

**PROCEEDINGS OF REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING
GREEN LINE TRANSIT ORIENTED DISTRICTS
March 22, 2000, April 12, 2000 and April 26, 2000**

March 22, 2000

Staff presented the Green Line T.O.D. draft ordinance, the related zone changes, and the Green Line Transit Oriented District Land Use, Housing and Economic Development Strategy Report (Green Line Strategy Report) to the Commission. The TOD provisions would create a walkable, more pedestrian-friendly environment, revitalize the areas around the Hawthorne and Vermont Green Line transit stations, and increase Green Line ridership. The TOD's cover all areas within approximately one-quarter mile of the cited stations.

The draft ordinance would also include changes of zone from C-3 to C-2 along Vermont Avenue, and from M-1 to C-2 along Hawthorne Boulevard to provide for pedestrian friendly commercial uses along these streets. Additionally, a Strategy Report lays out the basic policy directions applicable to development within the TOD's, and lays the basis for the more detailed standards in the draft ordinance.

Staff then detailed some of the draft ordinance standards applicable to the C-2 zone along Vermont and Hawthorne. For instance, a commercial development in the C-2 zone would be limited to 35 feet in height; however, if a significant percentage of the floor area is residential in a mixed-use building, the height limit would rise to 45 feet. Additionally, ground floor uses in a mixed use building would be limited to pedestrian-friendly commercial uses.

Mr. James Wallace, Chairman of the Greenline TOD Advisory Committee (TODAC), then testified before the Commission. He stated that the Committee had met many times to review and comment on portions of the draft ordinance and Strategy Report, and no objections were raised during review of the final draft.

Mr. Henry Porter, President of the Southwest Community Association and a member of TODAC, stated that the mixed-use TOD concept is a viable one that will increase community security and lower the crime rate.

In response to a Commission question, staff explained that there was little coordination with the adjoining cities of Los Angeles and Hawthorne because they are not working on any TOD-related ordinances. The cities were contacted, but declined to participate in TOD planning at this time. As a result, the draft ordinance addresses only unincorporated areas.

Commissioner Vargo asked why the draft ordinance requires a conditional use permit for apartment buildings of over 4 units in the R-3 zone. Staff responded that this requirement would create a more pedestrian-friendly environment by discouraging the construction of large monotonous buildings. The CUP requirement would help regulate the design of large apartment buildings and result in more open space—a more open

feeling. Staff was directed to look into whether this CUP requirement would be appropriate and report back at a later date.

The Commission then voted to close the hearing and direct staff to bring back the Green Line package for discussion and possible action, addressing the issues brought up by Commissioner Vargo. The motion was passed unanimously.

April 12, 2000

Staff gave a re-report to the Commission on the nature of the Transit Oriented Districts (T.O.D.) program. In response to Commissioner Vargo's request, staff also presented a sketch depicting four 4-unit apartment buildings overlaid over one large apartment building on a lot of typical size. The drawing compared the design possibilities under current zoning code provisions, which do not require a CUP for larger apartment buildings in Zone C-3, to design possibilities under the provisions of the draft ordinance, which require such a CUP.

Commissioner Campbell then expressed her opinion that the newly proposed design requirements, which included more open space, and the related CUP requirement for apartment buildings with more than four dwelling units, are definitely more desirable than the options allowed under the current code.

Commissioner Campbell went on to ask what kind of support was present in the community for the proposed ordinance, including the cited CUP requirement, and asked for clarification on how the proposed T.O.D. program was developed. In response, staff explained that they worked closely with a Transit Oriented Districts Advisory Committee (TODAC) composed of residents and business persons from both the West Athens and Lennox communities. Staff stated that the TODAC met numerous times and made direct decisions on most policies and ordinance provisions, including the cited CUP requirement. Staff also held a townhall meeting at which the community expressed clear support for the resulting draft ordinance, zone changes and Strategy Report.

Then Commissioner Vargo again addressed the draft ordinance conditional use permit (CUP) requirement for apartment buildings of more than four units. She stated that she now agrees that under the proposed requirements, the resulting design would provide an interesting cluster of small buildings and related open spaces—in short, an interesting design. But she also stated that she would still like to see some detailed design criteria for larger buildings that have more units. She stated that this would insure the provision of open spaces and an interesting building design while providing a greater number of dwelling units.

Commissioner Vargo then requested that staff develop design standards for larger buildings, including balcony, landscaping, and wall modulation and articulation interval requirements.

The Commission then directed staff to develop the cited standards to eliminate long, monotonous building walls on larger apartment buildings. Additionally, staff was directed to research other jurisdictions' design guidelines that promote more attractive

multiple-family residential buildings, and to bring this information back to the Commission as a consent item for approval.

April 26, 2000

Staff presented the architectural design standards for large apartment buildings requested by Commissioner Vargo. Commissioner Vargo then stated that her concerns were satisfied; however she also stated that she wants the standards to include the specific depth that long walls should be offset, the designation of created open spaces as “private” open space, and specification of minimum dimensions of such open spaces.

Commissioner Toy then made a motion to prepare the related standards, approve the draft ordinance, the related zone changes and the Green Line Strategy Report, and the Commission approved the motion 3-0 (two members absent).