

WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

October 18, 2018

Agenda Item #9

Westwood Neighborhood Council Standing Policy on the Review of Applications for Proposed Projects Located Within the Westwood Community Plan Area

Whereas, the City of Los Angeles Department of Neighborhood Empowerment has confirmed in writing that it is established City policy that **“ALL NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS CAN COMMENT ON ANY PART OF THE CITY”***; and

Whereas, the Westwood Neighborhood Council (WWNC) is the oldest and original Certified Neighborhood Council in the Westwood Community Plan Area, and which represents nearly all of Westwood’s single-family zoned areas as well as the majority of the multi-family zoned areas, where virtually all of Westwood’s families, permanent residents, and deeply-rooted stakeholders live, together with tens of thousands of renters, students, business owners, property owners, employees, faith-based community members, and other long-term Westwood stakeholders; and

Whereas, these tens of thousands of WWNC stakeholders are tax-payers and voters, and include nearly all of Westwood’s permanent residents and long-term stakeholders, most of whom own their homes in Westwood, and therefore have a significant and long-term financial stake in the future and vitality of the entire Westwood community, as opposed to a temporary, transient, or narrow interest in Westwood, having made their largest lifetime investment in Westwood, and with a collective property investment totaling many tens of billions of dollars; and

Whereas, thousands of these WWNC stakeholders have raised, and continue to raise, their families in Westwood and, as such, have a long-term interest in the entire Westwood community, and have supported, and continue to support, Westwood’s public and private schools, parks, faith institutions, public library, police department, fire department, and other civic resources; and

Whereas, as the home to virtually all of the long-term and permanent residents of Westwood, Westwood Hills, Comstock Hills, Holmby-Westwood, Little Holmby, Westwood Homeowners, Wilshire-Westwood Corridor, and Holmby Hills, the WWNC overwhelmingly represents the largest permanent customer base for businesses in Westwood, which residents collectively possess vast discretionary buying power, and are the largest source of loyal, on-going, and decades-long permanent customers who have enormous economic impact on the ultimate long-term success or failure of Westwood businesses; and

Whereas, Westwood Village has served as the primary retail, restaurant, cultural, entertainment, service, and shopping area for the residents and neighbors of Westwood for nearly 90 years since opening in September 1929, and WWNC stakeholders have a significant and ongoing interest in the continued success, vitality, historic preservation, and development of the Village; and

**August 20, 2018 Correspondence to Board of Neighborhood Commissioners from Grayce Liu, General Manager, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment (pg. 13): “Ability to Weigh in on Issues: It should be noted that the Westwood Neighborhood Council still has the ability to weigh in on the proposed shared areas even if the Commission does not approve the proposed boundaries overlap. All Neighborhood Councils can comment on any part of the City.”*

Whereas, the Iranian American and Persian business community along Westwood Boulevard south of Wilshire, known as Persian Square, is a recognized, historic, and cohesive cultural and business community that has existed in Westwood for more than 40 years, and more than half of which is located south of Ohio Avenue within the boundaries of the WWNC; and

Whereas, the WWNC comprises the largest geographic area within the Westwood Community Plan Area and the WWNC boundaries completely surround and envelop the newly formed North Westwood Neighborhood Council (NWNC) on three sides – east, west, and south – ensuring that any development project located within the smaller NWNC boundaries has the likely outcome of creating significant environmental impacts for the stakeholders of the surrounding WWNC; and

Whereas, the legal basis for reviewing any development project is the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which mandates that all potential environmental impacts of a proposed project must be identified and disclosed by the project applicant in order to be analyzed, reviewed, and mitigated to the greatest extent possible, and which also requires that the decision-maker must consider and take into account all testimony and evidence submitted by all impacted stakeholders, regardless of any municipal, geographic, or artificial boundaries; and

Whereas, in the City of Los Angeles multiple neighborhood councils already routinely review and take positions on proposed projects and other issues including but not limited to, Hollywood, Koreatown, Vermont Avenue, the San Fernando Valley, and San Pedro among others; and

