussed. In addition to these meetings, members are tasked with providing targeted feedback on the key deliverables, such as the draft Commercial General Plan Land Use (GPLU) maps and draft zoning strategies. Breakout groups were tailored by geography. Group 1: Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey, Group 2: Westchester-Playa Del Rey, Group 3: West Los Angeles, Group 4: Venice, Group 5: Regional (this regional group covered topics concerning the four plan geographies), and Group 6: dedicate for Spanish speaking members.

Summaries

The summaries represent a condensed version of the staff presentations and comments shared by advisory group members during the meeting. They represent various comments from different members, and not the overall opinion of the advisory group.

MAIN ROOM SUMMARIES

- The meeting began with an opening presentation by staff that covered various topics including a recap of the first WCPAG meeting, and feedback received, overview of the New Code and Zoning String (Form, Frontage, Standards, Use, Density). Recording and materials for the second meeting can be found on the WCPAG website [here](#).
- The presentation was followed by two breakout sessions each with 6 breakout groups.
 - **Breakout Session 1** - consisted of a guided discussion on imagining the vision of what type of development should occur along the westside commercial corridors.
 - **Breakout Session 2** - consisted of a guided discussion on draft commercial general plan land use maps, correspondence tables, and draft zoning strategies. The draft maps and draft zoning options covered topics such as use, scale, density, heights, and floor area and neighborhood scale commercial amenities. As part of the discussion, feedback was provided sharing what was liked and what should be considered in the commercial corridors. The presentation was followed by two breakout sessions each with 5 breakout groups.
- The presentation and breakout sessions were followed up by a Q&A which included the following questions from members:
 - Question regarding how the frontage design standards will prevent parking taking up the entire first floor to provide more pedestrian friendly development.
 - Question regarding the integration of the City's adaptive reuse ordinance and whether it can be utilized as a source for capturing more housing.
 - Question regarding the type of additional outreach efforts that will be performed in the later phases of the Community Plan Update.
 - Question regarding the expectation of the 52 WCPAG members' role in educating the community prior to the next meeting.
 - Question regarding when the City will be sharing open space and road network strategies.

- Question regarding the implementation timeline and priority of review if the General Plan conflicts with the existing Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) program.
- Question about if these commercial district strategies can be carried into the residential and industrial district strategies.
- Question about landscaping impacts with the proposed building setbacks and maintenance of trees at grade and on rooftops.
- Question on where to access the most current information on the Planning website.
- Question on how the community plan updates overlaps with the other planning efforts in the City like the Housing Element.
- Question on how the corridor plans are going to impact the residential areas immediately behind them.
- Question on open spaces plans.
- Question on how the plan addresses equity to health, medical access to health care, available green spaces, and density related to proximity to green space.

BREAKOUT SESSION 1 - SUMMARIES BY BREAKOUT GROUP/ROOM

Breakout Group 1 - Session #1: Palms Mar-Vista-Del Rey

Feedback on Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Ensure guiding principles match with the GPLU.
- Increased open space.
- Protect local small businesses and strengthen incentives for the right of return.
- Promote ground floor commercial business.
- Promote affordable commercial business spaces.
- Improve the right of way to promote bicycle and pedestrian friendly experiences.
- Promote more trees, landscaping, parklets, pocket parks.

Shared Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Protect local small businesses and strengthen incentives for the right of return.
- Protect ground floor commercial businesses in mixed use developments.
- Promote more trees, landscaping, parklets, pocket parks.

Breakout Group 2 - Session #1: Westchester-Playa Del Rey

Feedback on Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Preserve density on individual commercial lots.
- Incorporate the idea of a 15-minute community where all service needs are within a 15-minute walk or bicycle ride from home.
- Prioritize small business and ground floor retail.
- Promote high density residential along the commercial corridors near jobs.
- Enhance commercial and residential development complementary to the Airport expansion projects.
- Promote green space.

Shared Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Establish walkable, bikeable, car-light, fine grain retail, affordable mixed-use development.
- Creating safe, walkable neighborhoods, residential in commercial corridors is beneficial for businesses.
- Create a sense of place for open spaces like pocket parks that connect to commercial corridors.

Breakout Group 3 - Session #1: West Los Angeles

Feedback on Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Promote density and commercial development concentrated along Pico, Olympic, Santa Monica with existing commercial.
- Promote bike infrastructure
- Promote density and mixed use along Robertson as well. Utilize existing underutilized commercial buildings.
- Promote open space, parks, and playgrounds.
- Create a strong mix of commercial services in close proximity to residential neighborhoods.
- Promote diverse building forms that allow open space off the street behind the building.
- Reduce parking requirements, discourage curb cuts and auto uses.

Shared Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Establish a high-density variety of affordable income mix-use developments along commercial corridors. Examples included but not limited to Westwood, Beverly Glen, Barrington, Bundy, and Sepulveda.

