



# Venice Neighborhood Council

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

Email: [info@VeniceNC.org](mailto:info@VeniceNC.org)



## Discussion Forum Committee Meeting Minutes

The Canal Club  
2025 Pacific Avenue  
Venice, California 90291  
Tuesday, May 1, 2012 at 6:30 PM

### 6:30 Call to Order and Member Introductions

**Present:** Brodie Seagrave, Don Novack, Ira Koslow, Joe Murphy, John G. Reed, Nicolas Hippisley-Coxe, Patrick Murphy.

**Absent:** Colette Bailey, Daffodil Tyminski, Jon Jorgenson, Matt Geller, Matt Kline, Nick Antonicello, Scott Mayers.

### 7:00 Discussion Question

[See next page for [Discussion Summary](#)]

In 2009, the VNC identified six vision goals (Participation, Walkability, Diversity, Creativity, Collaboration and Brainstorming) to guide the current Board's mission. Which of these six goals are most important in Venice today and do they 'create a working framework of integrated strategies'?

### 9:00 Adjourn

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## VNC Vision Goals

### VNC Standing Rule 20 adopted 090421

To stimulate the vitality of the VNC, the Board and VNC Committees are encouraged to consider the below **VNC Vision Goals** in their deliberations.

Although the VNC is a political body, and inevitably it may become embroiled in issues that divide the community, these goals are designed to promote a more proactive, collaborative vision for VNC Committees to include in their deliberations as they formulate recommendations for Board consideration. The intent is to create a working framework of integrated strategies capable of achieving, over time, broader consensus and increased:

#### Participation

Consider strategies that encourage & facilitate broader involvement of stakeholders, major organizations, community groups, and government institutions, etc.

#### Walkability

Consider strategies that reduce the use of cars and that promote alternatives such as walking, skateboarding, biking & bike racks, circulation systems (trolleys), park & ride rather than additional parking, street-narrowing/sidewalk widening, walk/bike/skateboard lanes separated from traffic, easier neighborhood pedestrian access to commercial stores, etc.

#### Diversity

Consider strategies that encourage & facilitate realistic recommendations designed to increase economic diversity, including affordable housing, etc.

#### Creativity

Consider strategies that promote the arts, encourage & facilitate creativity. This can apply to architecture, public art, social events (neighborhood gatherings/street movies/theatre/dance/pottery/...), etc.

#### Collaboration

Consider strategies that encourage & facilitate 'level playing fields' for collaborative negotiation; opt for procedures & policies that 'promote flexibility & dialogue' over 'reacting defensively to rigid criteria', facilitation/mediation training, etc.

#### Brainstorming

Consider strategies that encourage & facilitate exploring of non-traditional options for achieving shared objectives, etc.

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## Discussion Summary \*



The meeting was informal, discussion quite interactive, and required minimal direction. During the discussion:

1. Those present introduced themselves and answered questions from others.
2. Don Novack introduced a proposal he has been working on consisting of three parts (see **Exhibits** below):
  - Use of the Venice Historical Association vintage trolley as a First Friday shuttle (beginning May 4<sup>th</sup>) linking the waterfront and Abbot Kinney Boulevard between Brooks Avenue and Venice Boulevard.
  - Consolidation of the valet parking function in a single provider serving numerous Abbot Kinney Boulevard merchants.
  - Proposed construction of an automated parking facility on the southwest side of Electric Avenue.
3. The discussion consisted of numerous questions which clarified the proposal in considerable depth and in sufficient detail to enable those present: (i) to probe its longer-term impacts; (ii) to relate those impacts to the VNC Vision Goals; and (iii) to realize that the proposal was in the initial concept stage requiring further exposure to become 'crystalized'.
4. The sense that the proposal seemed compatible with several of the VNC Vision Goals and not in conflict with any of them led to a number of suggestions: (i) of possible additions to the proposal that would make it more attractive; and (ii) actions Don could take to help him get the project further 'crystalized' in the context of the VNC review – which included approaching various VNC Committees.
5. Those present felt comfortable communicating their sense that the proposal seemed to be compatible with the VNC Vision Goals and was therefore worth consideration by other VNC Committees.

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## Exhibits

### The Argonaut

Tuesday, May 10, 2012

## Vintage Tram Reemerges on Streets of Venice

By Vince Echavaria



One vehicle reminiscent of a popular mode of transport in the early days of Venice is making a return to the streets of the beachside community.

