

Planning Workshop Summary

for

OAKWOOD

Venice, California

November 5, 1988

OAKWOOD PLANNING WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

The Oakwood Planning Workshops were comprised of two phases: (1) Nine weekly meetings at which participants expressed their general concerns about the community; and (2) the additional effort of a smaller group of participants to produce specific recommendations for planning and zoning regulations for Oakwood. The report that follows is divided into Section 1: The Workshop Report and Section 2: Planning Recommendations. In this way, each phase of the neighborhood planning process as it occurred in Oakwood is fully documented, and there should be no confusion between the contents or recommendations of either Section.

Section 1: The Workshop Report, documents the concerns expressed by workshop participants, many of whom are Oakwood residents. The concerns were primarily social and economic, not planning, issues. They included affordable housing, community services, trash collection, alley and street maintenance and the problems of poverty, drugs and crime. These concerns overshadowed the workshop agenda, which meant that the group touched on planning issues only in more general ways. These issues included residential density, commercial development, traffic and parking. Consensus on specific recommendations did not emerge from the workshop session.

This, however, is a message in itself: the social and economic issues the workshop participants brought up are obviously much more important to the Oakwood community than the narrower and less critical questions of architectural character, heights, set-backs and so forth. It is hoped that the Workshop Report accurately documents these concerns and that they will be thoughtfully considered by the entire Venice community and the City Planning Department.

General workshop sessions were discontinued after attendance dropped considerably. Although little in the way of specific planning recommendations had emerged from the workshops, some participants wanted to present their recommendations for zoning and planning regulations. The result is Section 2: Planning Recommendations. In putting down their ideas, the participants took both the specifics and the spirit of the Workshop Report (Section 1) into consideration. However, while Planning Recommendations may reflect some of the contents of the Workshop Report, it is not intended to necessarily represent the views of everyone who attended the workshop sessions.

We thank everyone who made an effort to get involved in both the workshop phases and making planning recommendations. Those who participated made many valuable and thought-provoking contributions. We hope the time and effort spent mark the beginnings of further input on the part of the Oakwood community in the process of drafting the Local Coastal Plan.

Polly Rose,
Workshop Coordinator

Marc Appleton
Architectural Consultant

OAKWOOD PLANNING WORKSHOP - PARTICIPANTS

Bill Rosendahl
234 Dimmick Ave
Venice CA 90291
396-9386

Grace G. Pitts
700 Indiana Ave
Venice CA 90291
392-7384

Mark Bergal
1122 Indiana Ave
Venice CA 90291
392-3328

Rick Davidson
226 San Juan Ave
Venice CA 90291
396-6876

Dell Chumley
47-B Paloma Ave
Venice CA 90291
392-3306

Polly Rose, Coord.
2445 Walnut Ave
Venice CA 90291
821-4872

Arleen Hendler
2700 Neilson #736
S.M. CA 90405
399-1554

Mary Johnson
728 Indiana Ave
Venice CA 90291
390-4017

Mark Appleton, Archit.
221-B Hampton Dr
Venice CA 90291
399-9386

Neil Kaufman
632 Vernon Ave
Venice CA 90291
399-0563

Jerry Palmer
1519 Cabrillo
Venice CA 90291
392-6753

Mehrnoosh
701 6th Ave
Venice CA 90291
392-7027

Leiko Hamada
213 Rose Ave
Venice CA 90291
392-3013

Ray Gonzales
458 N. Bonhill Rd
L.A. 90049
472-5752

Cheryl Beauchamp
763 1/2 Sunset Av
Venice CA 90291
302-9193

Chester Powell
540 Westminster
Venice CA 90291
396-0217

Michael Chevalier
12 Rose Ave
Venice CA 90291
396-2327

Jose Alvarez
705 Indiana Av
Venice CA 90291
392-2501

Dorothy Brown
701 Indiana
Venice CA 90291
396-0035

Bob Castile
621 San Juan Ave
Venice CA 90291
392-5540

Dennis Eisenbeis
659 Indiana Ave
Venice CA 90291
399-5531

Glen Featherstone
531 Brooks
Venice CA 90291
392-0601

Tabor
Venice CA 90291
399-0964

Regina Hyman
664 Brooks #210
Venice CA 90291
452-5469

John Haug
1801 Lincoln #105
Santa Monica CA (??)
452-5469

Maria Valicia
707 Sunset Ave.
Venice CA 90291
399-8454

Nancy Mohler
229 Bernard Ave
Venice CA 90291
396-5288

OAKWOOD PLANNING WORKSHOP - PARTICIPANTS - Page 2.