- Protect bicycle lanes and create infrastructure to support increased traffic and congestion.
- Establish high quality climate resilience design with adequate front yard and rear yard landscape setbacks.

Breakout Group 4 - Session #1: Venice

Feedback on Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Ground floor retail with residential above.
- Visitor amenities
- Pedestrian oriented development
- Create separate commercial corridors for Lincoln Boulevard, Rose Avenue, and Ocean Front Walk.
- Protect and expand on different types of displacement.
- Climate resiliency in a coastal community.

Shared Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Active mixed-use and pedestrian friendly development with tailored approaches to each of the commercial corridors.
- Protect tenants and displacement.
- Appropriate landscaping requirements for a coastal area.

Breakout Group 5 - Session #1: Regional

Feedback on Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Vision statement should be more focused on the future, not the past
- Add more aspirational language regarding housing and sustainability, such as walkable neighborhoods and density
- Question about where the vision statement will reside and what its purpose is

Shared Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- Improving mobility so people can efficiently travel to work and have access to neighborhoods serving retail and regional commercial uses.
- Provide jobs and housing for people in the region.

Breakout Group 6 - Session #1: Spanish Regional

Feedback on Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- More public parking for mixed use development.

- Safe and peaceful area not too noisy.
- Ample trees, green spaces, and water fountains.
- Economic vitality and climate resilient building.

Shared Vision for Commercial Corridors:

- More public parking for mixed use development.
- Ample trees, green spaces, and water fountains.
- Economic vitality and climate resilient buildings.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2 - SUMMARIES BY BREAKOUT GROUP/ROOM

Breakout Group 1 - Session #2: Palms Mar-Vista-Del Rey

- Doesn't like this process of outreach. Too much information and not enough time to think about it and to ask questions.
- The descriptions in the designations and the FARs and heights don't match. "6.0 FAR is not low-medium"
- There should be a replacement requirement for commercial space.
- PVMR 60: should be proposed as a community center rather than a village to allow more density. Can be expanded to include the corner of Inglewood Blvd and Venice Blvd connecting to Beethoven in lieu of up-zoning PMVDR 13, 14, 15, 18, 26, 27. Expand northerly between 70 and 69 and southern between 64 and 70.
- There are gaps in up-zoning on National, Sepulveda, Pico, and Barrington.
- Up-zone the single-family between Pico and the freeway.
- Don't spot zone, up-zone more than just specific areas.
- PMVDR75: Regional center here has never been brought up to the community. This is not appropriate here at all. We need to preserve the adaptive reuse of buildings here. Rejects this proposal.
- PMVDR 73: Don't mind the community center designation but think the metrics are too big. Too much height and FAR.
- Likes the max building width tool.
- Wants to see projects be mixed use. Need commercial on the ground floor
- Need to better connect the different village / community center areas
- How does this align with what Culver City is planning?
- Potential for open space along the waterways to connect these commercial centers.
- The change areas are too fragmented. They need to be connected.

- PMVDR 70: the property abutting the diagonal portion of the boundary might be designated historic.
- There are new developments happening on lots that are being rezoned.
- PMVDR 60 needs to be expanded on Grandview to the currently zones M1 lots.

Breakout Group 2 - Session #2: Westchester-Playa Del Rey

- The plan allows for development on 25-foot-wide lots but needs to incentivize smaller footprint developments that are less disruptive.
- Ground floor height should be considered at 12 feet instead of 14, which would preserve more height for above floors.
- Smaller lots may need additional FAR to make development feasible.
- Would open space requirements interrupt potential to develop on smaller parcels?
- Do the Frontage District standards address transformers and utility structure locations that are a part of new development. She emphasizes that all departments should be coming together to address this issue.
- Is the only Neighborhood Center along Manchester?
- Areas like Westchester Triangle and Loyola Village, that have farmers markets and small businesses, should be preserved, and not impacted by increased heights
- Many of the places along commercial corridors that can take density back up to R1 (Loyola Village, westside of Lincoln), so developing a 7-story building could be disruptive. Current issue at the Pepboys Lot on Manchester is the frontage there are lighting, shading, noise, other issues that impact neighbors
- How does the plan accommodate the Coastal Act?
- What would residential uses in industrial areas look like? A lot of the existing industrial inventory is aging out and will need to be repurposed. These areas often abut residential and could effectively accommodate live/work.
- Enjoys the idea of having commercial corridors with access to a variety of uses.

Breakout Group 3 - Session #2: West Los Angeles

- WLA 45 being denser, correct designation as a Community Center
- Loves the paseos but wants them increased along with courtyards.
- NC and the community want more density. Would want to see the Westwood corridor incredibly built up. Mirrored what's been done on Pico and what can be done on Pico. Include mixed use and a bit taller in the height limits.

