

**Beverly Hills General Plan Topic Committees**

**Commercial Standards Committee**

**Report of Draft Recommendations**

**February 2004**

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### City Council Charge

The City Council's charge to the Commercial Standards Committee provides direction to consider the character, role and function of areas zoned for commercial uses as they exist today as well as for the future. The Commercial Standards Committee's ("CSC") full report includes detailed recommendations for each commercial type/area of the City. This Executive Summary highlights the major overall issues addressed by the CSC.

### Committee Vision

The Commercial Standards Committee's vision for the City's future development seeks to capitalize on the existing successes and to guide further growth in a manner that balances residential quality of life with the necessities and realities of maintaining a successful business climate to support that quality of life. The Committee felt that much of the activity in the City "works well" but that minor improvements could be made. In making its recommendations, the Committee felt that the following issues should be prioritized:

- The business triangle is an area where more density is appropriate due to its relative isolation from residential areas. More night time activities and a more integrated synergy between uses should be encouraged to promote a more vibrant atmosphere to serve the community.
- Development scenarios for the Robinsons-May/Hilton Hotel site and Parcels 1 and 2 were evaluated and recommendations made for their future redevelopment. For the Robinsons-May/Hilton Hotel site, these include housing and commercial potential at increased densities as this site does not directly abut residential uses. For Parcels 1 and 2, the CSC recommended that the site be developed in accordance with the currently allowable development standards. The CSC also recognized that these "Gateway" sites are underutilized and could be developed with significant architecture.
- The balance between the commercial areas and abutting residential zones was carefully considered. Better coordination (such as a 55-foot height limit in the commercial zones that abut 55-foot height limits in the R-4 zones) should be provided so that the residential areas are buffered and protected from negative impacts resulting from businesses.
- Development potential for key "gateway" locations (e.g., larger intersections) should be identified. These locations should be targeted for additional height and

density and should be highlighted as areas where signature architectural buildings should be developed.

- Allow Mixed-Use Development in all City commercial zones, including the area commonly referred to as the “industrial area.” Development standards should be consistent with the scale and character of the existing development surrounding the future project sites.
- Architectural diversity, creativity, and style were felt to be extremely important. To encourage diversity in building designs, developers should be offered flexibility for height and modulation without changing existing limitations on density.

## II. INTRODUCTION

Beverly Hills has a strong sense of community, offers good schools, parks and pleasing aesthetic qualities. This combination of factors draws both residents and businesses alike to make up the fabric of the community. The CSC's vision for commercial corridors is to revitalize, sustain, and enhance the community's viability while ensuring that this development is balanced and compatible with



goals to maintain an excellent residential quality of life. The Committee recognized the importance of maintaining the City's cachet as a prestigious business location. This cachet goes hand-in-hand with the revenue generated by the business community. Bearing these factors in mind, the CSC attempted to create a long-term vision to maintain the City's attractive and prestigious business image, while at the same time protecting its residential component by balancing the positive aspects of business revenue with the benefits to the residential aspects of the community.

The City is located in the center of an extremely competitive Los Angeles business market, yet its consistently high property values as well as excellent city and school services also make it a desirable place to live. While the City enjoys a reputation for financial success, some businesses do struggle, and vacant storefronts exist even in the most prestigious areas. Like other cities, Beverly Hills must continue to attract new business while supporting its current business and property owner base.

In general, the Commercial Standards Committee ("CSC") felt that "fine tuning" rather than major changes was needed to project and maintain the City's successful image. Major areas of discussion were grouped into five basic categories as follows:

- Coordination of height limits between commercial uses and adjacent residential neighborhoods
- Allowing additional height without increasing density for architectural enhancement of new buildings
- Maximizing Parking opportunities
- Development of "Gateway" locations throughout the City
- Mixed-Use Development

This fine tuning would involve two primary aspects: 1) minor changes to existing development standards to encourage local and regional serving uses in the community (e.g., shoe repair shops, pharmacies, supermarkets, legitimate theater, corporate headquarters, bookstores, congregate housing, etc.) and to nurture unique businesses such as talent agencies, auto sales, stockbrokers, banks and hotels to maintain the City's prosperity; and 2) focus on the few remaining development opportunities (Robinson's May/Hilton and the area known as "Parcels 1 and 2" at the western end of the City) and establish standards that would promote the best possible development for those sites while ensuring that such development would not significantly alter the City's character.

