



The Planning Commission

From: NOMA Board

Date: January 17, 2023

Re: Agenda Item 9A

The NOMA Board supports the concepts expressed in the letter sent to the Planning Commission by members Jim Ries, Leslie Lambert and Nina Fresco asking the City Council to request the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) amend the City's certified Housing Element to enhance Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH).

The request asks to **"retain the existing heights and Floor Area Ratios (FAR) in the Neighborhood Commercial Districts (NC) on Main Street, Ocean Park Boulevard, Pico Boulevard and Montana Avenue rather than increasing them as proposed" in the certified Housing Element. This is acknowledgement that the upzoning of our NC districts has the strong potential to displace locally owned businesses that provide affordable retail and essential services to residents. The letter says that "In fact, the loss of these neighborhood-serving businesses will be in direct conflict with AFFH objectives."**

The letter clearly states the need to maintain our Neighborhood Commercial Districts in order to provide essential services to residents. The last major zoning update (2015) considered increasing the height and FARs for the neighborhood commercial districts and decided that these were not warranted and should remain resident serving commercial areas.

Neighborhood Commercial Districts each have a unique feel which is vital to Santa Monica, its residents and business community. They provide a special mix serving us all. We would be substantially poorer as a community if we were to lose their distinctive nature and local ownership.

The NOMA Board urges the Planning Commission and ultimately the City Council to seek a modification in the City's certified Housing Element to protect the Neighborhood Commercial Districts.