



## **NOMA JOINS CITYWIDE OPPOSITION TO HINES PROPOSAL FOR BERGAMOT**

**November 20, 2013** -- The board of directors of the North of Montana Association (NOMA) today voted unanimously to oppose the current proposal for development of the Bergamot site. We see the proposed project as far too big and too dense for the site, and we feel that it would cause unacceptable traffic problems that would degrade the quality of life of both the immediate neighborhood and the city as a whole.

In a recent meeting with officials from the development firm Hines, the company's proposal was opposed by representatives of all the city's neighborhood organizations, Santa Monicans for Renters' Rights (SMMRR), and Santa Monicans for a Liveable City (SMCLC).

Following is our letter to the Planning Commission.

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**To: Santa Monica Planning Commission**

**From: Board of Directors, North of Montana Association (NOMA)**

**RE: 11/20/13 agenda item 8-A -- Bergamot Transit Village Center**

**The Board of Directors of the North of Montana Association (NOMA) strongly opposes the current version of the Bergamot Transit Village Center.** The project needs to be drastically reduced. It's too tall, it's too dense, there's too much office space, the amount of office space per employee was incorrectly calculated, and the project will generate way too much traffic in an area that is already at gridlock. **Only a greatly reduced project with much less office space, and much less trip generation, would be acceptable.**

We heartily endorse the statement by Friends of Sunset Park, which follows here.

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*We have looked through the EIR and, out of hundreds of DEIR comment*

letters from governmental agencies, neighborhood organizations in both Santa Monica and Los Angeles, and many, many individuals, only one letter was in support of the project.

The current proposal includes the following to replace the 200,000 sq ft Papermate factory:

- **766,908 sq ft in total** (50% larger than Santa Monica Place)
- **374,434 sq ft of office space** (further exacerbating the city's jobs/housing imbalance)
- **Heights up to 84 ft** (the same as the Water Garden, which many of us feel is too tall)
- **7,585 new daily car trips** estimated in the EIR

The proposed project would result in **significant and unavoidable impact at 25 intersections**, including:

- **23rd/Walgrove** at Rose Avenue & Venice Blvd.,
- **Cloverfield** at Santa Monica Blvd.,
- **28th/Stewart** at Olympic Blvd.,
- **Centinela** at Colorado, Olympic, I-10 freeway westbound ramps, & Venice Blvd.,
- **Bundy** at Olympic, Pico, Ocean Park Blvd., & National, and
- **Barrington** at Wilshire, Santa Monica Blvd., & Olympic;

1) **Caltrans** wrote in 2012 that existing average daily traffic on the I-10 Santa Monica Freeway is 192,000 in the vicinity of the project, and that **"the project will have significant traffic impact."**

2) The Los Angeles Department of Transportation (**LADOT**) wrote in 2012 that, "The project should be directed to remove these impacts through either a **scaled reduction** or land-use reconfiguration of the project."

3) Another comment in the EIR noted that "By the DEIR's own admission, the project is in an area that is largely built out, and many of the surrounding intersections operate at or near capacity.... The city and applicant should consider alternatives or **project reductions** which would result in **less traffic impacts.**"

4) The jobs-housing imbalance in our city, which has resulted from more than 9 million sq ft of office/commercial development since the 1984 LUCE was adopted, has created tremendous congestion on streets in Santa Monica and West LA, as well as the I-10 and 405 freeways. A key goal of the LUCE is to **"reduce future traffic congestion"** and **"reduce regional commercial uses."** The proposed Hines project violates these basic principles by a) **adding 375,000 sq ft of office/commercial uses**, and b) **increasing traffic congestion.**

5) Hines apparently estimated traffic and parking based on **286 sq ft per office employee.** Meanwhile, a survey posted by the Wall Street Journal in 2012 states that **"The average for all companies for square feet per worker in 2017 will**

**be 151 square feet. Therefore, new daily car trips generated by the project could be closer to 15,000 rather than 7,585.**

*In the Sunset Park neighborhood, all of our east-west "through" streets (Pico, Pearl, and Ocean Park Blvd.) are congested/gridlocked many hours of the day, not just from 5 to 6 PM, or whatever staff considers the PM peak hour.*

*Our only north-south "through" streets (23rd and Lincoln) are also congested/gridlocked many hours of the day. Frustrated motorists take every possible side street and alley to try to get to and from work, schools, and homes, endangering pedestrians and other drivers.*

*On some streets we have cars idling in front of our homes for hours at a time, making it impossible to get in and out of driveways. FedEx diesel trucks use our residential streets and alleys to come and go from their headquarters in the Marina, fouling our air.*

*Residents have difficulty getting to and from work. Parents have difficulty getting their children to school, after school activities, music lessons, and CIF games. People with health problems have difficulty getting to and from doctors' offices. Doctors and other local health workers find it impossible to get to professional meetings at UCLA and elsewhere. Another resident has written about getting stuck in traffic for an hour and watching her pet die before she could reach a nearby vet clinic.*

*Is this what the LUCE meant by "**preserving residential neighborhoods**"? We think not. We already have the Santa Monica Business Park and Santa Monica College in our neighborhood, as well as cut-through traffic from the hospital district, the Special Office District, and the Cloverfield entrance/exit on the I-10 freeway. Our neighborhood cannot handle more traffic.*

***For these reasons, we strongly oppose the current Bergamot Transit Village Center. Only a greatly reduced project with much less office space, and much less trip generation, would be acceptable.***