

At a Special Meeting on March 20th, 2019, by a vote of 8-0, the Del Rey Neighborhood Council passed the following motion outlining our comments on the Community Plan.

“The Del Rey Neighborhood Council recommends the following items be considered as part of the Palms-Mar Vista-Del Rey Community Plan update.

These concepts are born over years of Land Use and Board meetings and discussions about both individual projects and larger issues.

COMMUNITY PLAN TENETS

The following community plan cornerstones should guide the overall strategy within Del Rey.

NATURAL SPACE & PARKLAND

Del Rey has some of the most appealing open spaces in Los Angeles. We are the gateway to the coastal wetlands, and are home to a linear waterway system that connects the coast to inland Los Angeles. At the same time, Del Rey is underserved with recreational opportunities. There is extremely limited access to the natural areas noted above, and there are only a handful of small City parks. We must expand both access and interaction that is responsible and respectful of these natural lands.

- The Ballona Wetlands must be rezoned to match the existing protected uses and forever protected as open natural space.
- Any existing undeveloped land adjacent to creeks or wetlands must be rezoned and preserved as open space.
- The Centinela, Ballona and Sepulveda Creeks should be activated as greenways within Del Rey to both encourage a more practical interface with the public and return areas to a more natural condition. The Del Rey NC is on record supporting a broad approach to this which includes not only rejuvenating and activating the creeks themselves, but incorporating the surrounding areas with added interfaces for recreation, education and environmental purposes.
- Adjacent properties to the wetlands or our creeks with existing structures should be subject to restrictions on uses, density, height (no more than two stories) and massing as it relates to the interface with open space, special lighting rules to

avoid light pollution, and higher than normal open space requirements on redevelopment projects in these zones.

- Existing park spaces including the Culver Median must be forever preserved as parkland.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

Del Rey is a place with unusual diversity within the Westside of Los Angeles. Communities of various ethnicities, cultures and economic status have coexisted here for a very long time and been integrated throughout our area. It is very important to plan ways for development and growth to occur that support this diversity.

DENSITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Del Rey has accepted and even promoted density in various areas, including around Jefferson Blvd, and in the Glencoe Maxella Specific area. However, in many cases this density has outpaced infrastructure.

Examples of problems within the Glencoe Maxella Specific Plan include:

- lack of sidewalks and impassibility of existing sidewalks on Glencoe Ave that would otherwise allow for better walkability;
- addition of traffic counts from individual projects in isolation, without a global assessment of overall impact when multiple projects are built;
- multiple local intersections already rated F and not improved before additional development is allowed;
- lack of basic traffic infrastructure such as turn signals (Mindanao at Glencoe) and stop lights (Del Rey and Maxella) resulting in gridlock;
- lack of any bike lanes or aforementioned connections to the South and West;
- lack of light rail or dedicated bus lanes on Lincoln to enhance public transportation options;
- no street cleaning or other services to keep up with the changing character of the neighborhood;
- continued installation of above ground utilities, creating a visual blight on the area;
- complete lack of public open space; and
- non-existence of much needed installation and maintenance of public landscaping.

It's clear that infrastructure growth doesn't keep pace with development, and, that citywide, there is insufficient planning for the impacts of denser development until far after the impacts are felt. When it comes to planning for denser development the city is, at best, reactive; it should be proactive instead.

Improvements addressing the above must be made part in parcel with added development. While the Del Rey NC supports density in appropriate areas, there must be a new mechanism to keep the improvement of public services and infrastructure in lock step.

Further, while R1 and its purpose in a dense city may eventually be revisited on a citywide or statewide basis and via a broader planning analysis, the Del Rey NC currently supports maintaining the existing single family density in all R1 zones in Del Rey, subject to revision in the event mass transit comes to Del Rey.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS & HUBS

Del Rey has the advantage of a few commercial corridors that could provide services within walking distance to many Del Reyans. Development in commercial corridors or corners must be mandated to include commercial and pedestrian friendly interfaces. Examples of such areas include:

- Culver Blvd. and Inglewood Blvd.;
- Culver Blvd. and Centinela Ave.;
- Culver Blvd. and Slauson Ave.;
- Maxella Ave. and Glencoe Ave. in and adjacent to the Specific Plan area;
- Jefferson Blvd. and Inglewood Blvd.;
- Jefferson and Centinela;
- Marina Marketplace and Villa Marina Center;
- McConnell Ave. & Culver Blvd.;
- Sepulveda Blvd. and Lucerne Ave.; and
- Centinela Ave. between Culver City and Ballona Creek.