The “Red Cars” of the Pacific Electric Railway system were frequently visible in the early part of the 20th century as they crisscrossed cities in Southern California, traveling routes such as Venice Boulevard into the then newly developed community of Venice. The mass transit system, which operated distinctive streetcars, light rail and buses, was a primary transportation mode for visitors who came to tour Venice and its neighbor to the north, Santa Monica.

The days have long passed since the Red Cars were a regular sight across Los Angeles, but a vintage red tram from the Pacific Electric era is seeing a rebirth in Venice.

The Venice Historical Society has acquired a 1948 tram that the organization intends to use for events such as First Friday on Abbot Kinney Boulevard and other happenings, giving riders a view from an old-fashioned vehicle and touching on the area’s historic connection to the Red Cars. One vehicle reminiscent of a popular mode of transport in the early days of Venice is making a return to the streets of the beachside community.

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“I saw it as a wonderful asset to bring a little history and charm back to Venice,” said Jill Prestup, Venice Historical Society president. “What would be better than to have an original tram come back, take people around Venice and bring them back?”

The tram is not intended to be used as a bus, but rather by groups such as non-profits for specific events and activities. The vintage design of the tram may remind some longtime residents who lived during the Pacific Electric years of the streetcars that used to traverse the area, Prestup said.

Passengers will have the opportunity to take a route down Abbot Kinney Boulevard to Main Street and the Windward Circle, touring historic locations of the seaside community as well as some current hot spots.

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The old tram previously took part in the Venice High School centennial parade last year and was well received by children and pedestrians alike when it made a stop at the Abbot Kinney First Friday event May 4, Prestup said.

"I knew it would be well received, I just didn't think it would be this well received," she said of people's reactions when the tram has appeared on the streets.

The historical society will officially debut the tram at an event celebrating its "maiden voyage" for invited guests at Hal's Bar & Grill, 1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., from 3 to 5:30 p.m. Saturday, May 12. The event will feature tram rides and an exhibit Venice: Yesterday/ Today, including photographs from the historical society archives coupled with modern images by Venice photographer Helen K. Garber.

The historical society has not determined a fee structure for use of the tram, which can fit up to 26 riders. A retired city bus driver will be in the driver's seat for most of the events.

The acquisition of the 1948 tram comes after the historical society has completed some other projects highlighting Venice's history in recent years, including the restoration of colonnades along Windward Avenue and the placement of a vintage gondola that used to cross the local canals at the Windward Circle. Such projects are intended to pay tribute to the community's early years, Prestup noted.

"Venetians are so proud of Venice," she said. "This is to educate people and get them to appreciate Venice's history."

The historical society purchased the tram last year from two businessmen from the Monrovia area who bought it from the state. Little is known about the vehicle's exact origin and where it was operated locally. The former owners had an appreciation for antiques and used the tram in events like car shows and parades, Prestup said.

Most of the restoration work was done by the previous owners, but the historical society has done a recent tune-up and installed "Venice" and "Historical Society" banners.

In addition to the experience of an historic tram ride, the historical society and merchants along Abbot Kinney believe the vehicle can help address some parking issues associated with occasions like First Friday as well as during the summer season.

"We want people to know this can be an alternate option for First Friday," said Prestup, adding that some visitors can park further away and have the chance to use the tram.

Don Novack, co-owner of Hal's Bar and Grill, agrees the tram can be one way to ease the parking problems during First Friday and other popular events.

"We definitely have a parking issue in Venice; this is not going to solve it but it may alleviate a little of it," Novack said. "If it successfully helps alleviate some of the parking issues and people can park further away and get to and from their cars, I think it will be a good thing."

If the tram rides are eventually able to bring more people to shop and dine along Abbot Kinney, many of the merchants might be interested in using the vehicle on a more full-time basis, he suggested.

Touching on the area's history, Novack said the Red Cars used to travel close to Abbot Kinney Boulevard and he believes the return of a vintage tram can help recognize Venice's ties to that era.

"When people see it they get a kick out of it," he said. "I think it's a good thing to look back on what happened and how it evolved."

Prestup said, "This, to me, is going to bring people back," adding that the mission of her organization is to educate people and allow them to appreciate the history of Venice.

