

Contact Information

Neighborhood Council: Venice Neighborhood Council

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Date of NC Board Action: 10/25/2010

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Agenda Date: 10/27/2010

Item Number: 6, 7, 8

Brief Summary: Paragraph One of Two:As the most popular tourist attraction in Southern California, Venice must balance competing needs of residents, visitors and a wide array of diverse and unique businesses. Scarce Coastal Zone parking, different block-by-block regulations, unregulated valet parking activities, and the advent of food trucks have combined to result in confusion and tensions within the community.

Additional Information: Paragraph Two of Two:Because of these new activities, current public health, safety and parking enforcement regulations require immediate review and revision to achieve their intended goals. Resultant initiatives must provide residents, visitors and businesses with relief while encouraging opportunities for enjoyment for shoppers, business owners, food truck operators and customers.



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10.26.10 Motion Recommendations and Motion:

## **MOTION ON FOOD TRUCKS ON ABBOT KINNEY:**

Whereas Venice Coastal Zone parking suffers from ongoing and increasing congestion, and

Whereas multiple ongoing and new causes of Abbot Kinney parking and traffic congestion have been explored and identified, and

Whereas unregulated Valet Parking negatively affects both the Abbot Kinney business area and Los Angeles at large, and

Whereas the incursion of food trucks on Abbot Kinney brings both welcome and unwelcome impacts, and

Whereas existing regulations fail to provide the neighborhood with the intended protections regarding public safety, parking and quality of life, in part because County Health Department enforcement is currently unavailable during the prime hours of Food Truck operations on Abbot Kinney Boulevard,

We therefore move that the Venice Neighborhood Council Board of Officers approve the following Recommendations, Community Impact Statement and letter to CD11 Councilmember Rosendahl, members of the City Council, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, City Attorney Carmen Trutanich and LA County Supervisor Yaroslavsky:



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## **Venice Neighborhood Council recommends:**

- 1) Strictly enforcing relevant Los Angeles Municipal and County Codes.
- 2) Supporting Los Angeles County Health Department's newly-enacted ordinance for Food Truck letter grading.
- 3) Supporting the Los Angeles Police Department in enforcing public safety laws which prohibit any business from causing, directly or indirectly, unsafe pedestrian activity to take place on a street.
- 4) Reviewing the impact of Food Truck operations which add to existing parking and traffic congestion, and crafting new regulation to require accountability for impacts including increased intensity of use of the public right-of-way.
- 5) Informing Abbot Kinney businesses that privately contracting with Food Trucks to reserve public street parking in exchange for fees or services is contrary to the "spirit of community" expected and enjoyed in Venice.
- 6) Where a private location is used to host one or more Food Trucks, regulating the location's patron capacity to ensure public safety.
- 7) Where a private location is used to host one or more Food Trucks in or near a residential area, requiring signage near the property perimeter, in obvious, plain sight, advising patrons to consider the noise impact on residential neighbors and citing pertinent noise ordinances.
- 8) Where a public location is used to host multiple Food Trucks, requiring enough space between trucks to prevent a public safety hazard, as determined by appropriate governmental bodies.
- 9) Where a public location is used to host a Food Truck, requiring a permit process, with income distributions to include the Venice Coastal Zone Parking Impact Fund.



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- 10) Where a public location is used to host a Food Truck, requiring smoke, grease, noise, odor and trash impacts to be managed in order to prevent material impact on adjacent businesses and residences.
- 11) Including Venice Neighborhood Council's recommendations with Los Angeles City Council's efforts to address Food Truck and Valet Parking impacts.



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10.26.10 Motion Recommendations and Motion:

## **MOTION ON VALET PARKING ON ABBOT KINNEY:**

Whereas Venice Coastal Zone parking suffers from ongoing and increasing congestion, and

Whereas multiple ongoing and new causes of Abbot Kinney parking and traffic congestion have been explored and identified, and

Whereas unregulated Valet Parking negatively affects both the Abbot Kinney business area and Los Angeles at large, and

Whereas the incursion of food trucks on Abbot Kinney brings both welcome and unwelcome impacts, and

Whereas existing regulations fail to provide the neighborhood with the intended protections regarding public safety, parking and quality of life, in part because County Health Department enforcement is currently unavailable during the prime hours of Food Truck operations on Abbot Kinney Boulevard,

We therefore move that the Venice Neighborhood Council Board of Officers approve the following Recommendations, Community Impact Statement and letter to CD11 Councilmember Rosendahl, members of the City Council, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, City Attorney Carmen Trutanich and LA County Supervisor Yaroslavsky:



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## **Venice Neighborhood Council recommends:**

- 1) Strictly enforcing relevant Los Angeles Municipal and County Codes.
- 2) Implementing an Abbot Kinney consolidated valet parking program.
- 3) Encouraging continuing communications among representatives of Abbot Kinney business owners, patrons, affected residents and the Venice Neighborhood Council, with the goal of producing additional mutually-beneficial initiatives,
- 4) Implementing a Parking and Traffic study to assess current and future needs for Abbot Kinney and the surrounding area, including documentation of existing valet parking inventory.
- 5) Encouraging implementation of an Abbot Kinney Business Improvement District to develop community-serving business activity management policies such as enforcement of existing laws pertaining to public health and safety.



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## Abbot Kinney Parking Report

In pursuing our assignment to investigate, report and recommend on the issues of food trucks and valet parking, we focused on the following questions:

- Do our recommendations enhance the mission of the VNC?
- To what extent, and for how many stakeholders, can our work improve the quality of life?
- What City resources are likely to be readily available, and for what resources may we have to petition?
- What VNC resources, both technical and human, does our work require?
- How much public meeting time is our presentation likely to require?
- How soon must the Board act in order to move forward most effectively?

