

August 8, 2022

VENICE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
Preserving Public Places Committee

HISTORIC SHORT LINE BRIDGE & GRAND CANAL PARKLETTE MOTION

Whereas the bridge traversing Grand Canal between North and South Venice Boulevards was built for the original Short Line Railroad in the 1900s and is one of the oldest bridges in Los Angeles, facilitating the original creation of Venice of America and the continued visit of hundreds of thousands of people until the 1960s; and

Whereas the Grand Canal is the sole remaining portion of Abbot Kinney's original Venice Canals built in 1904 and is on the National Register of Historic Places; and

Whereas it was this bridge that enabled people of color to come from other parts of Los Angeles to work in Venice before the time when they were able to live or own property in the area; and

Whereas the bridge and canals were primarily constructed by Black, Mexican and Chinese people whose rich cultural history has been overlooked; and

Whereas the Venice Canal is a biologically sensitive coastal wetland in the Duel Coastal Zone, which the California Coastal Commission mandated be a habitat conducive to native wildlife including the endangered Least Tern bird; and

Whereas the City of Los Angeles is in violation of the California Coast Commission mandate that the canal boat ramp be accessible to the public for recreation in addition to continuing to serve the entire Venice Canals maintenance needs; and

Whereas the City has not maintained this parcel in good repair such that it is an eyesore to the hundreds of thousands of visitors to Venice Beach and the Historic Venice Canals and has not installed interpretative historic signage and plaques as agreed by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the City of Los Angeles; and

Whereas the City is currently proposing to develop 40 contiguous lots located on both sides of this portion of Grand Canal, to sandwich the bridge and canal between two tall buildings, cutting off the aprons of the bridge, rendering it unusable by cyclists, scooters and strollers who for generations have loved traversing it, eliminating public access to the boat ramp and showing no general public access to the entire historic site; and

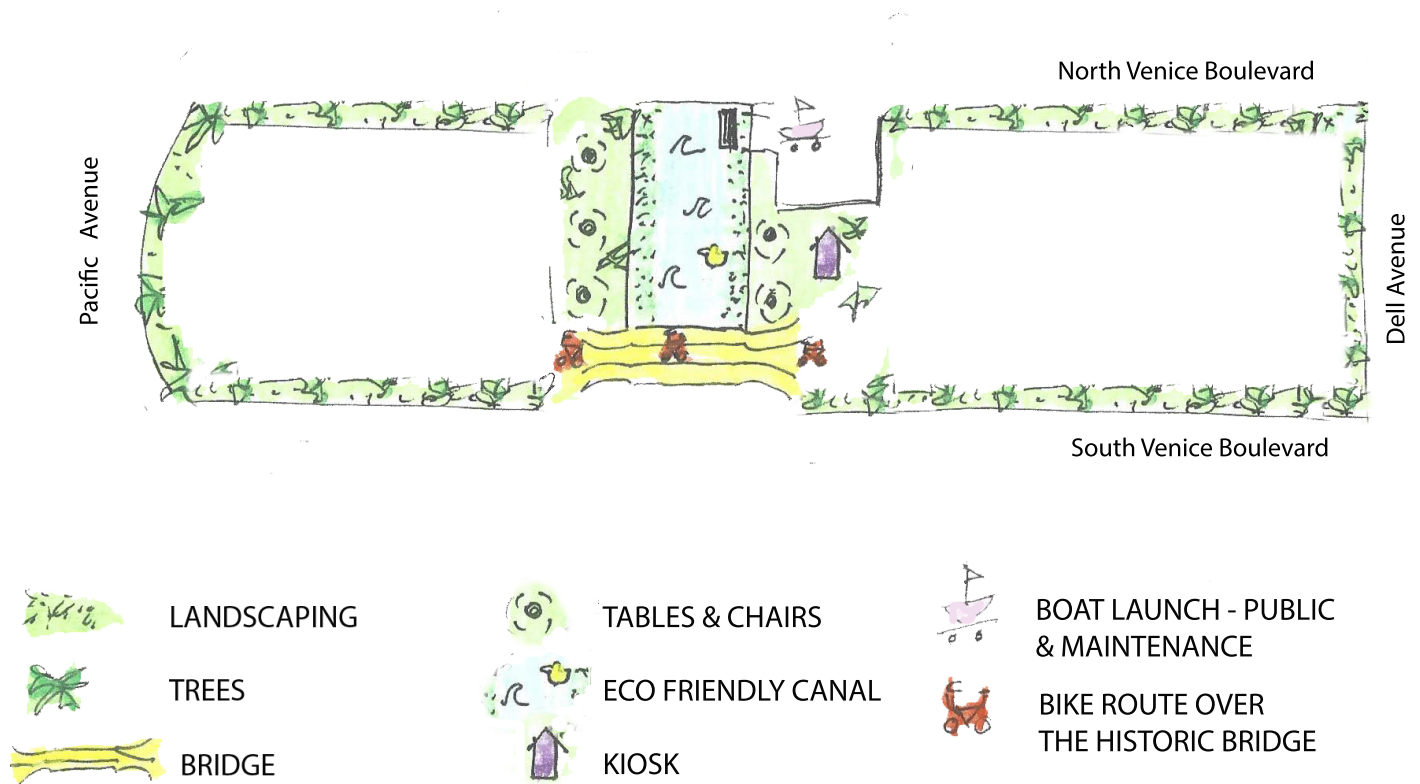
Whereas the balance of the Venice Canals are residential, thus this site lends itself to public enjoyment of the natural wildlife, historic and recreation not possible elsewhere; and

Whereas Venice has fewer parks than most other parts of the City of Los Angeles.

Now Therefore, The Venice Neighborhood Council requests that the Department of Recreation and Parks take on control of this unique site to create an environmentally sound parklette, accessible to the general public, recognizing its historic and cultural features with interpretive signage, and with seating, trees, landscaping and a small kiosk for visitors to enjoy the ecology of the canal, to launch boats for recreation and maintenance, to enjoy a cool beverage, and to continue to ride over the historic bridge. When funding is available, we ask that public restrooms be built under the bridge alcoves or wherever feasible.

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Greening the canal, adding historic signage, preserving the bridge, making the boat launch accessible to the public (all as mandated years ago), plus merely adding landscaping, tables & chairs and a kiosk would transform this "public right of way" into the wonderful cultural historic recreational parklette that Venetians and tourists would love to visit.



Attachments:

Sketch of Historic Parklette: <https://www.venicenc.org/assets/documents/5/committee62f56adc41bb0.pdf>

1992 Historic American Engineering Record, LA Bureau of Engineering: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/ca/ca1600/ca1696/data/ca1696data.pdf>

National Parks Service, Historic Landmark Designation: <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/82002193>

Los Angeles Historical Cultural Monuments List - Item 270: https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/24f6fce7-f73d-4bca-87bc-c77ed3fc5d4f/Historical_Cultural_Monuments_List.pdf

Robert Haro's Letter to Editor Nov 1, 2021, Westside Current - Bridge/Mexican Landmark & Recreation: <https://www.venicenc.org/assets/documents/5/committee62f18efa1cb29.pdf>

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