



FRIENDS OF SUNSET PARK

A California nonprofit corporation of Sunset Park residents • Box 5823, Santa Monica, California 90409-5823 • FriendsofSP@yahoo.com

AUGUST 2013 NEWSLETTER

Layout by Bill Josephs

Downtown Santa Monica: What Do You Want It to Look Like?

On August 14, at 6:30 PM at City Hall, the City Council will discuss the future of downtown Santa Monica. Planning staff is asking the Council what height limits should be studied in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) before the Downtown Specific Plan is published, and they are recommending 120–135 feet.

The current height limit is 84 feet from 2nd to 5th St. and 45 feet on Ocean Avenue.

Meanwhile, developers want to build very tall hotels topped with luxury condos. Proposals include the Wyndham/Holiday Inn condo/hotel project on Colorado and

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Want More Traffic?

If the answer is “No!” here are three things you can do:

- Stay informed by reading local newspapers and FOSP emails.
- Attend City Council meetings when important decisions are being made.
- Speak to Council members during Public Comment and email your comments to them at Council@smgov.net

The Bergamot Area Plan Will Increase Gridlock

FACTS: On August 13, the City Council will be considering the Bergamot Area Plan. What do Sunset Park residents know about the plan, and what would they like the Council to do?

The 140-acre Bergamot area is basically bounded by Cloverfield, Colorado, Centinela, and Exposition. Bergamot area

development agreements in the pipeline or recently constructed are already estimated to generate more than 20,000 additional daily car trips, and many of those cars will be traveling north and south.

According to the city’s Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE), “While Santa Monica is generally blessed with a fine grid of inter-connected streets, the grid breaks down in several places, particularly in the north-south direction. In fact, there are only five corridors that traverse the whole City from north to south...

Some of these, particularly 26th Street and 23rd Street, were never designed to carry heavy vehicle volumes.”

The only north-south “through street” between Lincoln and Centinela from the Bergamot Area to the southern city limit

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Communicating with Your City Council

- If possible, look up online the agenda item number for the topic you wish to comment on: <http://www.smgov.net/departments/clerk/agendas.aspx>
- Comments can be e-mailed to Council@smgov.net – Include the meeting date, the agenda item number (if you know it), and the topic in the subject line.
- If you don’t have access to a computer, you can mail letters to the City Council at: **City Clerk, 1685 Main Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401.** Allow two days for delivery.
- Courteous letters expressing your point of view are probably more persuasive than angry letters.
- **Attend a Council meeting:** The City Council meets at City Hall, 1685 Main St., and the public portion of the meeting begins at 6:30 PM.
- **Parking:** You can park in the Civic Center Parking Structure on 4th Street. The entrance is on the west side of 4th Street, at Civic Center Drive, between Pico and the freeway. Keep the parking ticket with you so you can get it validated in City Hall. If not, you’ll need a credit card to get out of the parking structure (\$3 after 6 PM).
- **Public comment:** The City Council meets in the Council Chambers on the 2nd floor of City Hall. There will be a table on the 2nd floor with agendas and speaker cards. Fill out a card and hand it to a staff person. You’ll get 2 minutes at the microphone when your name is called. You can always “pass” when your name is called if you decide not to speak.

SM Airport Update

Airport Manager Retires – According to the Santa Monica Mirror, “Former Santa Monica Airport director Robert Trimborn, who left the position after 17 years...on June 28, has joined American Airports Corporation [as Director of Business Development] to further the development of their growing portfolio of airport and fixed base operations (FBOs).” The company is located in Santa Monica.

Rep. Waxman Invites FAA to Participate in Forum to Discuss the Future of Santa Monica Airport – On July 16, Rep. Henry A. Waxman sent a letter to Federal Aviation Association (FAA) Administrator Michael Huerta asking that the FAA participate in a forum in Santa Monica with local residents and the City of Santa Monica to discuss options for the future of the Santa Monica Airport (SMO). The airport is currently operating under the Santa Monica Airport Agreement, a settlement agreement with the FAA that was established in 1984. The agreement will expire in 2015.