Whereas, legislative bodies and decision-makers including, but not limited to, the Los Angeles City Council and its several committees, City Planning Commission, Area Planning Commission, Westwood Community Design Review Board, Office of Zoning Administration, Department of City Planning staff, Building and Safety Commission, Transportation Commission, Police Commission, Fire Commission, Airport Commission, Library Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, Cultural Heritage Commission, and California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, among others, all are legally required to receive and consider testimony of any interested party, board, or association relative to any significant environmental impact of a project, and to consider all such environmental impacts of a project, when rendering a decision of whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny a project application; and

Whereas, applications by restaurants and retailers for alcoholic beverage licenses are reviewed, regulated, and issued by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control according to U.S. Census Tract maps, and not according to any neighborhood council boundaries, and the Census Tract map that includes virtually all of Westwood Village also includes the entire adjacent Holmby-Westwood neighborhood, an area whose boundaries fall exclusively within the boundaries of the WWNC, and the Census Tract that includes the commercial area of Westwood Boulevard south of Wilshire includes the Census Tract of the adjacent Westwood Homeowners neighborhood, an area whose boundaries fall mostly within the boundaries of the WWNC:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the following **WWNC Standing Policy** is hereby established:

**Westwood Neighborhood Council Standing Policy on the Review of
Applications for Proposed Projects Located Within the Westwood Community Plan Area**

1. In accordance with established City policy that “All Neighborhood Councils can comment on any part of the City,” the Westwood Neighborhood Council (WWNC) expressly declares its significant and ongoing interest in ALL projects proposed for development that are located within the boundaries of the Westwood Community Plan Area, which area is generally bounded by Sunset Boulevard on the north, Santa Monica Boulevard on the south, the Beverly Hills border on the east, and the 405 freeway on the west.
2. The WWNC directs all Applicants, project proponents, and their representatives, for proposed projects located in the Westwood Community Plan Area described above to timely submit a complete copy of their Project Application and Plans, and/or a complete copy of their Master Land Use Application, as early as possible in their project application process, and prior to any public hearing, for review, discussion, and recommendation by the WWNC, by contacting the Chair of the WWNC Land Use & Planning Committee (LUPC), through the WWNC website (www.wwnc.org), and requesting that the project be placed on an agenda of the LUPC.
3. The WWNC expressly reserves the right to issue a Letter or Community Impact Statement (CIS) for a proposed project, including any following: (a.) a letter of unconditional support; (b.) a letter of qualified support with conditions; (c.) a letter of opposition; (d.) a letter of opposition due to the failure of a project Applicant to submit and present its project in accordance with this WWNC Standing Policy, and therefore a failure to disclose potential project impacts as required by CEQA to a significant neighborhood of interest; or (e.) a decision by the WWNC to abstain from commenting on a project determined to have a less than significant or minor impact.
4. The WWNC reserves the right to abstain from reviewing and/or commenting on any project determined to have a less than significant or minor impact, as it may deem from time to time.
5. The WWNC will publicize this Standing Policy by permanently posting it on its website (www.wwnc.org), and by communicating this Standing Policy in writing to the Los Angeles Fifth District Council Office, Office of the Mayor, Los Angeles Department of Neighborhood

Empowerment, Los Angeles Department of City Planning, Westwood Community Design Review Board, Los Angeles Office of Zoning Administration, Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles County METRO, UCLA Chancellor, UCLA Administrative Vice Chancellor, Westwood Village Improvement Association Board of Directors, West Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, as well as to all elected officials at the municipal, City, County, State, and/or Federal levels who represent any part of the area represented by the WWNC. The WWNC calls upon all such elected officials and their representatives, and all public and/or private agencies, to communicate this Standing Policy to all project Applicants and their representatives, and to direct and advise all such Applicants to contact the WWNC LUPC in connection with all such projects in a timely manner in accordance with this Standing Policy.