



MIKE BONIN

City of Los Angeles
Councilmember, Eleventh District

August 17, 2017

Los Angeles City Council
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
Councilmember José Huizar, Chair
Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson
Councilmember Mitchell Englander
Councilmember Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember Curren Price, Jr.

Re: 12444 Venice Boulevard (Case No. DIR-2016-304-DB-SPR-1A)

Dear Honorable Councilmembers,

This is not the first time you have been asked to consider the project located at 12444 Venice Boulevard (Case No. DIR-2016-304-DB-SPR-1A). As you may remember from when it previously appeared before the PLUM Committee, this is a proposal to build what would be one of the tallest buildings on all of Venice Boulevard - between downtown and the ocean.

As you know, for a second time I asked my colleagues to join me in asserting jurisdiction over the project so that we could modify the proposal in a way that would allow it to better fit within the fabric of an existing neighborhood. We have been forced to do so because of the developer's unwillingness to meaningfully engage in a community discussion process. Despite the developer's lack of engagement, the community has been significantly involved in the project. The Mar Vista Community Council, the West Mar Vista Residents Association, South Mar Vista Neighborhood Association, and dozens of Mar Vistans have all worked and continue to work to advocate for a better project that will be compatible with the community.

During the past year and a half, the Department of City Planning and my office have received hundreds of communications from residents who are concerned that this proposal is not compatible with the surrounding community. These concerns are valid because in order to approve a project under the Site Plan Review Ordinance (L.A.M.C. § 16.05 et seq.), the City must find "that the project [including its height] will be compatible with existing and future development on adjacent properties and neighboring properties." However, as proposed and as approved by the City Planning Commission ("CPC"), the project's height and massing make it entirely incompatible with the surrounding built environment and greatly out of character with the immediate neighborhood. Additionally, the project's at-grade parking is incompatible with its location on a street where pedestrian activation and active transportation are prioritized.

Westchester Office

7166 W. Manchester Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90045
(310) 568-8772
(310) 410-3946 Fax

City Hall

200 N. Spring Street, Room 475
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 473-7011
(213) 473-6926 Fax

West Los Angeles Office

1645 Corinth Avenue, Room 201
Los Angeles, CA 90025
(310) 575-8461
(310) 575-8305 Fax

I am concerned that the CPC did not have full and complete information when it approved the project back in July and, therefore, was not able to appropriately mitigate the project's impacts. Specifically, the CPC was unable to move the existing grade-level parking underground because the necessary environmental analysis had not yet been completed. I understand that the Department of City Planning and the Department of Building and Safety are in the process of finalizing this environmental review that will allow the PLUM Committee to consider my proposed revisions to the project.

These revisions, listed below, will allow the proposal to meet the requirements of the Site Plan Review Ordinance by making the proposal more "compatible with existing and future development on adjacent properties and neighboring properties." Without these changes, I do not believe that the Site Plan Review requirements can be met.

Therefore, I ask that you recommend amending the project to include the following three conditions:

1. A requirement that no floor-to-ceiling area be in excess of 8 feet in height, except as otherwise required by the City of Los Angeles Building Code;
2. A requirement that removes the project's double-story area within the mezzanine level that do not provide habitable space; and
3. A requirement that all project parking be placed underground.

These modifications will allow the City to make the necessary Site Plan Review findings, which could not otherwise be made without the changes. When taken together, the conditions will lower the building height without restricting the overall unit count or floor area to which the developer is entitled under State law and the Density Bonus Ordinance. These changes will in no way inhibit the development of much needed affordable housing, and will merely serve to ensure that the project is a bit fit for Mar Vista.

Thank you.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Bonin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "M" and "B".

MIKE BONIN

Councilmember, 11th District