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## Consolidation of Valet Parking

### *Abbot Kinney Merchants Add Convenience For Their Customers!*

*Drop your car at one of the participating  
locations... Shop, Eat, or Take a Stroll.  
And When Done, Retrieve your car at any  
of the locations.*



*BHB* has extended professional valet service for evening operations at all of the following participating locations:

Hal's Bar & Grill – 1349 Abbot Kinney Boulevard

Space – 1410 Abbot Kinney Boulevard

Shima – 1432 Abbot Kinney Boulevard

Capri – 1616 Abbot Kinney Boulevard

Tasting Kitchen – 1633 Abbot Kinney Boulevard

Wabi Sabi – 1637 Abbot Kinney Boulevard

Hours: 5:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (until midnight on weekends)

Price will be the same at all locations

*Beverly Hills Best Valet*

• 310-854-8881 • 800-446-8676 •  
• [www.valetpark.com](http://www.valetpark.com) •

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## Electric AutoParc \*

In combination with a coordinated valet parking system, an automated robotic parking structure along the alley between Electric Avenue and Abbot Kinney Boulevard (bounded on the north by Santa Clara Avenue and on the south by California Avenue) presents a solution to the needs of the community. The parking structures will provide efficient use of available land, enhanced security, environmentally friendly technology, and aesthetically pleasing design potential. All of this is predicated on a long-term lease with the City of Los Angeles.

This system will almost triple the available parking along the Electric Avenue alley without expanding the footprint of the lot itself. Its use along the Electric Avenue alley will create 190 spaces for patrons, residents, and the public.

Automated parking is an advanced form of robotic vehicle storage that allows for drivers to independently store and retrieve vehicles in compact spaces. Sometimes referred to as "valet parking without a tip," automated parking structures are used in many countries outside the U.S. (e.g. many European countries, Japan, and increasingly in China). Adoption of these systems in the U.S. has been gradual, but is increasingly being considered for public and private projects due to its many advantages over traditional structures, such as a 66% spatial savings, reduced energy needs for lighting and HVAC, reduced risk of vehicle theft and damage, and enhanced security.

In a recent newsletter, Bud Ovrum, the General Manager of the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, referred to automated parking as a potential "game changer" for future projects. The city approves automated parking on a case-by-case basis.

The use of automated parking technology, with its compact warehouse-style storage system, is ideal for the narrow strip of land along the Electric Avenue alley between California and Santa Clara Avenues, which currently allows for 70 cars to be parked, one-deep, along its length. A traditional parking garage is not a viable option because of the parcel's unusual dimensions. Automated parking structures also require less construction materials, less construction time, less energy, and will feature less emissions from vehicles. (See Addendum.A, "Automated Parking Advantages over Traditional structures," prepared by Arup Engineering).

The height of the proposed structure will be kept below the allowable maximum. Because the structure can be completely enclosed, noise transmission would be significantly below acceptable norms. The structure, to be dubbed "Electric AutoParc," is also capable of meeting "Green" development standards. It will be powered using solar panels. Charging stations for electric vehicles will be provided. Vehicles are picked up and dropped off inside a secure, well-lit area, with strategically placed security cameras. To accommodate the needs of short-term visitors, ground space is being set aside between the structures for surface parking spaces, as well as for bicycles and motorcycles. This surface parking set-aside was developed in response to consultations with local coffee and ice cream vendors, whose customers require free and quick access when patronizing these shops. (See Addendum B, "Schematic Plans and Technical information").

"Electric AutoParc," in conjunction with changes in the valet parking system, will provide a comprehensive solution to the neighborhood's parking and traffic problems. Additional spaces will benefit all stakeholders along the Abbot Kinney Commercial Corridor; residents, visitors, patrons, and business owners. In addition, the parking structures will act as a buffer between the residential and commercial areas along the Boulevard.

The relatively compact structure will be broken into segments and adorned with vegetation and shrubbery to give it a more organic feel. One side of the structure's exterior will have a facade evocative of a cobbled European alley, borrowing from the techniques used by the mega-resorts in Las Vegas. On the opposite side of the structure, the exterior will be covered with an Art Wall. (See Addendum C, "Art Wall")

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\* **NB:** This is an extract from a report and the above references to Addenda are not included in this extract.

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Please contact Don Novack for further information at