Our Neighborhood Council is, first and foremost, the messenger of our community's voice to the City. Recommendations on these issues are designed to speak as broadly and directly as possible for the benefit of all Venice stakeholders, whether homeowner, renter, entrepreneur or visitor. We must speak to the City mindful of its current financial destitution, as well as its mandate, in any case, to represent our community's will. Understanding that this is a time of transition with a new VNC Board, we planned our work to use the least possible personnel resources while making the best use of available technical tools. We expect to require no more than twenty minutes of Board meeting time to present our findings and recommendations, and for Board consideration. Because these issues are as rapidly-moving as are their proponents and regulators, promising benefits that far outweigh current detriments, we recommend that the Board act with all due haste.

To date, our work has included: Research on recent local food truck and valet parking history; outreach to CD11 and CD4 staff, LAPD, the Fire Marshall, LADOT, local food truck vendors and their representative, local residents and business owners for direction, information and general discussion of pertinent issues; research on the food truck industry's nationwide emergence; analysis of valet parking issues and existing models being used elsewhere; and, finally, First Fridays field work on Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

## RESOURCES

Online research materials are posted here: <http://venicenc.org/parking-abbotkinney>.

## Survey

The community continues to provide survey input. Designed as a door-to-door poll of the area immediately encircling the most-impacted Abbot Kinney areas, our VNC survey also received input via email from as far away as the Milwood walk streets, and at least one response to date arriving via US mail. The strict quantification of replies to "Yes/No/Don't-Care" questions regarding food



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trucks and valet parking belies the remarkably holistic range of thoughtful comments, questions and suggestions provided by stakeholders from both the residential and business communities.

This said, the nominal numbers follow:

## Food Truck Operations

31% Positive – I welcome them.

54% Negative – I want them gone.

15% Neutral – They don't affect me.

## Valet Parking

5% Positive – I welcome them.

52% Negative – I want them gone.

43% Neutral – They don't affect me.

Survey considerations and highlights:

While at least one respondent reported an altercation with a valet parking worker, some others reported no awareness that valets parked cars on their streets. Still others reported frustration with valets parking on their streets, while one expressed no concern about parking congestion, offering her family's acceptance of scarce parking as a de facto condition of moving into the area. More than one resident expressed a sense of unfairness about grandfather parking rights for restaurants at the residential community's expense.

Whereas the VNC survey pertained to both food truck and valet parking issues, the Abbot Kinney business survey, generously compiled and provided in the aggregate by Carol Tantau, pertained strictly to Abbot Kinney food truck operations and, for the most part, their First Fridays experiences. As such, valet parking opinions were not available from Abbot Kinney businesses. While the vast majority of Abbot Kinney business operators were critical of the presence and some practices of food truck operators, many comments showed both tolerance and business benefits from food truck operations on Abbot Kinney.

Note: Survey answers were provided per the promise of anonymity for respondents. Some stakeholders chose to receive further information about these issues, and some signed up to receive regular VNC mailings.

While the surveys show respondents' opinions, they do not address resolving our fundamental challenge: automotive congestion.

## Studies

In addition to the variety of nationally-based online resources developed since May, 2010, we received a report from a local group that had commissioned a 2009 parking study for Lincoln Boulevard. Two graduate students from UCLA's Department of Urban Planning, under Professor Donald Shoup, studied parking along Lincoln Boulevard between Machado Drive and Venice



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Boulevard. The study's recommendations were "intended to foster a less auto-dependent and more pedestrian-, bike-, and transit-friendly Lincoln Boulevard." The study included summaries of results in other cities that have realized benefits from parking congestion-relieving initiatives, some of which would merit consideration for Abbot Kinney.

On August 11, 2010, the City Council Transportation Committee, led by Councilmember Rosendahl, held a public hearing, at which a multitude of City, County, restaurant and mobile food truck operators and representatives convened, to share analysis, reports and wide-ranging testimony on the history, growth and subsequent management challenges for the City's mobile catering truck industry. A wealth of valuable data, including examples of traditional business groups working with mobile food truck vendors, was made available to the public at this meeting.

## Outreach

Our outreach and research efforts dovetailed with stakeholder survey input to inform our recommendations. Senior Lead Officers Thusing and Skinner were always willing to answer our questions about codes and practical enforcement challenges, also arranging for a police helicopter to estimate the crowd size on September 3 (approximately two thousand). LAFD Inspector Nealy provided deep perspective based on his safety and crowd assessment work.

Council District 11 Office staff Arturo Pina, Laura McClennan and John Gregory each provided direction and contact information for various entities. DOT's Mo Blorfroshan provided helpful direction regarding signage. Finally, our own Past-President Emeritus DeDe Audet and Liz Wright provided direction, as well as offers to help with orange safety vests for our work!

More than one survey respondent mentioned self-regulation. Discussions with representatives of Abbot Kinney vendors and food truck operators have produced ideas and initiatives, at least one of which is active now and more of which are in the planning stages. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, exploring new parking options, increasing frequency and scope of trash collection, direct outreach to Abbot Kinney businesses, relocating food trucks to low-impact areas, designating specific areas for multiple trucks and partnering between food truck and business operators to provide incentives to residents.

Public Comments at multiple VNC Board meetings, as well as continuing reports and media coverage, including an Oct. 5, 2010, Town Hall forum broadcast on local radio, further informed our considerations.

Given that some new regulation is likely inevitable, our efforts must focus on continuing positive dialogue and transparently-vetted goals.