Bill Johnson
14013 Old Harbor Ln #115
Marina del Rey
578-7143

Patricia Powell
540 Westminister
Venice CA 90291
392-3609

Sharlotte Powell
534 Westminister
Venice CA 90291
396-3664

Jim Minor
423 Brooks #1
Venice CA 90291

Betsy Johnson, Hist. Soc.
27 Dudley Ave
Venice CA 90291
392-1014

Ed Berger
648 Santa Clara
Venice CA 90291
392-3800

Frankie Perry
613 Santa Clara
Venice CA 90291
399-1169

Vera Davis
641 Westminister
Venice CA 90291
399-7737

Valerie Castile
677 Santa Clara
Venice CA 90291

Barbara Lewis
610 6th Ave. #203
Venice CA 90291
396-3237

Frank Castile
677 Santa Clara
Venice CA 90291

Zelda & Victor Wilson
642 Brooks Ave
Venice CA 90291
396-8387

OAKWOOD WORKSHOP REPORT

BACKGROUND

The group formed on August 13 was small and comprised in part of people who were not Oakwood residents or property owners. Because we viewed neighborhood planning as a community effort, Oakwood residents who hadn't attended the Local Coastal Plan meetings we asked to join the Planning Workshops.

According to the rolls, a total of 40 people attended the six sessions the workshop met. An average of 10-15 people attended per meeting. A core of seven or eight attended the majority of meetings. (Attendees' list is attached as Appendix A.)

Despite the overall turnout, community participation in the process has been with mixed results: The first three workshops were spent discussing how to increase attendance as much as zoning and building regulations. (Flyers were distributed in Oakwood on three occasions.) Attendance was not consistent, and a significant majority attended fewer than half the workshops. Only five to six people attended the meetings of October 11 and 18, at which point the weekly sessions were discontinued.

It appeared to be extremely difficult for Oakwood residents to focus on the more specific aspects of zoning and building regulations when they perceived other issues as far more significant and critical to the community's immediate well-being:

- Maintaining and encouraging affordable housing
- Increasing community services
- Addressing crime and drug problems
- Improving Police and Fire protection
- Encouraging educational and job-related opportunities for children and teenagers
- Maintenance and trash collection.

These other issues continually circumvented and interrupted more specific discussion of planning and zoning regulations, and therefore figure significantly in this report as representative of the Oakwood community's overriding concerns.

In addition, conflicting agendas, some organized by the City itself, were unintentionally but coincidentally detrimental: Meetings of the Affordable Housing Task Force and Oakwood Owners and Tenants Association not only conflicted with the Workshops, but also many residents continued to be confused as to the issues these organizations and the newly-forming Oakwood Congress would address, despite efforts to clarify and distinguish the different forums.

The lack of discussion of specific planning and zoning regulations does not mean Oakwood residents are indifferent to what happens to the community. The opposite is true: many people, particularly long-time residents, expressed deep and long-standing concerns about Oakwood. Thus, it is clear that though there may not have been a focus on specific planning regulations, workshop participants are interested in how the LCP affects their community.

Following the workshop sessions, participants began work on a presentation for the Planning Department. That presentation and a summary of this report will be given at the Planning Meeting of November 5.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This was the overwhelming topic of most workshop sessions. The issue virtually dominated the meetings, even though it is outside the workshop agenda. It was difficult, if not impossible, for the group to move beyond what many see as the inescapable fact that poor and low-income residents are being displaced, and that this trend will continue unless the City, private development, and the Venice Community take an active interest in positive remedies.

These concerns took various forms, including:

1. Density bonuses for affordable housing are meaningless unless tied to some form of subsidy programs (low interest loans, tenant subsidies, etc.)
2. The suggestion that density bonuses for low income housing be required on all new residential construction.
3. That Oakwood be up-zoned to as many as six units per lot as a move to provide more low-income housing.
4. Concern that new planning regulations might force property owners to make expensive upgrades. Subsidies for low income resident-homeowners to update their properties?
5. Existing subsidized housing (HUD projects) must be preserved in perpetuity.
6. Owner-occupied multiple dwelling property, as distinguished from "absentee investor" income property, should be encouraged, perhaps with a density bonus or other programs to help resident-owners add housing units.
7. Preference for future affordable and other housing to be "scattered," infill type developments, as opposed to massive high-density projects.

8. Affordable housing should be truly affordable. Rents deemed (by CDD for example) as "moderate," are still above the reach of lower income people. To this end, some people thought only "low" and/or "very low income" housing should be considered for Oakwood.

Recommendations:

Affordable housing must be available in Oakwood now and in the future. Under the pressure of economic and population growth in the area, we must maintain the variety of social and economic backgrounds that help form our community's unique character.

We assume that the City of Los Angeles, HUD, other government organizations and private community efforts will have to provide support for housing; e.g., rent subsidies, financing incentives, etc. The definition of "affordable" is determined by these programs.