“The Santa Monica Airport is just feet from many homes in Santa Monica. For years, residents have had to live with safety, noise, and pollution issues at the airport,” said Rep. Waxman. “It’s time to start having frank conversation with the FAA about SMO post-2015.”

New Landing Fee – The change from \$2.07 per thousand pounds of certificated maximum gross landing weight to \$5.48, which now applies to both itinerant aircraft and those based at SMO, went into effect on August 1.

New Flight Tracking System – On June 25, the City Council approved the modification of a contract with Excelis, Inc. to purchase a flight track data system (WebScene), replacing the current WebTrack system. The public will have access to the new flight track display system in September.

Santa Monica College

According to Greg Brown, SMC Director Facilities and Planning, the current construction project on the Pearl Street side of the Main Campus is an addition to the south side of the Library that will house the college’s Information Technology. No classrooms or student areas will be included, just staff offices and a computer room. This will be the data processing center that runs the business of the college, not an instructional program. It is part of the college’s 2010 Facilities Master Plan.

Meanwhile, August 26 will mark the first day of the Fall semester. Total enrollment in Fall 2012 was 32,626, up from 31,954 in 2011. More information is available at www.smc.edu

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2nd (195 feet), the Gehry-designed condo/hotel project on Ocean Avenue and Santa Monica Blvd. (244 feet), and the Miramar condo/hotel project on Ocean Avenue and Wilshire (320 feet).

Other seaside communities are maintaining the following maximum building heights – Santa Barbara: 20 to 60 feet. Malibu: 28 feet. Pacific Palisades: 30 feet. Venice Coastal Zone: 22 to 45 feet. And on the island of Bali: the height of a palm tree.

What do you want? Communicate with your elected representatives by 1) attending the Council hearing on the Downtown Specific Plan and speaking during Public Comment on August 14 at 6:30 PM, and 2) emailing your comments to Council@smgov.net

Annual Meeting Election Results

At the June 22 Friends of Sunset Park General Membership Meeting, the following members were elected to the Board of Directors for 2013–14:

Joanne Curtis, Charles R. Donaldson, Vivien Flitton, Zina Josephs, Cathy Larson, Lloyd Saunders, and Regula Ziegler

At a subsequent meeting, the Board of Directors elected its officers:

President – Zina Josephs
 Vice President – Lloyd Saunders
 Secretary – Charles R. Donaldson
 Treasurer – Vivien Flitton

Thank You to the Door Prize Donors!

The FOSP Board wishes to thank the following businesses which generously donated door prizes for the 2013 Annual Meeting:

Acapillow – 3018 Pico Blvd.
 Bark Williams – 2901 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Bob’s Market – 1650 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Campos Famous Burritos – 2008 Pico Blvd.
 Compatto Yarn Salon – 2112 Wilshire Blvd.
 Creation Grill – 2901 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Edelweiss Flower Boutique – 1722 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Engler Brothers Auto Parts – 2630 Pico Blvd.
 Gilbert’s El Indio Restaurant – 2526 Pico Blvd.
 Goods – 1738 Ocean Park Blvd.
 il Forno Trattoria – 2901 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Josie Restaurant – 2424 Pico Blvd.
 Lares Restaurant – 2909 Pico Blvd.
 Laura’s Nail Salon – 3026 Pico Blvd.
 Make Believe Costumes – 3240 Pico Blvd.
 Maya Shoe Repair – 1708 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Next Door at Josie – 2420 Pico Blvd.
 One West Bank – 1750 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Pacific Resident Theatre – 707 Venice Blvd.
 Santa Monica Yoga – 1640 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Starbucks – 2901 Ocean Park Blvd.
 Superfast Copying – 2358 Pico Blvd.
 Sushi Sasabune – 11917 Wilshire Blvd.
 YogaWorks – 1426 Montana Avenue, 2nd floor

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is the 26th/Cloverfield/23rd corridor, right through the center of the Pico and Sunset Park residential neighborhoods.

Will greater density will improve the quality of life? Planners support the theory that denser development will reduce car trips, reduce emissions, and improve our health by forcing us to walk, cycle, and use public transit instead of driving. We've been seeing denser development in Downtown. How's the theory working so far? Gridlock seems to have become standard, with idling cars wasting gas and polluting the air.

