

WESTSIDE SPECIFIC PLAN STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING # 7: November 29, 2022

Conference Room #3, City Hall

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brian Bailey, Jack Cline, Juliet Goff, Richard Lucas, Judith Merlo, Tony Shamtobi, Kevin Wilson

STAFF PRESENT: Carlos Fandino, Dan Wall, Manny Garcia, L. Hernandez

CONSULTANTS PRESENT: Phil Burns, Lance Lowrey, Bob Paternoster

GUESTS PRESENT: Leegan Lim, Mario Lim

Introduction:

Carlos opened Meeting #7 at 2:10 P.M. and welcomed the Committee. He stated that the staff has heard what the Committee had to say at its earlier meetings and has decided to push ahead with an ordinance to change the zoning to permit mixed use along Santa Fe Avenue and to put aside for now all of the other work. He thanked the Committee members for their time and commitment.

Review of Committee Contributions to Date:

Bob reminded the Committee that we had first met nearly two years ago on February 2, 2021. At that time the staff had offered us a very general vision about bringing some mixed use, including residential and retail, to portions of the Westside. At that time it seemed like an impossible dream. But thanks to the Stakeholders and their suggestions about how to overcome obstacles to achieving the vision, we have now defined a very detailed and viable vision. He recalled the contributions of some individual members of the Committee:

- Doug challenged us to “think big.”
- Marisa agreed with Santa Fe focus, but only if we could find a way to reduce truck traffic.
- Juliet said Alameda East could serve businesses well, but only if the signals were improved.
- Jack suggested that we look south for residential in proximity to Huntington Park services.
- Tony stated that Santa Fe improvements (parking, trees) are needed to support his project.

- Kevin noted that Santa Fe North could have parking and trees if center median were removed.
- Brian accepted residential development adjacent to existing industrial, but only if there is separation and trucks can continue to serve industry as they do today.

Development Proposal at 5592-5600 S. Santa Fe:

Leegan Lim stated that his family has been active in Vernon since 1999. They own several properties, and are now proposing to development two adjacent parcels at 5592 and 5600 S. Santa Fe Avenue. Their original intention was flex warehousing, but when they learned of the City's new vision, they enthusiastically revised their plans to live/work residential with ground floor retail. He stated that residential pencils out in Vernon for three reasons: (1) proximity to jobs in L.A.; (2) the City's streamlined approval processes; and (3) adjacency to L.A. Arts District as a model.

In response to questions from Jack, Leegan stated that there will be slightly more than 40 units, depending upon their size; parking will be podium/subterranean; target rents will be about \$3.50/sq. ft., slightly less than the Arts District. Kevin noted that the Fire Department may require a setback on Santa Fe because of existing power lines there, and Dan stated that the City might consider placing those lines underground. Juliet stated that such a development could bring to Vernon exactly the type of people that it needs to stabilize its governance: young workers from Downtown Los Angeles who could serve well on Vernon's City Council. Richard warned that larger radius curb returns may be required at 56th Street, but Phil noted that smaller radii were included in the proposed infrastructure improvements for Santa Fe South.

Jack summarized that the Lim proposal is a great example of how things work in Vernon. He suggested that, if necessary, the City might be flexible with its parking requirements and not require affordable housing within the project. Juliet and Tony stated that such incentives are appropriate to kick-start development, but that the ordinances can be followed more strictly as development proceeds in the City. Bob noted that another developer has already approached the City with a proposed residential development project at 2808 Santa Fe Avenue.

Response to Stakeholder Concerns:

Phil discussed the changes in direction which are now being taken in response to concerns raised by the Committee. The major change, as previously reported by Carlos, is that the zoning will be separated from the remainder of the report so that it can be implemented immediately; the remainder of the report will be separately published as a long-range vision to guide and inspire

future actions by the City and by private property owners/developers. He noted that the team has heard and responded to the concerns of the Committee as follows:

1. Residential development should be prioritized.

The proposed zoning will permit projects such as the Lim proposal to proceed immediately.

2. Land values may be negatively affected by restrictive zoning.

The proposed zoning will allow all uses which are currently permitted (e.g., warehousing).

3. Lack of consensus on transportation proposals.

Although there appears to be strong support for the Truck Corridor proposal, all proposed new infrastructure will be made part of the Vision for possible future projects.

Phil concluded his presentation by noting that the proposed rezoning of mixed use districts along Santa Fe Avenue will affect only 2.2% of the City's total land area, leaving the remaining 97.8% zoned exactly as it is today for industrial use.

Kevin suggested that we also consider permitting residential development in areas which presently permit commercial, such as the property at Slauson and Boyle. Manny responded that this property is currently being recycled for warehouse use. Jack and Juliet urged consideration of permitting residential on other properties which are close to amenities (such as grocery stores) in Huntington Park. Phil responded that residential projects are best developed within specified mixed use areas where supporting amenities will spring up, and that isolated residential projects are not likely to attract the type of residents which Vernon wants and needs.

Kevin asked where we are with regard to the Housing Element and the Environmental Impact Report. Phil reported that the team is currently evaluating changes which will be required in these documents in response to the separation and acceleration of the rezoning.

Summary and Conclusion:

Dan concluded that he had heard consensus of the Committee to move ahead with the zoning and retain the remainder of the plan as a long-range Vision. He stated that the City would like to rezone first the designated mixed use areas along Santa Fe, and that it would consider additional areas for residential zoning in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Paternoster, Moderator