The zoning of these areas should be protected and preserved with some commercial use component mandated in addition to optional residential in order to provide support services and diverse uses to adjacent existing residential populations.

CREATIVE AND SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Del Rey has some unusual Light Manufacturing districts which are unique to the Westside and feature older small scale buildings that are very suitable to start-up and small businesses. In order to preserve opportunities for local and nearby residents to obtain suitable space for these types of businesses, the existing buildings in these areas should be preserved, modernized and adapted as much as possible.

Unrestricted demolition and redevelopment may result in higher rent and larger scale commercial space that could price out the current market.

HEIGHT LIMITS

There should be no unlimited height zones in Del Rey. Currently, they exist north of Jefferson (though in reality limited by the proximity to LAX) and in a few places along Washington Blvd adjacent to the Culver City border. These should be capped at heights similar to the surrounding development.

Del Rey has remained primarily a place made up of buildings that are most often one and two stories tall, with multi-family areas that only occasionally reach the 45' R-3 height limit (with the exception of the Glencoe-Maxella Specific Plan area). It would be most appropriate to maintain the existing development height maximums, in order to preserve access to our coastal breezes, open vistas, abundance of daylight and overall 'beachy' feel.

Area H south of 90 and west of Centinela Ave should be allowed a higher height limit compared to the rest of Del Rey, however still reasonably capped. In all cases low income housing bonuses should still be embraced.

MOBILITY

Del Rey has the advantages of having walkable areas, offering housing close to places of business, having access to several major transit corridors, and connections to important recreational opportunities. To take full advantage of these opportunities, the following must be considered in any community plan:

- implement safe bike lanes that cross the Ballona Creek and connect north and south Del Rey; the Del Rey NC is previously on record supporting some form of a

bike bridge in the vicinity of McConnell or Beethoven;

- establish bike routes to access areas west of Lincoln, as there is currently no bike lane connection across Lincoln Blvd to connect Del Rey with the Marvin Braude bike path or beach areas; the Del Rey NC is on record supporting efforts to improve these connections and make a safe and proper point of access either at Lincoln Blvd or Maxella Ave;
- establish bike routes connecting Del Rey to other neighboring communities (Mar Vista, Playa Vista, Playa del Rey, Culver City & Venice); these are primarily in the north/south direction as well;
- construct more dedicated bike lanes instead of shared bike lanes where possible;
- encourage development that allows more people to commute to work and shop/dine on foot or bicycle; such areas should include live/work and mixed use projects along designated commercial corridors and within specific plans;
- mandate and fast-track the inclusion of some form of mass transit on Lincoln Blvd (either bus express lanes or light rail);
- support and advocate for current Metro plans for an underground rail line along Centinela through the heart of Del Rey that would allow direct rail access for Del Reyans and alleviate the north/south cut-through congestion that plagues our neighborhoods;
- find additional solutions to the north/south traffic that transits Del Rey but does not originate in Del Rey, including traffic cut-throughs to and from the South Bay and Playa Vista to the south and Venice and Santa Monica to the north;
- maintain and augment existing bus lines that allow residents to access the Expo line via Washington, Culver & Lincoln Blvds;
- support added pedestrian safety measures throughout Del Rey;
- recognize that modern transportation networks necessarily include bike sharing, ride sharing, scooting, and micro transit, and these are crucial to maximizing mobility and lessening our dependence on cars; Los Angeles must foster partnerships with both public and private providers, and mandate proper coordination of these networks through data sharing and technical analysis; include infrastructure improvements that work with these new networks (such as scooter parking zones or ride sharing drop off zones). The Del Rey NC is on record supporting a data-based approach to ride sharing.