### **III. COMMITTEE CHARGE**

The City Council's charge to the Commercial Standards Committee provides specific direction to consider the character, role and function of areas of the City zoned for commercial uses in the present context as well as the future. At a minimum, the Committee was directed to include the following issues in its discussions:

- The character, role and function for the community of the range of commercial uses currently permitted (e.g., retail and non-retail, hotels, service uses, local entertainment opportunities, retail character, mixed residential/commercial use, etc.).
- Commercial "areas" that are not characterized by single commercial streets surrounded by residential uses, including the Business Triangle, C-5 zone (old Industrial Area), and Robinson's/Hilton area.
- Parking management (in lieu, municipal parking).
- Development opportunities that will benefit the community.
- Older, less economically competitive commercial buildings.
- Former railroad right-of-way (westerly, Parcels 1 and 2).

### **IV. WORKPLAN**

The CSC began its analysis by brainstorming about factors that affect the City's commercial vitality. One of the goals was to create a path for accomplishing feasible commercial projects. Considerations included discussions of successful projects in other areas; issues that drive development or cause obstacles to development; how local traffic versus through traffic affects commercial corridors; the relationship between uses and areas, and how development standards such as height and density might be modified to better suit their location in district areas such as the Business Triangle, Industrial Area, and commercial corridors such as Wilshire

Boulevard, Olympic Boulevard, South Beverly Drive, La Cienega Boulevard and Robertson Boulevard.

To address its charge, the CSC divided the City's commercial areas into small geographic regions and studied them one region at a time. Wilshire Boulevard was broken down into smaller areas (West: Santa Monica West to Beverly Drive; Mid: Beverly Drive to Robertson Boulevard; and East: Robertson Boulevard to the Eastern City Limit). South Beverly Drive, Robertson Boulevard, La Cienega Boulevard, Olympic Boulevard, the Business Triangle, and the Industrial Area were also reviewed as distinct areas.

The group then approached its charge and recommendations based on the following major areas of concern:

**Workplan Issue 1:**

Character, Role and Function of Commercial Uses, Development Opportunities, and Parking Management and Supply.

- a) Wilshire Boulevard (West, Mid and East)
- b) South Beverly Drive
- c) Robertson Boulevard
- d) La Cienega Boulevard
- e) Business Triangle
- f) Olympic Boulevard
- g) Industrial Area

**Workplan Issue 2:**

Reconstruction of older, less economically competitive buildings in all commercial areas of the City.

**Workplan Issue 3:**

Development opportunities (uses and development standards) for the following sites:

- a) Beverly Hilton Hotel/Robinson's May Site
- b) Former railroad right-of-way (westerly, Parcels 1 and 2)

**Workplan Issue 4**

Mixed-Use Development

## **V. EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

The CSC participated in the three all-Committee briefing sessions that kicked off the General Plan Topic Committee project. Briefing documents provided to the CSC to inform and assist them in their recommendation included:

- a. Maps with summaries of permitted uses in commercial districts.
- b. Building data (height, square footage, floor area ratio) for each of the study areas.
- c. Two comprehensive bus tours of the study areas.
- d. Memorandum and presentation by Chief Financial Officer Don Oblander regarding City general fund sources.
- e. A presentation of mixed-use projects by local architect and university lecturer Johannes Van Tilburg.
- f. A presentation on mixed-use development experiences of other cities by Paul Silvern (land use, real estate and financial strategist with Hamilton, Rabinovitz and Altschuler) and Bill Trimble (Senior Planner, City of Pasadena).

Educational materials provided to the Committee members are included in the attached Appendices.

## **VI. COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The CSC participated in the following three efforts to gauge the community's reaction to progress the committee was making with respect to its charge. Support documents for these efforts are provided under the Community Outreach Appendix.

April 2003: All-Committee Session at which each topic committee shared preliminary recommendations. This session helped committees to identify issues of overlap and conflict between the various groups.

May 2003: Farmers' Market Outreach with the Community Character, Commercial Standards, and Commercial-Residential Interface Committees. Along with a series of questions, residents were provided with photographs to assist them in selecting the types of standards they felt were appropriate for their community.