North-south cut-through commuter traffic in Sunset Park increased dramatically during the expansion some years ago of the high density Special Office District (the Water Garden, the Yahoo Center, the Arboretum, MTV, and the Lantana Campus).

Due to the location of Santa Monica Airport on the east and Penmar Golf Course on the west, the only "through street" south of the Bergamot area is the Cloverfield/23rd corridor.

This same corridor also serves Santa Monica Business Park, Santa Monica College, the Cloverfield entrance/exit on I-10, and the hospital district. It becomes a virtual parking lot at various hours of the day, complicating the lives of residents. How will creating even greater density in the Bergamot area make things better?

No net new trips? Systems analyst Valerie Griffin has suggested that planners and developers are greatly overestimating the square footage needed per employee in office projects, thereby underestimating the number of workers who will commute to the new offices in the Bergamot area and creating more daily car trips than estimated in the LUCE Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The densities proposed in the plan, as measured in "floor area ratios" (FARs), will lead to increased traffic. As an example, replacing 109 mobile homes at Village Trailer Park (VTP) with 377 apartments in five-story buildings will increase daily car trips from about 200 to nearly 2,000.

Planning staff has stated that the 2.5 maximum FAR is being met by this and other developments, but that's only because developers are being allowed to include "new streets" (the extension of Pennsylvania Avenue and the addition of narrow streets between some of the parcels) in their FAR calculations, contrary to the Municipal Code.

Replacing the 200,000 sq ft Paper Mate plant with the 766,000 sq ft Bergamot Transit Village Center and adding the 192,000 sq ft Colorado Creative Studios; the 304,000 sq ft Roberts Center; the 341,000 sq ft East Village (replacing VTP); and the 356,000 sq ft Paseo Nebraska doesn't sound like reducing density — it sounds like lots of massive buildings.

As a result, planners now state that the LUCE goal of "no new net trips" is only an "end state goal" for the year 2030. Traffic consultant Jeff Tumlin told the Planning Commission that traffic in the Bergamot Area will "flip" after initially increasing, but it's not clear as to when or how this flip will occur.

What's traffic like now around the Bergamot area?

Here are some 24-hour traffic counts, as of 2006, from the city's Transportation Management Division:

- 20th Street, Wilshire to Pico – 25,427
- 26th Street, Wilshire to Olympic – 17,752 (mostly 2-lane)
- Cloverfield, Santa Monica Blvd. to Olympic – 42,937
- Cloverfield, Olympic to I-10 freeway – 29,458
- Wilshire Blvd., 17th to Centinela – 39,806
- Santa Monica Blvd., 17th to Centinela – 28,238
- Colorado, 20th to Centinela – 17,749 (mostly 2-lane)
- Olympic Blvd., 20th to 26th – 28,577
- Olympic Blvd., 26th to Centinela – 33,880
- Pico Blvd., 20th to Centinela – 26,663

Where are our busiest intersections?

Here are some of the intersections currently rated "UNACCEPTABLE" in the Bergamot Transit Village Center Final EIR:

- Lincoln & Olympic/I-10 W/B off-ramp;
- Lincoln & Ocean Park Blvd.;
- 20th & Pico;
- 20th & Pearl;
- 23rd & Pearl;
- 23rd & Ocean Park Blvd.;
- Cloverfield & Santa Monica Blvd.;
- Cloverfield & I-10 WB off-ramp;
- Cloverfield & I-10 EB on-ramp;
- Cloverfield & Pearl;
- Cloverfield & Ocean Park Blvd.;
- 25th (west) & Ocean Park Blvd.;
- 26th & Montana;
- Yale & Broadway;
- Stewart & Olympic;
- Centinela & Santa Monica Blvd.;
- Centinela & Broadway;
- Centinela & Colorado;
- Centinela & Exposition;
- Centinela & Ocean Park Blvd.

How much traffic will current Bergamot Area development agreement projects add to our congested streets?