BEAUTIFICATION

The Community Plan should encourage architecture and site planning that contribute beauty, quality and environmental sustainability to the neighborhood. The public

interface of our buildings must also work hand in hand to make Del Rey a more livable space.

City codes are too lax in allowing open space within developments to be on rooftops or other areas that don't actually appear as open space to the community or invite the public to enjoy them.

Particular attention must be paid to the interface between the public and our buildings and making them pedestrian friendly and not walled off.

Improvements to the public rights of way should also be enhanced in all areas, and mature trees should be protected where possible.

DEL REY CHARACTER AND IDENTITY ENHANCEMENT

Del Rey has a set of physical and lifestyle characteristics that are truly unique in Los Angeles and even in the Westside. These are partially due to our proximity to the coastal environments and the wetlands and because of Del Rey's status as a sanctuary from overdeveloped nearby communities. This results in a relatively low density, diverse collection of residential and small scale commercial neighborhoods.

Efforts should be taken to recognize these unique qualities, preserve and enhance them, and encourage local pride amongst our residential and business communities.

Some ideas that have come up to support this idea include:

- implementation of an extensive and creative Del Rey signage program in our most visible areas as well as at the entry points to Del Rey;
- creation of identifiable public landmarks, such as monuments, iconic public art and architecture, plazas or public gathering spaces;
- establishment of a community building, center or other public facility where community functions and meetings can take place in a centralized location.

AREA SPECIFIC CONCERNS

The following recommendations concern particular areas and zoning issues that follow along the above tenets.

GLENCOE MAXELLA SPECIFIC PLAN

This Specific Plan has served the area well, however changes are recommended after seeing the effects of its implementation over many years.

First and foremost, the boundaries of Del Rey itself should be expanded to include the parcels bounded by Del Rey Ave, Lincoln Blvd, Maxella Ave and Washington Blvd. This area is technically part of the Venice NC and Venice Community Plan, however east of Lincoln Blvd falls within the Specific Plan and is de facto part of Del Rey.

The four corners of the Lincoln-Washington intersection are not in Del Rey. However, we recommend that they be included in the Specific Plan because this intersection abuts Del Rey and is one of the most poorly developed and planned major intersections in Los Angeles.

With this in mind, the following alterations should be made in the Specific Plan:

- remove public storage facilities from the allowed new construction; these do not encourage the mixed use character that should dominate this area;
- require all developers entering into large scale renovations, not just those building new developments, to install sidewalks;
- allow residential/mixed use along Lincoln Blvd;
- mandate affordable housing component in all new buildings;
- expand to include the Lincoln-Washington intersection with an eye towards a master redevelopment of that intersection to include protected bike lanes along Washington (via widening with redevelopment), a more pedestrian forward interface, buildings that involve and invite the public to interact, landscaping, and mixed residential/commercial opportunities with affordable housing;
- as noted above, the strip of land bounded by Del Rey Ave, Lincoln Blvd, Washington Blvd and Maxella Ave, should be ceded from Venice to Del Rey as it falls within the existing Glencoe Maxella Specific Plan, and the interests of that strip align much more with the priorities of the neighborhood to the east of Lincoln Blvd than that to the west;
- a more rigorous open space component must be included; such open space must be publicly accessible; additional greening innovations, such as water reclamation and further streetscaping, must be mandated;
- the Plan must encourage parklets or other innovative use of street space;
- street widening must be maintained as written in the existing Specific Plan;

- mandatory public infrastructure contributions should be used towards improvements (such as turn signals, street cleaning, preservation of open space etc) within the plan area or adjacent area.