September 2003: An outreach survey was sent to every residential address in the City (over 15,000 households), with a response rate of 9.8% (1,435 responses). Responses to the survey varied widely and demonstrated issues where there exists a great deal of debate within the community. The results indicated to the Committee that the survey might not have been consistently interpreted by all respondents, as the questions appear to have been

received and understood in differing ways. Some felt the questions were leading or were constructed in such a manner to elicit a specific response. Since the survey was developed by group members and staff (as opposed to a professional marketing firm), the Committee felt it was more accurate to state that the survey drew attention to the areas of conflict but was not necessarily a scientific method of testing the community's viewpoints. The survey and compilation of results is included under the Community Outreach Appendix. Generally, there was a strong consensus around the following areas:

- Office buildings on Wilshire Boulevard that exceed the City's current 3-story height limit **could be rebuilt at their existing heights and sizes if the full amount of required parking is provided.**
- Mixed-use development is appropriate for most commercial areas.
- The area located on the north side of Little Santa Monica Boulevard, west of Wilshire and east of Moreno Drive (Parcels 1 and 2) **should not be developed at a higher density than 3 stories and 2:1 FAR.**

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Workplan Issue #1: Character, Role and Function of Commercial Uses, Development Opportunities, and Parking Management and Supply.

#### a) Wilshire Boulevard:

Due to the variation in uses and overall length of Wilshire Boulevard, this street was separated into sub-areas. Some of these areas were broken down further into north and south sides of the streets as warranted by their differing characteristics including uses, traffic flow, heights of existing buildings, proximity to both single and multi-family residential areas, changing market places, differing degrees of building maintenance and care, and the potential for increased density to attract reinvestment and new development. The recommendations were then consolidated within the following primary sections of the corridor.

#### 1) Wilshire Boulevard West: ( Santa Monica Blvd. – Beverly Drive)



In this area, buildings are taller and more dense than those to the east and consist of major commercial “high-rise” businesses and department stores, located at the southern edge of the business triangle. The area transitions to residential on the south side of Wilshire Boulevard.



The Committee felt that additional height and density should be considered at certain anchor locations, as is suggested in the current General Plan since this type of development lends more architectural diversity and interest. The edge of this area is also being considered for a major hotel and public plaza

project (the T-Lot, which consists of 14 lots between Canon and Beverly Drives just north of the lots fronting on Wilshire Boulevard). This project is also discussed in the next section of this report. Generally speaking, this area along the southern edge of the Business Triangle should be “enlivened”. This could be accomplished by encouraging pedestrian and mixed-use development.

Uses/Opportunities:

- Office uses should continue to predominate on the north side of the street, even at the ground floor level.
- Pedestrian-type uses such as retail should be allowed, but not required.
- Mixed-use development consisting of retail on the ground floor and residential above should be allowed on the south side where the use is compatible with adjacent multi-family residential uses.
- The existing Department Store Overlay Zone on the south side of the street should be expanded two blocks westward to the Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevard intersection.



While a majority of members agreed with this recommendation, some members felt this proposed change would be in conflict with the previously set cap on developable floor area in the Department Store Overlay Zone.

Note: The existing Department Store Overlay Zones extend from Camden to McCarty Drives to Peck Drive on the south side of Wilshire Blvd. (Camden/Peck/Bedford Drives for the CRPD Zone and Bedford/Roxbury/McCarty Drives for the CR Zone.)

Note: The CRPD and CR zones are overlay zones which allow additional height and density for the construction of department stores. If the department store incentive is not exercised and general commercial office space is developed, the underlying provisions of the C3 Zone (3 stories, 45-foot height limit, 2:1 FAR) remain in effect.

#### Development Potential/Standards:

- To create architectural diversity and character, the existing development standards of 45 feet and 2:1 floor area ratio (FAR) should be modified for the triangular-shaped parcel at the Bedford Drive, Roxbury Drive and Brighton Way intersections to allow 75 feet in height with a 3:1 FAR.



While the majority of members agreed to this recommendation, a minority felt that the development standards should not be intensified due to concerns about potential increased traffic impacts.