Some participants felt it was important to emphasize that affordable housing should be viewed as a community-wide issue and that Oakwood should not bear the entire burden for affordable housing. Given the scope of the problem, the existence of low-income residents throughout Venice and the potential availability of sites for affordable housing in several neighborhoods, affordable housing should be addressed by the entire community.

Proposals:

1. Density Bonuses be granted for affordable housing, with the recommendation that they be connected to housing subsidy programs. (See below)
2. Allow optional density bonuses for affordable housing when subsidy programs are available.
3. Developer's fee on office, commercial and market-rate residential development for affordable housing.
4. Allocation and/or development of city-owned or other vacant lots for affordable housing: this could be built by a non-profit community development corporation:
 - a. City Owned Lots
 1. 682 Broadway
 2. 650 Westminster (address approximate)
 - b. Pleasant View & Broadway
Owned by L.A. Unified School District, who could sell it to the City for developments as affordable housing.

c. Other City-owned lots in Venice
(Outside Oakwood) could be sold, with the revenue earmarked for affordable housing in Oakwood.

d. Public Storage (Rose Ave)
The remainder of this site, at one time proposed as a homeless shelter, could become affordable housing.

A workshop participant affiliated with a newly-forming non-profit community development corporation discussed the organization's efforts in the future to develop affordable housing.

Some participants expressed the hope that in Oakwood's very valid efforts for affordable housing, that there would still be land allocated for public areas, such as parks.

Density Bonuses

Density bonuses were favored to encourage in-fill, scattered developments considered preferable to large low-income projects.

Economic viability of a 25% bonus on 3-unit zoning was questioned.

There was a general recommendation that density bonuses be tied to subsidies. One participant did a development pro-forma showing affordable housing (even at 6 units per lot) was not viable unless subsidized (Pro-forma attached as Appendix B).

Several people recommended that although the current financial and political climate makes density bonuses seem unfeasible, a formula for them should be developed in the event of future subsidy programs, lower interest rates, etc.

The group did not consider development criteria for density bonuses' effect on scale of the neighborhood.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Concern for current lack of community-oriented services and business was discussed.

Desired community services include:

1. Child Care Center
2. Community Center
3. Police Sub-station
4. Educational (homework) Center
5. Parks, playgrounds & other recreational facilities
6. Senior Citizens Center
7. Medical Services
8. Skill Center (for teenagers)

9. Fire Station
10. Head Start Program

Community-oriented businesses:

1. Grocery Store
2. Laundromat

Recommendations:

Allocating land use for specific community needs is highly desirable, particularly to keep Venice as a whole from becoming a "shoppers' paradise" for everyone but Venice and Oakwood residents.

Proposals:

1. Venice Library and other available facilities be allocated and improved for community use; e.g., Child Care, Education, Senior Citizens.
2. Vacant land and other properties should be acquired and improved for use as community service facilities.

HOUSING DENSITY

Views on density ranged from two units per lot, and a density bonus, to six units (based on a lot size of 40x130). The six unit plan recommended a 45-foot height limit and significant reductions of the current parking requirements, perhaps to as little as one or no parking spaces per unit. Most people, however, thought 45 feet was inappropriate for Oakwood.

Several people favored four units per lot.

Others felt the current RD 1.5, (3 units) was appropriate. An objection to RD 1.5 was it would encourage large, and therefore expensive, units.

There was some feeling that density should be increased only if tied to an effective affordable housing program.

One proposal was to maintain the overall building envelope and increase the number of units per lot to provide smaller units which would presumably be less expensive for seniors and people without families. This proposal also included reducing parking from two to one space for single units.

Consensus on density never emerged. At one meeting a participant volunteered to petition the Oakwood area on density and other people wanted to put it to a vote at the following session.

Unfortunately, the next two meetings were too poorly attended to take a vote and the petition never happened.

The real difficulty with the density issue was that discussion or interest was not generated among workshop participants to evaluate the impact of higher densities on the quality and character of Oakwood. Overall, density was seen only from the view-point of increasing the availability of housing. Architecture, environmental quality, pollution, noise and traffic impact were not dealt with in any detail. Individually, several workshop participants expressed a desire to keep the scale Oakwood now has; but discussion of density from a broader point of view with adequate consideration of these factors never occurred in the group.

This was a major shortcoming of the workshops, and a clear indication of the concerns facing Oakwood: affordable housing, poverty, crime, drugs and trash are obviously much more important than architectural character, height, set-back and landscaping requirements. Nevertheless, everyone in Oakwood is affected by the results of planning. Therefore, future planning developments should invite the input of the community, especially as they affect density.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT ROSE AVE., LINCOLN BLVD., HAMPTON AND ELECTRIC AVE.

Participants were concerned that recent commercial development and "Highway Oriented Commercial" zoning does not promote businesses oriented to the local community; e.g., dime stores, food and groceries, laundromats, inexpensive restaurants.

