

PURPLE LINE TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

November 16, 2017



Executive Summary

This Purple Line Transit Neighborhood Plan (TNP) aims to develop land use, zoning, and design regulations for the neighborhoods surrounding three future Metro Purple Line stations in the Wilshire area: Wilshire/La Brea, Wilshire/Fairfax, and Wilshire/La Cienega. The study area generally includes the commercial corridors within a 15-minute walk of each station.

During the initial phase of the public planning process, in the first half of 2016, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning hosted two community workshops for residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to enhance neighborhoods surrounding these transit stations, as well as several other small focus groups with specific stakeholder populations. Staff collected and summarized this input about their perceived thoughts, ideas, and concerns for the future of their neighborhood as it develops around transit. Please see this [link](#).

Using the comments received through the first round of outreach, in combination with station area context, current City plans and policies, demographic analysis, and planning best practices, the Department developed initial land use and zoning concepts. Along commercial corridors, the initial concepts included targeted increases in development rights and design regulations along commercial corridors, and in multifamily areas (identified in SurveyLA) the concepts include character-specific building design regulations. These initial concepts were presented at a public open house on November 16, 2017 at the Pan Pacific Senior Recreation Center at which comments were received. Following this meeting, materials were made available online and staff solicited additional comments through the end of December.

The TNP staff promoted the event through a mailing of more than 4,000 flyers; an email interest list; distribution of meeting information to offices and organizations such as the respective Neighborhood Councils and Council District offices; social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor (in coordination with the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment); and the project's website www.latnp.org. All comments inform the Department's analysis; however, the final regulations developed through this planning process will generally address issues related to land use, development, and urban design. Comments from the public featured several recurring themes in relation to the initial concepts presented:

- The TNP should allow for greater amounts of housing around the planned Purple Line extension, in light of the ongoing housing crisis.
- Uses that serve visitors and support cultural institutions, such as restaurants, hotels, entertainment, and cafes, are best supported through increased residential density.
- More should be done to encourage office uses adjacent to transit.
- Rent-restricted affordable housing and the preservation of rent-stabilized housing are a priority, but not at the expense of accommodating overall housing demand.
- Residential neighborhoods can maintain their character through design regulations while allowing for more housing.
- Both real and perceived safety and security of pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists is of utmost importance at the stations and along corridors, especially along 6th Street.
- Adjacency to transit drastically reduces the need to provide parking, and demand-based strategies, such as shared parking and unbundling parking costs from rents, should be required.
- Open spaces and plazas need to be well designed and include extensive landscaping and amenities.

In-depth comments were received on a number of specific topics and are summarized below:

Density

- A number of commenters want to see more housing and increased density, including mixed uses, in the plan area, noting the need for more capacity near transit.
- Many do not think the proposed plans go far enough to provide housing.
- One comment called for 20,000 more units in the ½ mile radius around stations.
- Commenters suggested creating room/zoning for as much housing and jobs as possible with suggestions such as:
 - Increased Floor Area Ratios (FARs) to accommodate growth.
 - Prioritize redevelopment of parking lots and low-rise single use buildings for new developments.
- Commenters viewed the Wilshire corridor as an ideal place to build new housing, some suggesting transit-oriented development (TOD) planning from Highland to La Cienega.
- Many people drew connections between transit, density to support transit, including both jobs and housing, and the formation of “ecosystems” that would support new and existing businesses in transit-oriented areas.

Single-Family Zoning

- Commenters were “dismayed” with the amount of area that was not considered in the initial planning concepts, specifically the single family areas and Park La Brea.
- Many feel the entire ½ mile radius around each station should be part of the study area, with more neighborhoods being upzoned for multi-family, anywhere from the duplex density to eight units or more per lot.
 - These were often referred to as “missing middle” housing or “gentle density.”
- Many commenters felt residential Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ) areas could support more density while maintaining design standards and scale.
 - They pointed out that larger homes could be converted to multi-unit buildings without changing the scale or look of the building/neighborhood.

Affordability

- Many comments cited the need for incentives to encourage affordable housing in new development. Some suggestions included:
 - Floor Area Ration (FAR) bonuses for providing affordable housing.
 - Preservation of existing affordable housing stock.
- Commenters linked housing prices to vacancy rates and suggested capacity should out pace growth to allow for stable pricing.
- The need for affordable housing serving diverse populations was noted, including housing for homelessness, very low income (rent-burdened), and groups such as artists.

Parking

- Many commenters felt parking was over-regulated and suggested lowering/eliminating parking requirements; following are some comments received related to parking:
 - One commenter noted ‘onerous’ requirements for 3+ bedroom apartments which they claim reduce the stock family-sized units.
 - Another commenter felt parking requirements hurt historic areas, placing requirements that don’t fit in the context of 1930s homes.
 - Adaptive re-use projects should have a lower parking requirement.
 - Many suggested eliminating parking requirements all together next to the stations.
 - Generally lowering parking requirements across the board, including in single family (R1) zones.
- A maximum parking ratio should be used instead of a minimum to prevent over parking of units.
- One commenter felt the area around 6th Street and La Brea needs more parking and would like to see parking lots retained.

- Other ideas suggested for parking management included:
 - Enforce parking restrictions;
 - Underground parking;
 - Shared and unbundled parking;
 - Require flexible parking space design so that underutilized spaces can be converted to more productive/habitable uses in the future.

Height

- People were generally in favor of building heights of 5 to 8 stories in the plan area with taller buildings, including towers, along Wilshire, Fairfax, and La Brea.
- Many wanted to eliminate or increase height limits in multi-family residential areas.
- Some comments felt that if the study area is constrained by single family neighborhood, then height must be utilized where possible to provide housing.

Open Space

Commenters who discussed publicly accessible open space in private development prioritized the provision of substantial amounts of seating and trees.

Preservation

- One commenter felt that 6th Street has “exquisite architecture,” more so than HPOZs adopted in the area.
- Most of the preservation discussion revolved around rent stabilized multi-family housing stock.
- Many felt that a transit plan should not preserve single family homes right next to a multi-billion dollar infrastructure improvement such as the Purple line subway.

Design

- Require design standards only in exchange for additional development rights.
 - The commenter felt that onerous design restrictions could inhibit development, but the incentive to provide compatible design for more development rights would be a win-win.
- Setback reduction in multi-family zones.
- Include HPOZ area and use strict design standards to ensure compatible form while allowing of expanded densities
 - Many homes could contain two, four, or eight apartments and still maintain their form in HPOZs.
 - This has been described as “gentle density.”

Streets

- Extend pedestrian corridors to connect Little Ethiopia and the Farmer’s Market, and other nearby attractions.
- One commenter emphasized how dangerous 6th Street is for traveling by bicycle.