- For the triangular-shaped parcel on the north side of the street at Rodeo Drive and Dayton Way, maintain the existing code allowances (45-foot height and 2:1 FAR).
- Allow the replacement of non-conforming buildings to existing FAR even if this exceeds the current code allowances provided that current code parking is provided. This would promote retention of the majority of the City's office space and provide a more architecturally interesting streetscape.
- Consider allowing increases in height while maintaining a 2:1 FAR so that properties can be developed with setbacks, plazas, and more interesting architecture
- The height limit should be increased from 45 to 55 feet on the south side of Wilshire Boulevard for mixed-use development to be compatible with the height of the abutting R4 zone to the south.

- For the Commercial Retail Planned Development Overlay Zone (C-R-PD Zone aka Department Store Overlay Zone located on the Barney's site), continue to allow an 85-foot height limit with a 5:1 FAR.



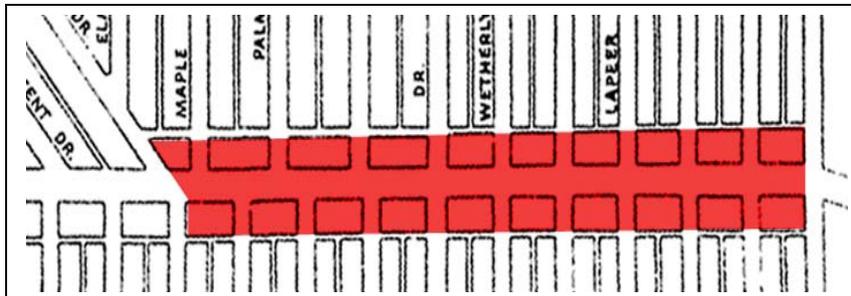
Parking Supply:

- Because parking is an essential resource, and in order to maximize availability, the City should retain the existing code-required parking standards and the in-lieu parking program for retail uses only.

Resources Required to Implement:

- Zoning incentives for mixed-use development might be required, as well as amendments to the Municipal Code for added height and/or density and design requirements. Staff and consultant time for design, cost of environmental and other studies would also be required.
- For the triangular parcel at Bedford Drive, Roxbury Drive and Brighton Way, accommodations for allowing a parking encroachment underneath the sidewalk would be necessary.

**2) Mid-Wilshire Boulevard: Beverly Drive – Robertson Boulevard**



Current and proposed uses in this area include the hotel approved between Palm and Maple Drives (currently a vacant blockface on the south side of the street); and the mixed commercial and residential “Crescent” project under construction at the northwest corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Crescent Drive (the project’s frontage is on Wilshire Boulevard). The Crescent project would be 54 feet in height, which is taller than the current 45-foot height limit along Wilshire Boulevard.



Moving eastward, Doheny Drive is one of the few designated north-south traffic arterials in the City. This area has a mix of building heights and types. Some older buildings are considered obsolete and/or in need of rehabilitation. This presents opportunities for conversion from office to residential uses. Many are legal and non-conforming with regard to height and density; yet remodels can be more costly

than new construction. This can lead to poorly maintained buildings and result in difficulties leasing less-than-quality space.

In general, this stretch along Wilshire could be enhanced by more pedestrian-friendly businesses including mixed-use. Mixed-use developments would create fewer impacts to the surrounding neighborhood than commercial projects developed to current code allowed height and density.



#### Uses/Opportunities:

- Maintain existing mix of commercial uses.
- In addition to existing commercial uses, promote pedestrian activities as these would spur property owners to upgrade buildings and attract retail and other pedestrian-friendly ground floor uses.
- Encourage mixed-use development on the south side as it would be compatible with adjacent multi-family residential uses to the south.
- Due to the proximity to a single-family residential zone, mixed-use should also be allowed on the north side of the street, provided that it is built within the current code allowances (45 feet, 3 stories, 2:1 FAR).

- Continue to allow automobile dealer uses (for new vehicles) with enclosed showrooms (currently allowed by Conditional Use Permit).