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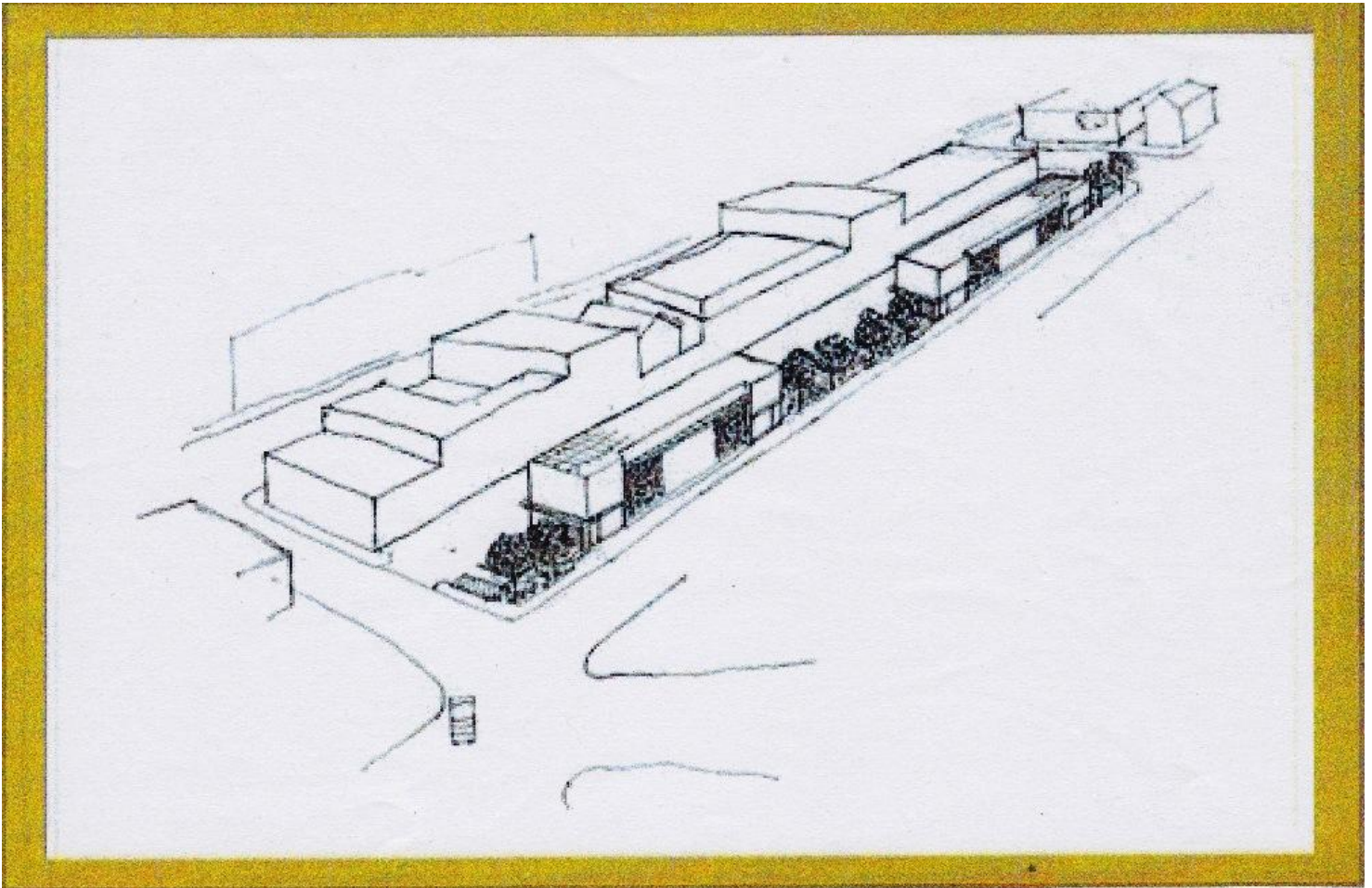
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A "Venice Art Wall" will be painted on the exterior of the structure's panels facing Electric Avenue. Initial discussions have been held with world-renowned artists who live and work in Venice. They are enthusiastic about the opportunity to donate their labor to the creation of a unique Venice landmark. Among them are Peter Alexander, Judy Baca, Laddie John Dill, and Ed Moses (Bios in Addendum C). In sum, an automated parking system along Electric Avenue presents an innovative, aesthetically pleasing solution to a progressive and eclectic community's growing needs.

Some vendors and patrons were concerned that there would be no room for short-term parking. As mentioned, the structure will be partitioned, retaining open space for quick surface parking for vehicles. Additionally, bicycle parking will be accommodated in these open spaces. The sound produced by the solar-powered structure is no louder than a vacuum cleaner operating inside of a building. By their nature, automated parking structures do not allow for theft and loitering because only vehicles are capable of entering the structure. Occupied vehicles are automatically prevented from entering by the system's sensors, This is true even where the only occupant is an infant or a dog.

Conveniently located structures like the proposed "Electric AutoParc" would provide the perfect complement to the long-term parking needs of the Abbot Kinney Corridor. This project will serve as a template to resolve parking constraints throughout the City of Los Angeles.



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