

Port of Los Angeles scales back waterfront plans

Comment sought on skeletal elements

If this feels like we're back to square one, we are. The Port announced this December it is seeking comment on its plans to go ahead with a much less ambitious project that does not deal with the amount of retail development or open space issues. Instead it will be focusing on what it calls skeletal elements to include finishing the promenade, creating a coastal trail, expanding the Red Car line and new cruise ship facilities plus others. For more information go to portoflosangeles.org.

The comment period ends on February 28th. Comments can be sent to: ceqacomment@portla.org and to spencer.d.mcneil@usace.army.mil

A draft environmental plan will be released perhaps by the fall of 2007. In the meantime, we will do what we have come to do so well...wait and see.

Goldberg

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On building community ownership of the plan:

"People ask about my vision for San Pedro. I can't tell you what my vision is.

"My vision is to create a process where the goals of the city and the goals of the community come together to create a plan that you guys love and will fight for every day.

"I'm convinced that one of the huge problems in this city is that we plan project by project and that must stop. It won't stop until you get a great plan and you will fight for it and I will fight for it every day."

On neighborhood councils, developers, and the politics of planning:

"I've asked myself the question, is real planning possible in LA? I think it is, if two constituent groups are behind it. We won't be successful without both of them.

"Number one, the community and the neighborhood councils have to be supportive of real planning and I think they are. Communities want real planning because they need to know what is going to happen in their community and right now they don't.

"People complain and say, 'Oh, the neighborhood councils are against every project.' Under the system we have here, I think a logical response by neighborhood councils is to be against every project because you have no idea what the next one is going to be.

"Number two, the plan needs to have the support of the development community, meaning it's real. [Developers need to know that] when they look at a plan and they look at a zone, that's what we want.

"In every other city in this country, the zone on the land establishes the value of the land. That's the highest and best use.

"If it's industrially zoned land, it's worth \$20 or \$30 a square foot. In Los Angeles, that's not true.

"The value of the land is not based on what the zone says or what the plan says. It's based on what that developer believes he can change the zone to.

"That is disastrous for this city. Disastrous.

"I have to believe that the developers are getting sick of this. I have developers who come in to me and say, 'I bought this industrial land. I paid conversion prices,' -- meaning they didn't pay \$20 or \$30; they paid \$100 -- and I say to them, 'Can you spell speculation?'

"And they say, 'But, you've always done it. You've always converted.'

"I'm sorry, zoning has to mean something in this city."



Photo courtesy of Palos Verdes Land Conservancy

Dogs and owners, participating in the Bark & Boo Halloween Costume Parade this last October, are lead by Becky Harper and John Nieto through White Point Nature Preserve during the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy's (PVPLC) first of its kind event. Attendees were treated to a costume contest for dogs, crafts, games and special exhibitions. Now the Conservancy is looking for volunteers to help create more special events at the Preserve. Contact Mary Ellen Richardson at (310) 541-7613 x210 for more information.

Planning Taskforce Pilot Program Begun

Planning Department Liaison to interact directly with NC's

By Soledad Garcia

Somebody building a five story condo next to you and you were never informed? That's a nightmare scenario that hopefully won't happen. To that end, the new Department of Planning Director Gail Goldberg has put in place a ten point pilot program that has a liaison from the Planning Department who will communicate directly with participating neighborhood councils on planning matters.

At a meeting held in December 2005, The Planning Taskforce from the Los Angeles Neighborhood Councils' Congress originally identified what were considered the ten most important planning features that eventually became the current Pilot Program. The program was ratified by the Task Force in October 2006 and now is being implemented. The program insures that applicants that are filing building plans with the city will have those plans submitted to participating neighborhood councils for their review and comment. This will provide oversight at the local level that has never been seen before.

The following are the ten points that comprise the program. While this may seem a bit dry to most, it shows that the City Planning Department is serious about involving local residents in what is being planned in their communities and giving them a way to officially respond in Board hearings.

1. The Planning Department will establish a NC Liaison whose primary job will be to interact with NC's participating in this program.
2. All Neighborhood Councils in the pilot program will designate a person for contact with Planning.
3. Zoning Information and Maps Access System (ZIMAS) will be modified to include the name and contact information for the NC person dealing with planning matters for that NC and Planning will print a copy of this information and provide it to the applicant, at time of filing, advising them to contact the NC as soon as possible.
4. Each applicant will provide Planning with an extra copy set of the application filing package and Planning will send this set to the appropriate NC as soon as possible, but within 3 or 4 working days.
5. NC's will advise Planning via mail, fax, E-mail or in person at the public hearing of board decisions regarding the approval or disapproval of specific cases and citing the reasons therefore. If the NC does not so communicate to the Planning Department decision maker by the time of the public hearing, then the NC will be deemed to have "no position" on the issue and the case will not be delayed pending NC action.
- 6 - 10. City will provide advance notice for proposed City initiated cases, establish a schedule for Community updates for all Community Plans, establish a Task Force "Planning Committee" for cooperative instruction on planning matters, meet with all NC's collectively to discuss delivery of services and NC Planning Committees advising Planning with regard to their agenda to include those where significant cases would be discussed.

The first Planning Outreach sessions have already been held on Zoning (ZIMAS) training for residents, owners, real estate people and whoever was interested in participating in this unprecedented interaction with the City Planning Department. The training will be coming to the Harbor Area in the near future. The date, time and place will be announced. Attending this meeting is the next step in your planning education regarding development in San Pedro.

As Jon Perica, a retired Zoning Administrator for the City of Los Angeles who presented at a local planning forum last spring said, "If you educate yourself and know what you want, you can make a difference."