

PURPLE LINE TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

Summer 2016



Executive Summary

During the initial phase of the public planning process for the Purple Line Transit Neighborhood Plans (TNP), the Los Angeles Department of City Planning hosted two community workshops for residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to enhance neighborhoods surrounding transit stations. This project aims to develop land use, zoning, and design regulations for the neighborhoods surrounding three future Metro Purple Line stations in the Wilshire area: Wilshire/La Brea, Wilshire/Fairfax, and Wilshire/La Cienega. The study area generally includes the commercial corridors within a 15-minute walk of each station. Each community workshop focused on the corridor as a whole:

- Wednesday, June 29, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Temple Beth Am
- Thursday, June 30, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Temple Beth Am

The TNP team promoted the event through a mailing of more than 4,000 flyers; an email interest list; offices and organizations such as the respective Neighborhood Councils and Council District offices; social media such as Facebook and Twitter; and the project's website www.latnp.org. The TNP team gathered input from community residents, business owners, employees, transit users, and other stakeholders about their thoughts, ideas, and concerns for the future of their neighborhood as it develops around transit. All comments inform the Department's analysis; however, the regulations developed through this planning process will generally address issues related to land use, development, and urban design. Comments from the public featured several recurring themes:

- More neighborhood-serving commercial uses, such as grocery stores, are needed to decrease necessary auto trips.
- Uses that serve visitors and support cultural institutions, such as restaurants, hotels, entertainment, and cafes, would help encourage activity throughout the day and are desirable.
- Density is generally appropriate in close proximity to the station but should taper down farther from the station or corridors, and in transition to residential uses.
- Buildings should be aesthetically pleasing and designed to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- The area as a whole needs a stronger district identity, continuity of design, and sensitivity to the existing historic character.
- Both real and perceived safety and security of pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists is of utmost importance at the stations and along corridors.
- It's important to have adequate parking for new development and at the transit stations to minimize neighborhood impacts.
- Outdoor open space, green space, and public art are community amenities and should be encouraged in development through parklets, plazas, and outdoor dining areas.

Category	Community Comments
Land Uses – Comments generally focused on the lack neighborhood-serving restaurant and retail amenities, as well as a lack of entertainment uses, and a desire for additional hotel uses.	
Desired Uses, Amenities, and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There’s a need for more restaurants and businesses with a vibrant street frontage • Uses that create high-quality employment are especially desirable • Entertainment uses, like neighborhood movie theaters, are largely missing • Maintaining the neighborhood feel should be balanced with uses that attract users at different time of day, such as entertainment and neighborhood bars • There may be a way to adaptively reuse old theaters for some of these more intense entertainment uses since they already have soundproofing • Wilshire, west of Fairfax is especially in need of new uses and vibrancy • There should be more community resources for seniors and people with disabilities • Discount stores are not a desirable use for the area
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be additional affordable housing included in any housing that is built; affordable housing adds to diversity, which is desirable • Rent Stabilized housing units should be preserved • The design of any new housing should be in keeping with the character of existing residential uses
Commercial/Institutional Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street-facing frontages of institutional/cultural users should be more activated • Having additional hotel uses could help support the cultural institutions - there are some boutique hotels currently, but visitors mostly use airbnb for lodging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On the other hand, avoid having too many hotels and making the area feel like its overly tourist oriented • Other museum-serving accessory uses (restaurants especially) could also act as neighborhood-serving uses if they interact with the street and are open to the public
Mix of Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a good mix of businesses is important; many desirable services, such as hardware and grocery stores, aren’t available within walking distance • Ground floor commercial with residential above would suit this area (may work better on La Cienega than on Wilshire) • Explore ways to incentivize the creation/retention of small businesses • Higher capacity buildings are ok on bigger streets, not smaller ones
Specific Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shalhevet development is out-of-scale for south part of Fairfax • The development on the Southeast corner of Wilshire/La Brea was frequently cited as being poorly designed and out-of-scale • The corner of Wilshire/Fairfax should be more of a developed node with higher density; it’s a cultural anchor

Building Design – Themes included a desire to place additional limitations on massing and heights, as well as using design to create a more walkable environment, and creating a stronger and more consistent identity throughout the corridor.