Development Potential/Standards:

- Allow additional height and density at the corners of major intersections (with the exception of the Wilshire/ Doheny intersection due to its lower



density as compared to other intersections) and anchor locations through transfers of development rights from lower-density buildings. This would allow for development of more distinctive architecture and uses. Concentrating height along intersecting commercial corridors would shift the taller buildings to commercial areas at the end of the block that do not abut and

impact residential zones. Transfers of development rights for height or density would need to be reviewed on a block-by-block basis. (Any transfers of such rights should only occur within the same block).

- Allow a height increase from 45 feet to 55 feet on the south side of the street to match the higher adjacent residential development to the south, but retain the 2:1 FAR.
- Maintain current standard of 45 foot height and 2:1 FAR on the north side because of its adjacency to the single-family residential zone.
- Allow additional height and density for projects that involve multiple lots that provide other community benefits such as open or green space.

Parking Supply:

- Retain current code requirements.

Resources Required to Implement:

- Staff, consultant and decision-makers' time would be required to implement zone changes.

**3) Wilshire Boulevard East: Robertson Boulevard – Eastern City Limit**



This area is characterized by older commercial and office buildings. It also includes local-serving retail businesses and a cluster of older movie theaters. Lot sizes vary, and the properties do not have alleys at the rear. The

Wilshire Boulevard commercial lots abut residential zones on both the north and south sides of the street. At the easterly end, the corridor is characterized by existing large scale development on both sides of the street with strip mall development on the south side at the City's gateway. Reinvestment in this area is encouraged to revitalize many of these older buildings.



Uses/Opportunities:

- Allow mixed-use development to increase activity that would support local-serving businesses without additional adverse traffic impacts.
- Between Stanley Drive and La Cienega Boulevard, allow residential uses on the commercially-zoned properties.
- Allow mixed residential and commercial development on both sides of the street between Robertson and La Cienega Boulevards.

Development Potential/Standards:

- Between Stanley Drive, Le Doux Road and La Cienega Boulevard, encourage cohesive, unified development and allow residential mixed uses in the commercially-zoned properties.
- Maintain current standard of 45-foot height limit and 2:1 FAR on the south side of the street where it abuts an R-1 zone.
- Increase the height allowance from 45 feet to 55 feet on the north side of the street, east of La Cienega Boulevard.
- Allow additional height and density for building significant architecture for gateway locations such as the corner of San Vicente and Wilshire Boulevards.





Uses/Opportunities:

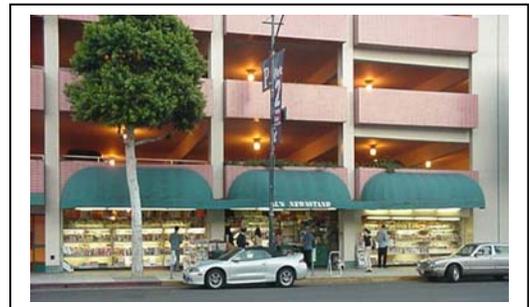
- Allow residential and mixed-use development along the 400 block to foster the pedestrian activity and liveliness of this area. This type of development will be compatible with nearby residential areas.
- With the exception of the 400 block, prohibit office uses on the ground floor street level to promote pedestrian activity in this entire sub-area. (Restrictions would be similar to those effective in the Business Triangle.)
- Continue to encourage village-type, neighborhood-oriented uses.
- Protect adjacent residential properties from commercial activities by maintaining low-intensity uses.

Development Potential/Standards:

- Retain the existing height and density requirements for structures on both sides of the street.
- On the west side, the rear yard setback requirements should be increased by an additional third-floor setback of 10 feet for those commercial buildings that abut R-1 zoned lots.
- Additional vertical setbacks should be imposed on properties abutting single-family residences if multiple-parcel development occurs.

Parking Supply:

- Implement a centralized or universal valet service.
- Accommodate employee parking so that public parking availability is maximized and not used by employees.
- The business triangle's in-lieu parking program should be expanded to this area.
- Additional public parking should be provided in the 400 block.





Uses/Opportunities:

- Maintain the existing character (local business-serving small scale of the street).
- Mixed-use and or adaptive reuse (modifying existing commercial buildings into a mix of commercial and residential uses) projects should be allowed.



Development Potential/Standards:

- Maintain current standard of 45-foot height limit and 2:1 FAR.
- Encourage retention of the existing scale through zoning incentives.