- Shocked that it doesn't look like the village designation isn't being used there. A lot of bus stops look like they are being ignored, like Barrington and Bundy. Reworking the boundaries of this would make sense for Sawtelle.
- Including more notches where trees can be planted. Have public plazas of 30 x 30 ft on corners, in a frontage element. Shouldn't be a zero-rear setback against residential, a six-story shear wall along an alley is awful. Affordable housing requirements higher than 11%, should be 15 or 20% for the massive upzoning.
- Create more plazas, tree lined streets along lesser streets, not just major corridors.
- Avoid high density along single family neighborhoods, Trees on site are very important. Look to Beverly Hills for tree lined areas buffering mixed used to residential and serves green space for multifamily neighborhoods. Earthquake faults are an issue around Santa Monica, how does the building code come into play? Regional retailers and neighborhood serving uses don't mix.
- 8 stories are too big on Pico, Community Center WLA41 and 44 is pushing it. 5:1 FAR there's no space at ground level.
- Similar sentiment for WLA 38 and 37.
- The use map, community facilities is only for regional centers and wondering if elder care facilities would be limited to regional centers, if that's the case then there would be very little place for those to be located.
- Hybrid education needed on some of these streets.
- Downzoning on Neighborhood Center (Sawtelle, Westwood - WLA 39 and 37) vs TOC for density. At least a 4 density for smaller units is recommended.
- There is enough capacity on the corridors to satisfy the need from the state and leave single family neighborhoods alone. When the corridors are developed, we can reconsider additional housing need.
- We need to have enough services for people coming to the area, specifically mentioned ER wait times. Be proactive about other infrastructure we do not need, such as on Pico Blvd, there's a 36" gas pipeline that can be very dangerous in the next earthquake. Build housing that is not on polluted land and on dangerous infrastructure. Be mindful of flood plains, reference the latest FEMA maps to avoid building housing in a flood prone area.
- Do heights relate to the widths of the street? Westwood is different from Pico. How do you create a truly pedestrian street with small sidewalks and tall buildings above you? Livable Communities element sees Westwood as a lower height street. Applicants say they can't do ground floor retail through TOC, must have active use, a community room doesn't activate the street.
- Need for greater health equity to health services for the elderly like hospitals and care facilities are important.

- Concern that the community plan will be consistent with the housing element.

Breakout Group 4 - Session #2: Venice

- VEN 21 - Ocean Front Walk
 - Down zoning to residential isn't being corrected. 30 years ago, there were parcels that were spot zoned from commercial to residential in Venice. The neighborhood council after repetition from stakeholders requested that planning correct this during the community plan update.
 - Ocean Front Walk is an important visitor area and corridor for our community residents and visitors that use the beach. It can be difficult to satisfy the needs of providing visitor serving amenities and neighborhood serving amenities. When you are looking at zoning for the area, keep in mind the challenge that it's difficult to make everyone happy. It is worth thinking how will commercial/ residential interact with one another?
 - How do we provide activity when there was no activity along the boardwalk during COVID and it became dangerous. How do we continue to get people to come in during the day and night and populate the boardwalk.
 - It is also a good place for people to live. This is where you want more live/work in this area because people won't mind the noise and business from the boardwalk.
 - Adding small tenants' spaces, tenant size max limited at 10,000 square feet, and community serving uses can help balance that.
 - There should be an emphasis to differentiated and not create another Abbot Kinney. A community design overlay needs to preserve the overall character of the boardwalk. Development is inevitable but whatever development occurs on Ocean Front Walk - there should be some sort of guidelines that are different from what is shown today.
 - Another point - Windward Boulevard, Pacific Ave, and Main Street - those areas aren't included and should be included in the Ven 21 subarea boundary as well. They are somewhat connected in terms of character.
- General - Oakwood
 - Missing an important opportunity here. Historically - especially in Oakwood, there used to be a lot of community commercial along corners. (7th/Sunset, 6th / Broadway, Indiana/Hampton, Andalusia/Rialto) - would like to see that be an additional commercial component in Venice.