MARINA MARKETPLACE

The Marina Marketplace, south of Maxella, could be included under the Glencoe-Maxella Specific Plan however with special conditions. While residential zoning use may be applied, this property is currently a vital commercial center that helps establish the surrounding community as a walkable neighborhood. Therefore ensuring a modernized commercial redevelopment should be the priority here. Also, density should be limited to ensure responsible development in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood with strict attention paid to open public space, height, massing, stepbacks, traffic generation, noise and air pollution, and the maintenance of a substantial commercial component. Generally the height and density should not exceed that of the adjacent Glencoe Maxella plan. While the framework for the future of this land is best addressed in the Community Plan, specifics for any development should be revisited by this Neighborhood Council with designs and plans in place.

BALLONA WETLANDS

We advocate for the creation of a Ballona Wetlands Specific Plan or the zoning of adjacent lots using new ReCode tools that outline the steps needed to caretake this vital open space. Such a Plan would protect all existing natural habitat, and the following basic points would govern redevelopment on properties adjacent to both the wetlands and all creeks running through Del Rey:

- all redevelopment must be considered based on not just *how* the building fits into the surrounding environment, but *whether* the building fits into the surrounding environment;
- any new projects, if approved, must include no less than 20% of lot area dedicated to public open space; additional setbacks and yard sizes facing the creeks should be required;
- place limits on lighting that conflicts with wildlife;
- create specific softscape, heat island and stormwater management requirements and restrictions within the new zoning;
- no industrial zones should be allowed, and any existing should be rezoned to open space or low density residential with density limits that match the interface

described above.

CENTINELA GREAT STREETS

Centinela Ave is Del Rey's 'Main Street' and demands attention to enhance the pedestrian experience and prioritize the commercial appeal of the street. Please refer to our community's prior and current Centinela Ave Great Streets applications for the entire plan. Augmentation of this street must be included in any future vision of Del Rey.

AVON WAY/KENSINGTON WAY

The area bounded by Culver Blvd, Washington Blvd, Lindblade and Berryman is chronically underparked and underserved by public transportation, and we have heard concerns from the area's residents every time a project is proposed there. We suggest a transportation overlay that mandates developers to address the transportation needs of this area specifically. Options could include more parking, shared ride access, or other creative solutions.

MAR VISTA GARDENS

Although this area is under HACLA control, there may be a time in the future when it becomes available for development. Given the relatively low density of the site and its existing status as an enclosed community, this should be rezoned for denser development but under public control. This denser development should include:

- low income housing with the potential for a transitional housing component;
- some market rate units as space allows;
- other components such as commercial corners and open space;
- park space and community facilities that are equal to or greater than what currently exists; green initiatives should be included;
- consideration of a better public interface with the surrounding community;
- adequate parking and transportation infrastructure.

Long-time community members must be given first priority in any new development at this site. Up-zoning this land may spur a public-private partnership to rebuild this important neighborhood while maintaining its current opportunities for low income housing.

MESMER TRIANGLE

Light industrial is disappearing on the Westside, and the Mesmer Triangle is a vital and vibrant pocket of it that should remain. This area is a prime candidate for adaptive re-use and should not be rezoned for any other general use other than as it exists. Redevelopment should be limited in lot size to prevent both large scale demolition and projects that would alter the current character. Further, at least 50% of any existing building should be maintained under any redevelopment. This maintenance of the status quo should not preclude improvements to the public right of way that facilitate pedestrian safety and beautification, as the area is lacking in sidewalks and safe buffers between pedestrians and roadways.

AREA H

The part of Del Rey south of the Ballona Creek and west of Centinela requires specific attention. Currently it is home to a vibrant commercial and light industrial community.

As with the Mesmer Triangle area, adaptive reuse should be emphasized. At least 50% of any existing building should be maintained in new development to encourage adaptive re-use. Existing heights should be maintained in any new development in order to keep the midrise character of the area. All developments should be required to maintain an open interface with the public rights of way and be required to include a ground floor commercial component, open space, or substantial community improvements such as food truck parking/service areas.

CONCLUSION

The above are not binding suggestions, and the Del Rey NC retains the right to adjust the specific points above based on the results of the draft Community Plan and EIR and its findings, as well as continued community input over the coming months. The Council reserves the right to review individual projects on a case by case basis and make adjustments to the above motion as needed.”