Although this view was shared by a majority of members, a minority felt that additional height should be allowed for mixed-used development or parking; and some felt that additional height should be permitted on the first blocks north and south of Wilshire Boulevard.

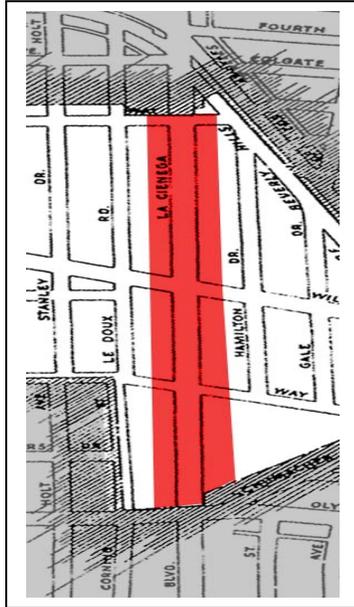
Parking Supply:

- Encourage City acquisition of properties to build a City-owned, public parking facility.
- With Beverly Hills Unified School District, explore the possibility of building a parking facility under the playground at Horace Mann School.

Resources Required to Implement:

- Staff and decision-maker time to modify the Zoning Code.
- Staff, decision-maker and School District representatives' time to negotiate the construction of joint-use, public parking.

**d) La Cienega Boulevard**



This major north-south corridor is mostly characterized by Restaurant Row and commercial businesses. Small-scale commercial buildings and mid-scale medical office buildings are located here, as well as La Cienega Park, which has a number of uses including tennis and playing fields, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Library with its large open, grassy lawn. Typical lots have a shallow depth, no alley, and abut residential neighborhoods.

Uses/Opportunities:



- Continue to allow existing uses, including the existing character of restaurant row and mid-size general and medical office uses. “Restaurant Row” should not be restricted to only restaurant uses.
- For the area north of Wilshire Boulevard, modify the transitional ordinance to allow restaurants to seat customers after 10:00 p.m.

Development Potential/Standards:

- For the area north of Wilshire Boulevard on the west side, the allowable height should be reduced from three stories to two stories to retain the existing height, density, scale and character of the adjacent single family neighborhood.

- For the area north of Wilshire Boulevard on the east side, the current 2:1 FAR allowance should be maintained, however, the maximum height should be increased from 45 feet to 55 feet to be consistent with adjacent R-4 allowable heights.
- To facilitate better access to the park and parking facilities, a pedestrian bridge should be constructed over La Cienega Boulevard to connect La Cienega Park to both sides of the street. This bridge would be considered a City gateway and should be architecturally significant.

*Parking Supply:*

- Retain current Code requirements.

*Resources Required to Implement:*

- Staff and decision-maker time to modify Zoning Code.
- City funding for public right-of-way improvements (pedestrian bridge).

e) ***Business Triangle***



The Business Triangle is the City's main business district. It is considered to be pedestrian - oriented with high-end retail, commercial, office, medical and financial uses. City parking structures facilitate much of the pedestrian

activity in this part of town. To encourage additional world-class architecture, larger buildings (with additional height and density if necessary) could be built. The Triangle can support additional height and density (especially within the inner core) as height and density would not adversely impact residential neighborhoods. The property known as the T-Lot (8 lots just north of Wilshire between Beverly and Canon Drives) contains several surface parking lots. Although surface parking is not necessarily a desirable use for these properties, the lack of development on these lots currently provides a visual relief for the area. This "open feeling" should be retained through the use of a public park or plaza area in future redevelopment plans.

Uses/Opportunities:



- Maintain current mix of pedestrian-oriented businesses, medical offices and hotels.
- Maintain the non-retail ground floor use limitation on the urban design streets (Rodeo Drive, Beverly Drive, Canon Drive, Dayton Way and Brighton Way) to a 25-foot frontage.
- Continue to encourage outdoor dining activities.
- Promote evening entertainment-oriented (theater, etc.) uses.
- Allow mixed-use development (including adaptive reuse on all streets in the triangle with different development standards depending on surrounding development).