- Also, on 7th Ave since it's more of a transit-oriented road. There are also several of those store fronts mid-block, there were small shops that are now art studios.
 - 7th Ave is quite traffic heavy - is not defined as a commercial corridor but is defined as residential from Rose Avenue to California Avenue, I would be interested to see how that is looked at in the GPLUs. When the bus started running on that street, not sure what the exact purpose of that was and was it identified as a transit opportunity corridor. I am interested in what the planning department has in mind there and haven't seen any discussion there.
 - On 7th Avenue, there isn't really any commercial and largely residential. There is planning for low-income housing on the First Baptist Church lots on each side of Westminster Ave on 7th - deciding of what happens there. There is discussion from the community about having a community center on that property that is accessible to the low-income housing but also accessible to the community. I am interested in what happens and the impact of traffic with the additional housing.
 - How would the new proposals affect Oakwood Park and the uses allowed there? (Example: dog park).
 - There are other uses that could happen there, with low-income housing along that street. I don't see a mixed-use opportunity there because it's highly residential but there have been discussions of overlays, I am interested in participating in a discussion about Oakwood.
 - Along 6th Ave - bus line shows more intensity is occurring - the colors didn't seem to change
- General - All Zones
 - Not much change is really occurring or more on the margins if that. If the height and FAR are not really increasing, it is going to be meaningless. In incorporating this, have you adopted reasonable expectations of what will be built within that building envelope. Given that isn't going to change much, is that the goal for meeting the RHNA numbers for Venice? Is it just not accounting for any growth? (Staff explained that there will be gentle density allowed in some residential areas and strategic growth being proposed for some commercial corridors, including Ven 24, Ven 26).
 - The area between Washington and Maxella was left out on the east side of Lincoln Boulevard - it's an ideal area to upzone because you already have 4-5 stories of multi-family and that strip on Lincoln frontage, you could be up zoned to 8 stories that wouldn't impact adjacent residents. You would

not have the same problem, going north of Lincoln Blvd, where you have a single family in East Venice. This also something that came up through the neighborhood council.

- Design standards
 - The break in facades are 140 feet. If we look at the lots in Venice, the lots are small - are we proposing consolidation for places like:
 - Lincoln Blvd / Rose Ave - 35 to 50 ft
 - Venice Blvd which also stands out - VEN 22 (Venice Blvd) which is residential only and is going to be mixed-use which I don't have issue with and think is actually a good move.
 - TOC TIER 2 & 3 (Venice Boulevard/Lincoln Boulevard)- Concerned about the facades, building breaks, heights - how will that work? (Alex response: the districts have been built to include TOC bonus - when you see base FAR/ Stories and bonus FAR/Stories, this is accounting for TOC. We are folding the TOC program, which was meant to expire after 10 years, into the zoning code and make it permanent. As far as building breaks, those will happen at an ad hoc basis when properties turn over and get redeveloped. There is nothing we can really do to make sure they are aligned. On wide sites such as those over 350 feet you are going to get a pedestrian passage all the way through if there is a connecting block. Depending what district, you are zoning for, if it's on Lincoln Blvd - probably calibrate a max building width of 160 feet or 210 feet - so if the building was developed wider than then it would have to do the full break or the courtyard alternative.
- Corner of Venice Boulevard / Abbot Kinney Boulevard
 - These corridors are a series of linear corridors but without a center spot.
 - This intersection could be a center spot. There is Lemonade, high density housing and across the street is Paloma. Wondering why those businesses are not included in this map. (Staff response: This area is still under review).
 - These streets are not great pedestrian streets. Hard for people to pass each other. More articulation is needed, the corners can be activated.
 - Create a community center/ node.
 - Vera Davis Center (Oakwood) is another area that is a community center/node. You have a couple of bus stops, but it is not articulated differently at all. In fact, it is a dividing line between two different densities. Oakwood is denser than areas next to it.

Breakout Group 5 - Session #2: Regional

- Greater Zoning on Transportation Corridors
 - More consistency across these corridors
- Simplified Typology (New GPLU designations)
 - Just include more examples
- Westside Communities
 - Increase density around commercial corridors
- Venice
 - Some of the designations have the same density, heights, bonuses, and FARs
- FARs/Height
 - Ensure consistency across all areas
- New GPLU Designations
 - Under what designations are hotels going to be in?
- Equity
 - Allowances for new housing, ensure that neighborhoods are doing their fair share
- Consider more transit stops on major corridors
- Westside Communities
 - Have maps that integrate green spaces and resources to determine where density is more appropriate
- Pocket Parks (Westside Communities)
 - Include more
- New Land Use Designations
 - Include examples for people to visualize what these spaces would look like
- Up-zoning
 - Santa Monica, Olympic, and Venice
 - Lot of resources here, it is currently underutilized
- Green Spaces
 - Make these places truly public, and not just for some groups
- Open Spaces
 - Invest in communities, but don't trust private developers
 - Encouraging new designations to be placed where space already exists

Breakout Group 6 - Session #2: Spanish Regional

- Likes the economic growth and variety that is being offered, she's hoping for affordability
- Likes the public transportation options offered on Bundy or in its surroundings, she hopes for this area to have more commercial use.
- Concerned about the height of buildings that have been built as they block sunlight for the vegetation in the area, she would like to see more traffic flow and public parking availability.
- Keep in mind the diversity in the areas of WLA 40 & 41 including retirement centers and job centers to support the strong Latino and other ethnic groups in these areas.
- Provide more affordable housing and to clean the areas in the Westchester section.
- The creation of more commercial centers in area WLA 40 & 41.