The group in general felt Rose Avenue should be small-scale, pedestrian-oriented, rather than becoming a short, narrow version of Lincoln Blvd for fast through traffic.

Several participants were dismayed at the Public Storage project and want all further development of that nature stopped.

Mixed-use development along Rose, incorporating affordable housing, was discussed; however incentives such as increased height limits or lot consolidation were not discussed.

There was discussion of pros and cons of alley parking lots behind Rose Ave. The advantage was a friendlier streetscape; the disadvantages included impacting the residential zone across the alley and isolating any residential units located above businesses. No consensus emerged as to the impact on residents across the alley. Concern was expressed that residential units in the mixed use projects facing Rose would be isolated by alley parking.

A suggestion was made that on the side or rear yard where commercial property abuts residential, the commercial should be made to observe the residential or more restrictive setback and height restrictions. Another idea for dealing with the transition between commercial and residential properties sharing an alley was to increase the commercial setback from the alley and keep the commercial buildings lower at the alley.

People would like to see community service facilities expanded on Rose Avenue.

Several participants favored changing remaining "Industrial zoning" and "Highway Oriented Commercial" to "Community-Oriented Commercial."

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

All participants were unanimously against further widening of Rose Avenue.

Lower speed limits and stop lights on Rose, at Rose & Hampton and other intersections, were proposed.

All participants were against widening Brooks Ave. It was unanimously felt that traffic would be a burden to the residents, and a busy thoroughfare through the middle of Oakwood would be detrimental, dividing the neighborhood in half and dangerous to children and pedestrians.

Although participants generally wanted slower traffic and no street widening, the conflict of traffic impact with greater density was not resolved.

Parking: The City should develop public beach parking on its own or through larger developers who can afford it, rather than impose this obligation on small residential property owners and developers.

Propose on-street diagonal parking at the already widened section of Rose Ave. (at the Public Storage site).

How to resolve inadequate parking of existing residences and businesses was not discussed. The use of garages as housing compounds the problem; however it was felt by some participants that extra housing units were more critical than the impact of parking.

PLANNING REGULATIONS

As indicated in the Introduction, these issues took a back seat to the more pressing concerns of the Oakwood community. However, some aspects of planning were considered briefly:

Second-floor decks or recessing on massings of second and third floors should be encouraged.

Building Heights: Two stories at 25 feet, with an allowance 35 ft., if the roof is pitched on at least two sides. (To encourage architectural variety of rooflines)

Design Review: Generally desired, though no one could decide who would review projects, the authority they would have or the criteria used to judge projects.

A recommendation that projects over a certain size be subject to community review was put forth.

Housing Density: Without a consensus on density, or even an adequate airing of views, the Workshop Coordinator queried participants on an individual basis as to how many units they would like on a lot. Results as follows:

2 units per lot: with a density bonus of 2 more, if affordable units (to encourage affordable units) 1

3 units per lot - 3

4 units per lot - 1: with the observation that density bonuses for affordable housing were probably not feasible

6 units per lot - 2 (responses from builders)

Recommend zoning stay exactly as is, i.e., if a lot is now 4 units, 1 unit, etc., it stays that way for all subsequent development. - 1

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Betsy Goldman, President of the Venice Historic Society, explained historic designations and cited the Tabor Residence at 1310 6th Ave. as an example: The house had been owned by Abbott Kinney, who moved the house from its original location to its present site when he gave the it to his chauffeur, Irving Tabor. Thelma Brawley, Tabor's daughter, currently lives in that house.

Goldman obtained a survey of historic buildings in Oakwood (done in 1981 by the Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering). The survey is now out of date, so Goldman is having a new one done for the Venice Coastal Area. The survey and a map of historic buildings in Oakwood will be submitted to the Planning Department.

Based on suggestions from Vera Davis and other workshop participants, the Historic Society has taped interviews with Charles Middlebrook, 96, Oakwood resident since the 1920s, and Thelma Brawley for a permanent record of Venice history from a black perspective. The Society is looking to interview other long-time Oakwood residents, especially those who lived here in the 1920s, and has asked for assistance in locating them.

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SECTION 2

SUMMARY OF IDEAS AND VISION FOR OAKWOOD PLANNING

- Maintain the current character—small scale, low height, beach community atmosphere.
- Support affordable housing.
- Improve parking.
- Develop a design plan for Rose Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard.
- Encourage landscaping.

