



# Venice Neighborhood Council

PO Box 550, Venice, CA 90294 | [www.VeniceNC.org](http://www.VeniceNC.org)

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## Abbot Kinney Parking Report

In pursuing our assignment to investigate, report and recommend on the issues of food trucks and valet parking, we focused on the following questions:

- Do our recommendations enhance the mission of the VNC?
- To what extent, and for how many stakeholders, can our work improve the quality of life?
- What City resources are likely to be readily available, and for what resources may we have to petition?
- What VNC resources, both technical and human, does our work require?
- How much public meeting time is our presentation likely to require?
- How soon must the Board act in order to move forward most effectively?

Our Neighborhood Council is, first and foremost, the messenger of our community's voice to the City. Recommendations on these issues are designed to speak as broadly and directly as possible for the benefit of all Venice stakeholders, whether homeowner, renter, entrepreneur or visitor. We must speak to the City mindful of its current financial destitution, as well as its mandate, in any case, to represent our community's will. Understanding that this is a time of transition with a new VNC Board, we planned our work to use the least possible personnel resources while making the best use of available technical tools. We expect to require no more than twenty minutes of Board meeting time to present our findings and recommendations, and for Board consideration. Because these issues are as rapidly-moving as are their proponents and regulators, promising benefits that far outweigh current detriments, we recommend that the Board act with all due haste.

To date, our work has included: Research on recent local food truck and valet parking history; outreach to CD11 and CD4 staff, LAPD, the Fire Marshall, LADOT, local food truck vendors and their representative, local residents and business owners for direction, information and general discussion of pertinent issues; research on the food truck industry's nationwide emergence; analysis of valet parking issues and existing models being used elsewhere; and, finally, First Fridays field work on Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

## RESOURCES

Online research materials are posted here: <http://venicenc.org/parking-abbotkinney>.

## Survey

The community continues to provide survey input. Designed as a door-to-door poll of the area immediately encircling the most-impacted Abbot Kinney areas, our VNC survey also received input via email from as far away as the Milwood walk streets, and at least one response to date arriving via US mail. The strict quantification of replies to "Yes/No/Don't-Care" questions regarding food



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trucks and valet parking belies the remarkably holistic range of thoughtful comments, questions and suggestions provided by stakeholders from both the residential and business communities.

This said, the nominal numbers follow:

## Food Truck Operations

31% Positive – I welcome them.

54% Negative – I want them gone.

15% Neutral – They don't affect me.

## Valet Parking

5% Positive – I welcome them.

52% Negative – I want them gone.

43% Neutral – They don't affect me.

Survey considerations and highlights:

While at least one respondent reported an altercation with a valet parking worker, some others reported no awareness that valets parked cars on their streets. Still others reported frustration with valets parking on their streets, while one expressed no concern about parking congestion, offering her family's acceptance of scarce parking as a de facto condition of moving into the area. More than one resident expressed a sense of unfairness about grandfather parking rights for restaurants at the residential community's expense.

Whereas the VNC survey pertained to both food truck and valet parking issues, the Abbot Kinney business survey, generously compiled and provided in the aggregate by Carol Tantau, pertained strictly to Abbot Kinney food truck operations and, for the most part, their First Fridays experiences. As such, valet parking opinions were not available from Abbot Kinney businesses. While the vast majority of Abbot Kinney business operators were critical of the presence and some practices of food truck operators, many comments showed both tolerance and business benefits from food truck operations on Abbot Kinney.

Note: Survey answers were provided per the promise of anonymity for respondents. Some stakeholders chose to receive further information about these issues, and some signed up to receive regular VNC mailings.

While the surveys show respondents' opinions, they do not address resolving our fundamental challenge: automotive congestion.

## Studies

In addition to the variety of nationally-based online resources developed since May, 2010, we received a report from a local group that had commissioned a 2009 parking study for Lincoln Boulevard. Two graduate students from UCLA's Department of Urban Planning, under Professor Donald Shoup, studied parking along Lincoln Boulevard between Machado Drive and Venice



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Boulevard. The study's recommendations were "intended to foster a less auto-dependent and more pedestrian-, bike-, and transit-friendly Lincoln Boulevard." The study included summaries of results in other cities that have realized benefits from parking congestion-relieving initiatives, some of which would merit consideration for Abbot Kinney.

On August 11, 2010, the City Council Transportation Committee, led by Councilmember Rosendahl, held a public hearing, at which a multitude of City, County, restaurant and mobile food truck operators and representatives convened, to share analysis, reports and wide-ranging testimony on the history, growth and subsequent management challenges for the City's mobile catering truck industry. A wealth of valuable data, including examples of traditional business groups working with mobile food truck vendors, was made available to the public at this meeting.

## Outreach

Our outreach and research efforts dovetailed with stakeholder survey input to inform our recommendations. Senior Lead Officers Thusing and Skinner were always willing to answer our questions about codes and practical enforcement challenges, also arranging for a police helicopter to estimate the crowd size on September 3 (approximately two thousand). LAFD Inspector Nealy provided deep perspective based on his safety and crowd assessment work.

Council District 11 Office staff Arturo Pina, Laura McClennan and John Gregory each provided direction and contact information for various entities. DOT's Mo Blorfroshan provided helpful direction regarding signage. Finally, our own Past-President Emeritus DeDe Audet and Liz Wright provided direction, as well as offers to help with orange safety vests for our work!

More than one survey respondent mentioned self-regulation. Discussions with representatives of Abbot Kinney vendors and food truck operators have produced ideas and initiatives, at least one of which is active now and more of which are in the planning stages. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, exploring new parking options, increasing frequency and scope of trash collection, direct outreach to Abbot Kinney businesses, relocating food trucks to low-impact areas, designating specific areas for multiple trucks and partnering between food truck and business operators to provide incentives to residents.

Public Comments at multiple VNC Board meetings, as well as continuing reports and media coverage, including an Oct. 5, 2010, Town Hall forum broadcast on local radio, further informed our considerations.

Given that some new regulation is likely inevitable, our efforts must focus on continuing positive dialogue and transparently-vetted goals.