



August 27th, 2024

RE: ITEM 11A - OPPOSE

Mayor Brock and Council Members,

The NOMA Board asks City Council to reject – or at least postpone – Item 11 to allow for greater community involvement before moving forward. Both parcels under consideration for "Exempt Surplus Land" status are extraordinary locations that deserve more careful planning. The 4th/5th and Arizona property is a rare opportunity to create open space for public use in the downtown area which is desperately needed to balance the aggressive development underway. The Wellbeing Project – a key component of Santa Monica's commitment to overall wellness – emphasized the importance of open space for recreational use, and this centrally located property would help address the near total lack of open space in downtown.

Likewise, the Bergamot district is a treasured arts and cultural destination that will be adversely affected – if not outright ruined – with excessive development.

It is unlikely that any developer will be able to build solely affordable housing at either site without additional revenue-generating, market-rate apartments or commercial ventures. By issuing RFPs for 100% affordable housing now (which are unlikely to generate viable bids) the City will cynically play out an act that it knows will not succeed and then be free to sell or lease the properties to the highest bidder for a mixed-use development.

We urge Council to pause and consider the consequences. Perhaps there are other means of achieving our affordable housing mandate without giving away these irreplaceable properties which belong to all residents.

Sincerely,

The NOMA Board