Residential Planning Recommendations Highlights

- Density: 3 units on typical RD1.5 lot, 2 on the smaller R2 lots north of Rose; Maximum total gross square footage of 3,800 square feet for RD1.5 lots and 3,120 square feet for R2 lots.
- Density Bonus: 1 additional unit on RD1.5 lots in exchange for at least one of the 4 units being affordable and with no enlargement of the building envelope.
- Height: 2 stories, 22' cornice line up to 30' maximum given a 45 degree roofline slope.
- Setbacks: 15' front; 3' side for one story and 5' for second story; 15' rear from center of alley.
- Parking: Install angle parking on wide enough commercial streets, and require that businesses provide customer parking to reduce pressure on neighborhoods. Do not favor permit parking.
- Lot consolidation: Prohibit.
- Demolition: One-for-one replacement of demolished affordable housing required.

Commercial Planning Recommendations Highlights

- Demolition: One-for-one replacement of demolished affordable housing required.
- Rose: Develop design plan modeled after Larchmont Village; Do not widen—install diagonal parking where widened already; Permit lot consolidation up to 90' frontage given affordable housing and below grade parking; Height limit 2 stories; Seek parking alternatives; Prohibit mini-malls and drive-thrus.
- Lincoln: Permit lot consolidation up to 90' frontage given affordable housing and below grade parking; Height limit 2 stories; Prohibit mini-malls; Landscape.
- Public Storage: Prohibit additional storage facilities; Develop affordable housing on the remaining lot on 4th.
- Brooks: Do not widen.
- Alleys: Maintain for safety.
- Parking: Businesses required to provide customer parking; Install meter parking on railroad land between Electric and West Washington.

Note: Planning Department Regulations should be clear and complete enough to preclude the need for variances or regulation by means of Architectural Review Boards, or other types of review boards. When required, the variance process should be made very clear and with precise guidelines to prevent discrimination. Any variances granted for unique situations (e.g. mom & pop neighborhood grocery w/o parking, odd shaped lot setbacks, reduced parking for free health clinic) must be compatible with neighboring property and subject to community review. No in-lieu-of payments for parking or for affordable housing should be allowed.

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL ZONE DENSITY

OBJECTIVE: The existing housing density in Oakwood is satisfactory and should be maintained.

Any new residential construction should be consistent with the low-height, beach community atmosphere—definitely not to go wall-to-wall condos.

COMMENTARY:

Three housing units are currently allowed on a typical Oakwood residential lot, which is 40 x 130 (5,200 square feet) and zoned RD1.5. Smaller lots north of Rose are about 42 x 101.5 (4,263 square feet) and zoned R2, allowing two units. There are a substantial number of four and five unit buildings that pre-date current codes. In addition, several large apartment buildings exist and contribute roughly 300 subsidized affordable housing units in Oakwood. The character of the neighborhood, although a mixture of single family and multiple dwellings, is small scale in feeling.

GUIDELINES:

1. Maintain the existing RD1.5 and R2 density zoning. However, establish a maximum total gross square footage of 3,800 square feet for RD1.5 lots and 3,120 square feet for R2 lots, in order to maintain an appropriate building scale, the ratio of landscape to building area, and to promote the development of smaller units.
2. "Grandfather" existing housing of greater density, however, allow no remodeling which adds square footage.

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL DENSITY BONUSES

OBJECTIVE: Support affordable housing development, while maintaining the small scale feel of Oakwood.

COMMENTARY:

Ways to encourage affordable housing within the small scale Oakwood neighborhood were discussed extensively.

GUIDELINES:

1. On RD1.5 lots, which allow 3 units, provide a density bonus of one unit in exchange for at least one unit being affordable, and given that the building envelope is not enlarged.
2. Grant no density bonus for the smaller, R2 lots.

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL BUILDING HEIGHT

OBJECTIVE: The existing character of Oakwood—small scale, low height, beach community atmosphere—should not be changed.

COMMENTARY:

To retain the small scale and feel of the neighborhood, the building envelopes for single and multiple residences, including any density bonus units for affordable housing, should be sized so as not to intrude on the existing scale. (This should not be taken to mean new development in proximity to the old, large scale projects—often on consolidated lots—should be permitted to scale up to the larger project; large scale projects should not be repeated or continued in future development.) Rooflines should allow sunlight into neighboring property and allow some feeling of privacy—not towering buildings overshadow adjacent property yards.

Architectural interest and variety is encouraged. Oakwood would like a policy of "no boxes!"

GUIDELINES:

1. Allow up to 2 stories, with a maximum cornice line or roof eave height of 22 feet. Given at least a 45 degree from vertical slope at ridges, allow roof slope heights to increase up to 30 feet maximum, provided that the roof eave line does not exceed 22 feet. Allow unenclosed roof decks up to 400 square feet in size.

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL SETBACKS

OBJECTIVE: Maintain the character of Oakwood, with space between buildings in line with the existing small scale look and feel.

COMMENTARY:

Useful open spaces, solar access, and architecturally interesting projects should be promoted.

