



North of Montana Association

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August 28, 2013

To: Santa Monica Planning Commissioners

From: NOMA Board of directors

Subject: 8/28/13 Planning Commission Meeting Agenda Item 5-B Zoning Ordinance Update – Sustainability, Parking and TDM

1) We are happy that staff heeded the concerns of our residents, and changed the designation of Montana Avenue from "Transit-Oriented and Mixed Use" to "Conservation Area". The change is described in the staff report as one that is "in keeping with the LUCE objective of conserving this area and recognition that little change is desired or expected." We applaud that sentiment, and look forward to seeing this designation spelled out in detail.

2) We would like to underscore our understanding that the parking lot behind the Whole Foods on Montana is designated as an "A" lot, and thus will continue with the existing R1 zoning of the adjacent residential neighborhood. (In other words, under the existing zoning, it cannot be developed with any greater height and density than the adjacent neighborhood.)

3) We recognize that the city's proposed parking reduction policy is aimed at getting people out of their cars. We feel, however, that such a policy would be woefully incomplete and premature if it is put in place before we address the other side of the equation: Transportation.

We need to provide reliable alternative modes of transit throughout

the city that are easily accessible and provide ready service to desired destinations.

The North of Montana area is home to a disproportionately large percentage of the city's elders, yet it has only minimal access to bus service. Further, a representative of the Big Blue Bus informed us at a recent meeting that bus routes are being cut, and that there are no plans to create north-south routes to connect our neighborhood (and others) to the future Expo line. To reduce parking availability throughout the city before this problem is addressed is short-sighted at best, disastrous at worst.

4) We urge that the Traffic Demand Management Plan include more rigorous enforcement efforts, as well as significant penalties for parking violations, particularly on residential streets.

5) We urge that parking standards for markets of 5,000+ square feet remain unchanged at 1 space per 250 square feet. Parking lots at large markets in Santa Monica are already seriously overcrowded, leaving customers and employees to fight for scarce spaces and spill over onto neighboring streets. (Think Whole Foods on Wilshire, Trader Joe's on Pico, and what is now Bristol Farms on Wilshire, all nearby markets that are frequent destinations for our residents). To reduce the parking standards for such markets would exacerbate problems for shoppers, employees and neighbors alike.

Sincerely,

The Board of the North of Montana Association