Development Potential/Standards:



- In general, retain current standards of 45-foot height limit and 2:1 FAR.
- Allow additional height and density toward the center of the Triangle as it would not have an adverse effect on neighboring properties.
- To maintain the existing village-like character, consider expanding the unreinforced masonry program to other older buildings.
- Maintain existing General Plan goal of allowing additional height and FAR for key corner “anchor locations” at intersections of Little Santa Monica and Wilshire Boulevards and streets that run north/south.



- Support the concept of providing amenities such as the open space plaza currently under consideration for the City's T-Lot project, which is the last remaining underdeveloped parcel in the triangle.

*Parking Supply:*

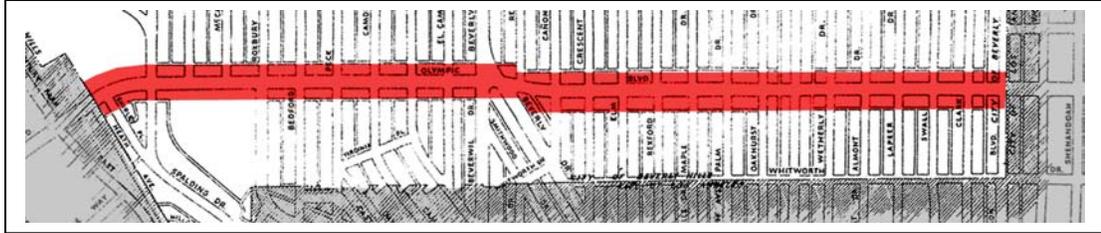
- Consider extending the in-lieu program to uses other than retail to help maintain and expand the commercial base of the City.
- Consider developing a shared parking program as parking might be available during the evening that would otherwise only be used by daytime workers/visitors.
- Provide development incentives for projects that include a public parking component to maximize availability of public parking.
- In areas where physical constraints preclude the development of parking, encourage encroachment below grade under the public right-of-way to gain additional parking spaces.
- Consider allowing alternative methods such as car elevators to provide the code-required number of parking spaces.
- Encourage and work with businesses to provide employee parking outside the business triangle and shuttle employees to work.



*Resources Required to Implement:*

- Facilitation and administration of a shuttle program (including funding, equipment and staff) to City-owned structures.
- Staff and decision-maker time to modify the Zoning Code.
- Encroachments under the public right-of-way for parking may require relocation of utilities.

**f) Olympic Boulevard**



Olympic Boulevard is a high-traffic corridor with a variety of uses including local-serving businesses; low-scale buildings with ground floor retail; office buildings near Beverly Drive; institutional and religious uses; mini-malls (the most in the City); auto dealerships; a grocery store; a major City park; and multi-family residences west of Beverly Drive. This area is unique to the City in that multi-family buildings on Olympic Boulevard face a high-traffic street, and many of the residential areas directly behind Olympic on both sides of the street are zoned both single and multi-family residential.



Uses/Opportunities:

- Allow mixed-use development/adaptive reuse on the commercial section between Beverly Drive and Robertson Boulevard.
- Continue to allow mini-malls subject to a Conditional Use Permit.
- Continue to allow car dealerships subject to a Conditional Use Permit. New dealerships should be located in a fully enclosed structure.



*Development Potential/Standards:*

- Remove CUP restriction and allow 45-foot height limit and 2:1 FAR for buildings that abut R-4 Zones. This will make the development standards for this area consistent with other commercial areas in the City that abut R-4 properties.
- Continue to restrict the FAR of 1.33:1 FAR (with an increase to 2:1 FAR by CUP) for areas abutting single family residential zones.
- Allow additional height and/or density at Beverly Drive intersection. This area could support large structures as a focal point.

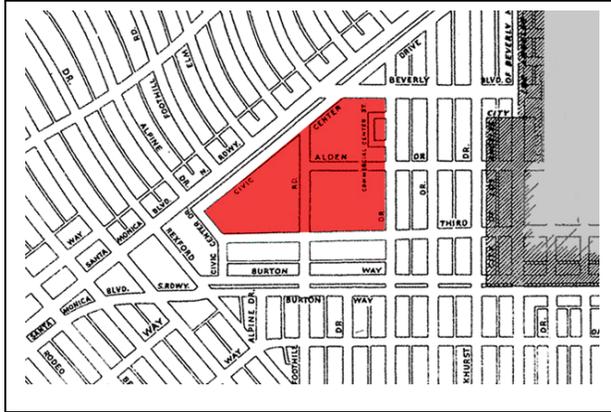
*Parking Supply:*

- Maintain current code requirements.
- Consider development incentives such as additional height or encroachment under the public right-of-way to increase the parking supply.