GUIDELINES:

1. Require a front setback of at least 15 feet from the front property line (front property line is generally understood to be the inside edge of the sidewalk).
2. Require each side setback to be not less than 3 feet for one-story construction and 5 feet for two-story construction (the first floor could have 3 foot setback, with the second floor stepped in to 5 feet from the property line).
3. Require a rear setback of at least 15 feet from the center line of the alley.

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL STREETFRONT/LANDSCAPING

OBJECTIVE: Improve the appearance of Oakwood residential streets, consistent with the feeling of friendly neighborhood access.

COMMENTARY:

New construction should have landscaping that improves the aesthetics of the neighborhood. The Venice Action Committee's "Greening of Venice" program is strongly supported.

GUIDELINES:

1. Undertake comprehensive curbside planting, with leafing street trees planted at an interval of one tree per lot. The emphasis should be on water conserving plants and materials, appropriate for coastal communities.
2. Prominently mark pedestrian walkways and important street intersections with signage reflecting the identity and character of the neighborhood, e.g. "Slow--Children at Play."
3. Encourage the City to develop a tree planting program with the community's review and approval.
4. Require that a minimum of 50% of front yard setbacks be softscaped, or planted.
5. Stagger street lighting on both sides of the street (many Oakwood streets now have lighting on only one side). Install adequate street lighting, particularly at crosswalks and intersections.

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL PARKING & PUBLIC ACCESS

OBJECTIVE: Residents and their guests should be able to park within a block of their home.

COMMENTARY:

Measures to improve residential parking are needed in particular in these areas: Santa Clara Avenue, 3rd, 4th and 5th Avenues near Rose, Electric Avenue, and San Juan. Permit parking is seen as a shifting of a problem to other areas, rather than as a solution. New development that complies with all parking requirements can help alleviate the existing parking shortfall by replacing parking deficient buildings (e.g. multiple unit courtyards with no parking; converted garages).

GUIDELINES:

1. Install angle parking on wide streets, especially where commercial parking is spilling over into residential neighborhoods (e.g. neighbors bordering Electric being burdened by parkers from West Washington Blvd., Rose Ave. parking going onto residential streets).
2. Continue allowing the use of alleys for residential parking access.
3. Allow no curb cuts except when mandated by unique requirements. If a curb cut is allowed, the number of spaces lost on the street must be added to the parking space requirements on the property.
4. Implement permit parking in Oakwood if it is to be implemented elsewhere in Venice.
5. For on-site residential parking, allow a rear yard driveway setback area to be used for required dweller or guest space, provided that the space is at least 18 feet from the rear property line so that no cars hang out over sidewalks or into alleys.
6. Allow dedicated unenclosed parking, and tandem parking provided that it belongs to a single unit, as well as enclosed and covered parking, to count toward required parking spaces.
7. Encourage permeable parking surfaces, which allow water into the soil rather than into a storm drain, and permits greenery in an area that would otherwise be barren.

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL SCREENS, WALLS & FENCES

OBJECTIVE: Promote friendly qualities of the neighborhood.

COMMENTARY:

While a "fortress" look is opposed, there was discussion in support of allowing higher front fences in consideration of safety concerns, pet enclosure and architectural diversity. Types of fencing material that appear "friendly" might be encouraged—flowering hedges, open trelliswork. No conclusion was reached for a definitive recommendation; further research is needed to develop guidelines for secure but friendly fencing.

GUIDELINES:

1. Consistent with existing regulation, allow front yard fences to be 3-1/2 feet high and rear fences to go up to 6 feet.
2. Prohibit visible use of barbed wire.
3. Allow higher fences and walls made of soundproofing material where residential abuts commercial lots, or next to an alley with commercial traffic (e.g. alleys paralleling Rose).

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL LOT CONSOLIDATION

OBJECTIVE: Maintain the existing scale of Oakwood.

COMMENTARY:

While lot consolidation may give some benefits, like improved financial feasibility of subterranean parking or somewhat reduced construction costs from economies of scale, there was concern that it would lead to large scale development. Lot consolidation in exchange for development of affordable housing is the one trade-off for risking such a change in character that was considered. But maintaining the existing smaller scale outweighed the advantage of affordable housing in this case.

GUIDELINES:

1. Prohibit lot consolidation in residential zones.

LOT CONSOLIDATION

Lot consolidation should be allowed since it can lead to better design by providing greater efficiency in subterranean parking and opportunities for creative flexibility in siting buildings. If several residential lots are combined, a variation in design is to convert what would be private yards into shared open space. Shared open space could be used to create a central courtyard or children's play space around which units are clustered or buildings could be sited with landscaped pathways between units. All of this landscaped grouping could sit over a secured subterranean parking garage resulting in a parklike environment with automobiles hidden from view.

If the concern over lot consolidation is due to a dislike of large massive facades, then let's deal with the issue through design control that requires open space and break up of massive facades into smaller elements.

