



June 14, 2018

Councilmember Mike Bonin
200 North Spring Street, Suite 475
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Councilmember Paul Koretz
200 North Spring Street, Suite 440
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Councilmember Herb Wesson
200 North Spring Street, Suite 430
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Expo Line Transit Neighborhood Plan (Council File 18-0437) – SUPPORT

Dear Councilmember Bonin, Councilmember Koretz, and Councilmember Wesson,

On behalf of Abundant Housing LA, Los Angeles's leading pro-housing advocacy organization with over 1,800 members, we strongly urge you to support the Expo Line Transit Neighborhood Plan (TNP) and approve the TNP in PLUM and City Council without delay.

The plan as adopted by the City Planning Commission (CPC) offers more housing opportunities for Angelenos across the income spectrum. By legalizing more housing near transit and jobs, the TNP will help reduce displacement and homelessness by addressing the city's housing shortage. Note that the CPC improved the plan's parameters by:

- Restoring midrise housing capacity on Pico Boulevard and Exposition Boulevard
- Increasing housing capacity in the "Bundy Triangle" area
- Removing height restrictions that favor commercial over residential uses
- Revising parking incentives and affordable housing requirements to align with the more rigorous Citywide Transit Oriented Communities Affordable Housing Incentive Program Guidelines

Collectively, these improvements will result in more below-market rate housing, more aggregate housing, and, most importantly, more opportunities for Angelenos from young college graduates to senior citizens who want to age in place to live near transit. Supporters of the Expo Line TNP include:

- The **National Resources Defense Council (NRDC)**, which supports the Expo Line TNP because "building more housing and reducing displacement near public transit is an environmental good."
- The **Palms Neighborhood Council**, which noted that "it helps meet our neighborhood's goals of new and affordable housing, street level neighborhood facing retail, and appropriate development near new mass transit investments."



- The **South Robertson Neighborhood Council**, which cited efforts by the State of California to “strip local control of development around transit corridors” and said it is “critical that we support the City’s own Expo Transit Neighborhood Plan (TNP).”

As you may recall, housing capacity in an earlier iteration of the TNP was reduced to appease a small group of homeowners concerned that allowable height on Pico Boulevard would increase by five feet (not a typo).¹ Even now there is opposition to a modest density increase from R2 to R3 along Exposition Blvd.² This adjustment would increase capacity for the sort of smaller units that would be accessible to middle income Angelenos, so we are puzzled by the opposition. If Los Angeles is serious about addressing the housing crisis, we must take advantage of every opportunity to legalize housing where it’s currently illegal, and we must do it now. Not in some community plan update years from now or in some heretofore unannounced special plan. Now.

Roadblocks like these call to mind City Council deliberations on a resolution against SB 827. Several councilmembers argued that while the bill was the wrong instrument for reform, reform was nonetheless necessary given the failure of cities across the state to build enough housing. One councilmember even said that LA’s “system is, in some ways, as bad as this bill.”³

Many opponents of SB 827, including several members of City Council, called on cities to responsibly upzone transit areas of their own accord and according to their own needs. The TNP, if adopted, will do exactly this. It will embody local control while showing that Los Angeles is a leader among California cities in addressing our housing shortage and reducing displacement via environmentally-friendly, transit-oriented development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Burns", written in a cursive style.

Nicholas K. Burns III, Westside Advocacy Coordinator
Abundant Housing LA
Affirmed by the Abundant Housing LA Steering Committee

¹ Department of City Planning Recommendation Report, page A-13 http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2018/18-0437_misc_9_05-17-2018.pdf

² Community Impact Statement submitted by Westside Neighborhood Council, http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2018/18-0437_cis_05-30-18.pdf

³ <https://la.streetsblog.org/2018/03/27/los-angeles-city-council-votes-unanimously-to-oppose-s-b-827/>