Scale/Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More height is appropriate as you get closer to stations, tapering to less height as you get further away • Transitional heights between commercial and residential uses (even multifamily) are important • The low-scale character of the residential neighborhoods is seen as desirable • Heights of the Westwood-area “Condo Canyon” would be out of scale
Density/Intensity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional density should be focused on the West part of Wilshire rather than on Fairfax itself, where the street is too narrow • Of the north/south streets, La Brea is better suited for additional density than Fairfax, but each may support some amount of additional activity
Site Planning and Building Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large setbacks can work if there’s something welcoming in that space, such as plazas and outdoor dining • Setbacks help open the street and make you feel like the buildings are more to scale (less looming) • Walkways and paseos to break up new buildings are important • Today, it can be hard to see shops/businesses from the street when they are tucked back into buildings – businesses should face the street and be near the sidewalk (this is especially notable on Wilshire west of Fairfax)
Ground Floor Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings too close to the street can feel looming; there should be additional greenery/softness at the ground level • Ground floors should have more transparency and lighting
Massing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More space and variation between buildings is important to minimize the feeling of the area being a concrete wall • Buildings should generally be required to step back as they go up • Underground parking should be encouraged • Change in helipad rule may lead to more interesting building design with more varied roof lines
Details/Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs should be sensitive to historic buildings • Reflective materials should be restricted - this can make the street too bright and cause glare issues and discomfort, it can also make the street hotter
Neighborhood Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activity and character of 3rd street promenade would be nice • There is a desire to create a stronger sense of place – more neighborhood identity
<p>Mobility and Parking – Pedestrian connectivity, safety, and comfort were a priority, although bicycle amenities and transit connections were also discussed. The need to continue to provide some level of parking for all uses, even immediately near stations, was also a theme.</p>	
Pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People walk in the neighborhood already • System of pedestrian pathways in Carthay is well-regarded; however, many of these don’t have any signage or curb ramps

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sidewalk quality and better lighting are both important to addressing mobility • Crosswalks should use leading intervals to put pedestrians first • There should be better wayfinding signage for pedestrians, including flashing signs at night • Sites and buildings should be permeable for walkers, Park La Brea especially • Wide sidewalks on Wilshire make it easier to walk • Would feel safer if there was more “vibrancy” - safety in numbers when there are other people walking or out on the street • Trees, awnings, shade, and landscaping are nice aspects of a walk down the street that should be incentivized • There is a need to better link the cultural assets and uses of the neighborhood to show people that they are close together and accessible on foot • San Vicente should have a separated mixed bike and pedestrian pathway with plants to make it easier for biking and walking as well as to add open space to the neighborhood • The aging population in this area increases the importance of addressing mobility needs for seniors and people with disabilities • Wilshire should not have curb cuts as this detracts from the pedestrian environment
Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subways would eliminate the need for many auto trips, especially to downtown • Additional bus connections to and from mass transit are needed, such as north/south DASH lines • A neighborhood circulator would ease moving between the various cultural institutions / destinations and the Metro line
Bicycles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected bike lanes (such as in NYC and Long Beach) make it feel safe to bike • If people ride a bike, they typically use side streets rather than main streets which don’t feel safe • Robertson could be a good north/south street for an additional bike lane, in addition to transit and walking rather than prioritizing auto uses
Motor Vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential streets need additional traffic calming • People won’t get out of their cars until they have good alternative transportation options or reasons to do so • Most people primarily drive to get around, even for local trips • La Cienega is best suited to car traffic
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parking in immediate proximity to station areas is needed • Parking management in Los Angeles should be more modern, like how Beverly Hills and Santa Monica manage their parking, with wayfinding signage, shuttles, and smartphone apps • Retail will always need some level of parking, but this may be reduced when the subway opens • Smart meters could help address parking problems and additional green, limited-time, curbs could also be explored

Livability – the need to provide frequent, sizable, and flexible public spaces and green spaces was a common theme.	
Public Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should require additional public art as a condition of certain large buildings • Tall buildings should have additional plaza or open spaces required
Public Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are some privately owned public spaces, but these are insufficient in terms of size, amount, and location on the site • Public squares with seating, fountains, and uses should be encouraged • Plazas are especially useful for public gatherings such as farmers markets and other flexible uses, such as entertainment • Having more music and outdoor concerts could help build stronger community; the community wants more ways to get together
Green Space/Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green spaces are important; should be required in new developments and towards the front, not hidden (Wilshire/La Brea development is an example of a development where the green space is small and poorly located)
General/Misc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting is intermittent – some spots have good lighting, others don't; generally does not feel safe at night • A specific look with lighting and coordinated trees would help tie the area together • More garbage cans on the street are needed • Consistency in signage should be improved to brand the corridor