AFFORDABLE VS. DEFICIENT HOUSING

Much ado has been made of preserving affordable housing and requiring new development to include affordable housing at the expense of other units on the site. Buildings wear out over a thirty or forty year period and to suggest that old buildings be replaced with new ones with rent levels comparable to the old is unrealistic. When we talk about creating affordable housing, we expect that housing to have adequate parking, new kitchens and bathrooms, new interiors, and be up to today's more restrictive building codes. Existing housing which is low in rent is inexpensive due to deficiencies in the unit such as inadequate parking, small floor area, or worn out fixtures. Comparing new affordable units to old deficient housing is like comparing apples and oranges.

ISSUE: RESIDENTIAL DEMOLITION

OBJECTIVE: Do not reduce the number of affordable housing units in Oakwood.

COMMENTARY:

Even though many homes likely to be demolished are probably deficient by current housing standards (e.g. no parking, ventilation problems, small square footage for the number of occupants), their destruction adds to the serious affordable housing shortage. A feasible way to replace any demolished affordable housing was sought.

GUIDELINES:

1. Require at least a one-for-one replacement of affordable housing somewhere in Oakwood when affordable housing is demolished.

ISSUE: COMMERCIAL DEMOLITION

OBJECTIVE: Do not reduce the number of affordable housing units in Oakwood.

COMMENTARY:

Even though many homes likely to be demolished are probably deficient by current housing standards (e.g. no parking, ventilation problems, small square footage for the number of occupants), their destruction adds to the serious affordable housing shortage. A feasible way to replace any demolished affordable housing was sought. There was particular concern about losing affordable housing along Rose Avenue, which is mixed use and being developed commercially.

GUIDELINES:

1. Require at least one-for-one replacement of any affordable housing that is demolished.

ISSUE: COMMERCIAL STREETSCAPING

OBJECTIVE: Create an attractive environment.

COMMENTARY:

Support Venice Action Committee's "Greening of Venice" program.

GUIDELINES:

1. Support streetscaping of these major entrances into Oakwood--Lincoln Blvd./Rose Ave., Rose Ave./Main Street-Hampton Ave.
2. Underground utility lines wherever possible. Lincoln Blvd., California Ave., and Rose Ave. should be top priority in Oakwood.
3. Prominently mark pedestrian walkways and several intersections with signage reflecting the identity and character of the neighborhood, e.g. "Slow--Children at Play."
4. Especially where commercial zones abut residences, require landscaping as an important part of maintaining consistency with the neighborhood look and feel. For example, a used car lot must be shielded from view by trees, hedges and other planting.

ISSUE: LINCOLN BLVD. COMMERCIAL ZONE

OBJECTIVE: Meet Oakwood residents' shopping needs that are non-neighborhood oriented, or benefit from higher business volume generated along the Lincoln through-traffic corridor. Discourage commercial overbuilding and encroachments onto adjoining residential neighborhoods. Design the commercial development to de-emphasize the highway look of the boulevard and to provide a buffer from the traffic noise and pollution for adjacent residences. Promote pedestrian safety

COMMENTARY:

Lincoln Blvd. in Oakwood needs significant beautification efforts—landscaping, architectural diversity, appropriate commercial signs, undergrounded power lines. Improvements in traffic flow turning from Lincoln Blvd. into Oakwood are also needed.

GUIDELINES:

1. Prohibit two-story commercial/retail structures with parking in front (e.g. mini-malls) because they are unattractive, inconsistent with the neighborhood character and dangerous for pedestrians and automobile traffic. Commercial development that encourages pedestrian traffic and does not unsafely concentrate automobile traffic should be encouraged.
2. Allow two-story construction, with height regulations that promote interesting rooflines.
3. Consider granting a height increase in exchange for setback, landscaping and affordable housing.
4. Permit lot consolidation of no more than 90 feet of frontage and only for: a) purposes of providing for projects that dedicate a minimum of 25% of total area for low-income housing; and b) below grade parking.
5. Promote much more landscaping along Lincoln, to define and emphasize entrances, and to soften the facade of structures and screen curb parking from building fronts.
6. Establish a volunteer sign review board to enforce requirements that signs be designed to reflect the architecture, streetscape, and design characteristics of the property served. The size of signs should not overwhelm the site. Signs should be located on facades only, not rooftops or sidewalks.

ISSUE: ROSE AVE. COMMERCIAL ZONE

OBJECTIVE: Mixed use neighborhood services/businesses with affordable housing and the promotion of pedestrian traffic are most appropriate for Rose Ave. Design of the Rose commercial zone should model after Larchmont Village.

