



Venice Neighborhood Council

PO Box 550, Venice, CA 90294 / www.VeniceNC.org
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February 10, 2008

Councilmember Bill Rosendahl
City of Los Angeles
City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Subject: Immediate Action Requested Regarding Parking in Venice

Dear Bill:

Nice seeing you last week, and great job with the OFW Ordinance Town Hall.

I know the parking crisis in Venice is very important to you, and I wanted to take a moment to update you on the Venice Neighborhood Council's (VNC) parking related recommendations. At our January 15, 2008 Board meeting, the VNC voted to strongly urge the Los Angeles City Council, along with various relevant agencies, including without limitation, the Departments of Planning, Building and Safety, Transportation and Public Works, as well as the Coastal Commission and the City Attorney's Office, to take the following immediate actions to address the parking crisis in Venice, particularly along Abbot Kinney Boulevard and around Ocean Front Walk (the "Boardwalk").

The Current Situation

As you are well aware, Venice, and in particular, residents, merchants and tourists on and around Abbot Kinney and the Boardwalk, are facing a serious parking crunch. This parking shortage threatens Venice's tourist economy and the community at large, making it difficult if not impossible for tax paying residents and merchants to find parking in their immediate neighborhood. Such parking shortages also harm development, growth and planning for the entire area.

By way of example, many property owners along Abbot Kinney are simply choosing to build large artist residences and live-work spaces, rather than mixed use spaces, contending parking requirements for the latter make it virtually impossible to profitably build them. This is compromising the character and charm of an otherwise unique and diverse shopping district. Furthermore, applicants seeking to open and/or



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expand local businesses are unable to do so because of the lack of parking. This parking shortage also impacts the ability of current merchants to stay in business as their customers and employees cannot find parking. Boardwalk buildings that provide parking often do not have adequate ingress and egress from the structures – which also creates a safety issue – and many of those structures are unavailable to the public.

Recommendations

As such, the VNC calls for the immediate creation and implementation of a Parking Assessment District (i.e., taxes paid are used to fund parking structures and lots), Business Improvement Districts, and a Parking Overlay Ordinance, particularly along Abbot Kinney and the Boardwalk. The City should use the funds and leverage created by the districts and ordinance – in addition to existing funds in the Venice Parking Fund - to build parking structures on public land. For example, lots may be feasible at: each end of Abbot Kinney Boulevard; on Pacific between North and South Venice, on Electric Avenue (like the ones in Beverly Hills); and at Westminster School. Existing parking lots should offer reduced rates for residents and/or modify their hours to work with merchants, valet services (so they stop parking on public streets and in public spaces), and residents. Free shuttle service (or one that charges a nominal fee to sustain it) to and from these and current beach parking lots would help, as would bicycle racks along Abbot Kinney and the Boardwalk. In fact, our Environment Committee has begun considering programs to increase bicycle usage in Venice.

To further fund construction of parking structures and/or a shuttle service, the City should immediately pass an amendment to applicable laws increasing the in lieu parking fee from \$18,000 to an amount determined pursuant to the attached In Lieu Parking Fee Formula (the “Formula”). This should not be a terribly high hurdle as the City is already obligated to do so pursuant to the Venice Local Coastal Program, Land Use Plan, Coastal Commission Certified 6/14/2001, Policy II. A. 4., Implementation Strategies, Page III-11.

Until this parking crisis is resolved, it is virtually impossible for the VNC to recommend parking variances for projects on Abbot Kinney or the Boardwalk, absent exceptional circumstances. We feel the City should treat such applications similarly. We also strongly urge the City to amend existing laws, eliminating grandfathered spaces and credits from project parking entitlements concerning Abbot Kinney and the Boardwalk. Regardless, the City must strictly enforce current parking requirements, particularly those applicable in the coastal zone.



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The VNC, and in particular our Land Use and Planning Committee's Parking Task Force, have focused on these important issues over the past year, with an emphasis on Abbot Kinney. Moreover, the VNC recently created a special Ad Hoc Parking Committee to address this issue throughout Venice. This project, however, requires significantly greater resources than we have at our disposal. As such, in addition to immediately implementing the above recommendations, we further charge the City Council and the above listed agencies to work together, with the VNC, to create a task force to study these issues and propose, adopt, and take concrete and immediate steps to resolve Venice's parking problem. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike R. Newhouse".

Mike Newhouse, President
Venice Neighborhood Council

MRN/cm

cc: Los Angeles City Council Councilmembers

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