- Village Trailer Park – 1,863 daily car trips;
- Roberts Center – 1,654 car trips;
- Colorado Creative Studio Project – 2,092 car trips;
- SMC Academy of Entertainment & Technology – 1,482 car trips;
- Herb Alpert Educational Village – 2,500 car trips (rough estimate);
- Paseo Nebraska – 4,000 car trips (rough estimate);
- Bergamot Transit Village Center – 7,585 car trips;
- Agensys, Inc. – 1,395 car trips.

How do developers propose to "mitigate" the traffic impacts from their projects?

Let's look at the Bergamot Transit Village Center and the Roberts Center. Both of them plan to reduce the impact of their estimated 1,866 new daily car trips traveling through the 23rd and Ocean Park Blvd. (OPB) intersection by removing three parking spaces on eastbound OPB to create a right-turn only lane. One wonders how much difference three cars idling in a right-turn-only lane will have on either 23rd (24,000 daily car trips) or OPB (27,189 daily car trips).

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OPINIONS: Should the Bergamot Area Plan rely on the LUCE EIR? The LUCE estimated 1,300 new residential units being built in the Bergamot area by 2030. Yet three years into the 20-year plan, civil engineer Armen Melkonians notes that there are already nearly 1,500 units proposed in four development agreements. It seems obvious that this Bergamot Area Plan should not go forward without a separate EIR.

Are the plan's trip reduction scenarios realistic? An older woman will supposedly sit alone all afternoon reading a book in a (non-existent) park on the Gas Company property rather than driving to an exercise class at the YMCA. A young woman will ride the Expo to work, attend an evening performance at the SMC AET campus, then supposedly ride her bike home from the Farmdale Expo station near Dorsey High School late at night, rather than driving. A family of four will supposedly ride their bikes to shop for groceries rather than driving to the store. Is this realistic or not? You be the judge.

Are trip reduction strategies relying on "local shopping for retail goods and services" realistic? There's an assumption that neighborhood-serving retail,

including cafes, grocers, pharmacies, and cleaners will rent space in the new developments so residents can run errands on foot or by bike. In reality, mixed-use buildings on 5th, 6th, and 7th Streets have yielded few such businesses, and new mixed-use projects on Main Street seem to have resulted primarily in more nail salons. What guarantee is there that the Bergamot area will be different, or that family-owned businesses will be able to afford the rents in new developments?

What do residents think? Here are some comments from 2013 Friends of Sunset Park membership forms in response to the prompt "My greatest concerns are:"

"Commuter traffic; horrible traffic; traffic congestion; traffic congestion on 23rd; increased traffic; increased traffic on 21st; traffic gridlock on Ocean Park Blvd.; traffic in afternoons cuts me off to south and east; traffic on residential streets; traffic racing down alleys; gridlock; gridlocked traffic east after 3 PM; lane reductions with increased traffic gridlock; loss of safety and relative quiet due to expansion and traffic increase. (250 comments)

"Council can't seem to resist developers; increasing density; too much development; rampant development in the pipeline; over-development, generating greater

traffic congestion; over-development of Santa Monica and loss of our wonderful family businesses; we are losing the soul of Santa Monica; out-of-control growth; smart growth; overbuilding of Santa Monica; overcrowding; loss of parking. (110 comments)

"Parking problems; encroaching parking on local streets; city planning; long-term planning and development. Santa Monica College construction, encroachment, endless expansion, traffic, parking problems, parking sprawl, traffic, traffic which causes pollution and congestion. Uprooting trailer parks." (42 comments)

Do residents want more traffic, more gridlock, and more air pollution from cars idling on our streets? If not, they need to tell the City Council that they want the Bergamot Area Plan revised downward on August 13.

Communicate with your elected representatives by 1) attending the Council hearing on the Bergamot Area Plan and speaking during Public Comment on August 13 at 6:30 PM, and 2) emailing your comments to council@smgov.net

When the hearing was originally scheduled on July 23, only a handful of residents attended. If you want the Plan changed, let your voice be heard!

Seventh Annual 4th of July Parade

Organized by the Ocean Park Association



Getting lined up



Heading south on Main Street