COMMENTARY:

Rose is a pedestrian street environment, not "highway oriented commercial" as currently zoned. More appropriate zoning would be "neighborhood oriented commercial." However, the zoning categories as defined and implemented by the Planning Department are not adequately differentiated—zoning types permitted under neighborhood oriented commercial should be more restrictive than highway oriented commercial. These types of businesses are appropriate along Rose: restaurant, deli, day care, dry cleaner, grocery, bakery, hair dresser, clothing boutique, furniture retail, health clinic, machine shop, glass shop, motorcycle shop, professional offices, art gallery, record store, bookstore, bank. Inappropriate businesses are: storage facilities, gas station, drive-thrus. Unlike Lincoln Blvd., Rose enjoys significant pedestrian traffic and mixed use.

GUIDELINES:

1. Review and clarify zoning definitions to reflect, in fact, what the description implies.
2. Do not widen Rose, as that would detract seriously from the community's goal to design a pedestrian-oriented, mixed use area serving the neighborhood. Discontinue requiring easement releases and additional setbacks when granting building permits along Rose by the Department of Public Works. (Information from the Department of Transportation did not show a significant increase in traffic volume from 1986. While Rose does handle commercial traffic between Lincoln and Main or Pacific, it dead ends into a small beach parking lot less than a mile from Lincoln.)
3. Install diagonal parking where Rose has already been widened at 4th, and at any other locations if widened.
4. Revise parking plans as envisioned in the Community Plan to provide alternatives to the parking strip behind commercial buildings. Such alley parking would be a burden on residents whose property abuts the alley behind Rose. Instead, the City should buy up selected property at several sites in the area for construction of public parking. Consider building subterranean parking.
5. Prohibit drive-thru restaurants or businesses.

ROSE--cont'd.

6. Prohibit two-story commercial/retail structures with parking in front (e.g. mini-malls) because they are unattractive, inconsistent with the neighborhood character and dangerous for pedestrians and automobile traffic. Only commercial development that encourages pedestrian traffic and does not unsafely concentrate automobile traffic should be allowed.
7. Allow two-story construction, with height regulations that promote interesting rooflines.
8. Consider granting a height increase in exchange for setback, landscaping and affordable housing.
9. Permit lot consolidation of no more than 90 feet of frontage and only for: a) purposes of providing for projects that dedicate a minimum of 25% of total area for low-income housing; and b) below grade parking.
10. Replace the crosswalk at Rose and 4th, where there is a 4-way stop.
11. Add a traffic light and crosswalks at Rose and Hampton.
12. Add a traffic light and crosswalks at Rose and 6th.
13. Encourage the development of affordable housing above commercial buildings by permitting a density bonus within the building envelope—that is, additional units allowed, but no overall increase in scale.
14. Establish a volunteer sign review board to enforce requirements that signs be designed to reflect the architecture, streetscape, and design characteristics of the property served. The size of signs should not overwhelm the site. Signs should be located on facades only, not rooftops or sidewalks.
15. Promote much more landscaping along Rose, to define and emphasize entrances and to soften the facade of structures and screen curb parking from building fronts.

ISSUE: PUBLIC STORAGE (ROSE & 4TH) INDUSTRIAL (MR1) ZONE

OBJECTIVE: Prevent further non-neighborhood oriented development.

COMMENTARY:

Much more attractive building is required to maintain the unique character of Oakwood and Venice.

GUIDELINES:

1. Develop the available lot on 4th, currently zoned residential, into affordable housing.
2. Prohibit further development of storage facilities.

ISSUE: ELECTRIC & HAMPTON AVES. COMMERCIAL ZONES

OBJECTIVE: Maintain the existing adjacent neighborhood character, improve parking and beautify the area.

COMMENTARY:

Residential parking is a particular problem for this area because of proximity to commercial establishments.

GUIDELINES:

1. Require businesses, on West Washington Blvd. in particular, to provide parking for their customers so as to not spill over into the non-commercial neighborhoods.
2. Install metered parking on the railroad land between Electric and West Washington.
3. Landscape appropriately to shield the parking lot.

ISSUE: MAJOR RIGHTS OF WAY—BROOKS AVE., CALIFORNIA AVE., 7TH AVE., AND ALLEYS

OBJECTIVE: Maintain the existing adjacent neighborhood character, improve parking and beautify the area.

COMMENTARY:

Safety in the alleys was a particular concern.

GUIDELINES:

1. Do not widen Brooks Avenue (consistent with the Oakwood Workshop group opinion).
Recommend that the Department of Public Works discontinue requiring easement releases and additional setbacks when granting building permits along Brooks.
2. Install a traffic light, in addition to the school crossing, at California Ave. and Linden.
3. Install a traffic light at the intersection of 7th and California, especially as 7th is picking up overload from Lincoln, its intersection with California is at an angle and there is heavy pedestrian traffic from the Oakwood Recreation Center and Athletic Field.
4. Maintain all alleys for public safety, with lighting, paving and pothole repair, and allowable parking access.