*Resources Required to Implement:*

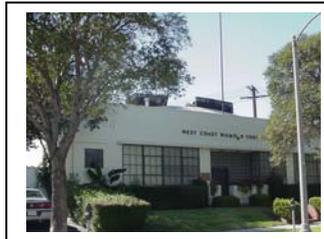
- Staff and decision-maker time to modify Zoning Code; and to establish policies regarding additional height at Beverly intersection.

**g) Industrial Area:**



The Industrial Area is predominantly characterized by three uses: Corporate campus and entertainment industry headquarters; City/government uses and properties; and pedestrian/retail oriented uses. Civic Center Drive includes low-rise buildings as well as some new and renovated architectural structures (the Ice House). Large lots with streetside

setbacks characterize Foothill, Maple and Alden. Industrial uses such as the power plant, water treatment plant and City vehicle maintenance facility are located on Foothill and Third Street respectively. There is considerable new, modern commercial headquarter-type development, as well as older existing facilities like the power plant and City maintenance yard. A Temple was recently approved for a vacant site on Alden Drive.



In general the CSC supported the Industrial Area Plan adopted by the City in 1994, with the following exceptions.

**Uses/Opportunities:**

- Mixed-use and adaptive reuse for privately-owned property as long as the ground floor is restricted to office use.

A minority view held that residential development was not appropriate in this area because of its proximity to civic uses such as the power station and vehicle maintenance yard.

- Change the Code to allow car dealers on all streets except Maple Drive. (Car dealerships are currently prohibited.)

Not all members agreed that car dealership uses were appropriate for this area as it is close to residential and some of the activities associated with auto sales (car deliveries, test driving, etc.) are disruptive. The minority vote also did not feel that car showrooms should be allowed.

- Encourage mixed-use/community center/housing opportunities on City-owned property. A minority view held that residential development was not appropriate in this area because of its proximity to civic uses such as the power station and vehicle maintenance yard; and that City-owned property should be used for civic rather than residential purposes.
- Allow medical uses if the number of vehicle trips generated by the medical use does not exceed the number of trips that would be generated if the property was zoned for office use. A minority view held that medical uses would create too many additional vehicle trips and that the area is too close to residential for this type of use.
- If mixed-use is permitted, consider allowing expansion of the existing hotel as it would be compatible with mixed-use development. This vote was very close (6-5) because almost half of the members who voted felt that a hotel use should not encroach into City-owned property, and that the corporate headquarter theme of this area should be retained without allowing other uses to incrementally encroach onto available infill parcels in this area.

*Development Potential/Standards:*

- Allow additional height for additional open green space on the internal blocks. While members agreed with the overall concept of additional height and density for anchor locations, they also agreed that most of the developable property belongs to the City and that the City could increase height and density if needed. Some members expressed concern that additional height would change the character of the area and impact nearby residential areas.
- Maintain the existing code allowances for height and FAR on the external blocks because of their adjacency to residential zones.

*Parking Supply:*

- Encourage additional parking to support existing municipal facilities.
- Consider this area as a possible location for Business Triangle employees to park and be shuttled to work.

*Resources Required to Implement:*

- Staff and decision-maker time to amend Zoning Code.
- Fund and perform a traffic and parking study for the area to evaluate the potential use of City-owned properties.

**Workplan Issue #2: Reconstruction of Older, Less Economically Competitive Buildings**

The CSC recognized that many older buildings in the City are not well-maintained and that rehabilitation costs may even exceed costs for reconstruction. Yet many of these buildings are legal and non-conforming with regard to height, density and parking. Therefore, owners may prefer to leave the buildings as-is and defer maintenance on them rather than rebuild them at lower heights and density.

To encourage reinvestment in these buildings and to retain the City's commercial base and cachet associated with a Beverly Hills address, the CSC agreed that legal non-conforming buildings may be reconstructed to their current height and density ***provided the current code required parking is provided.*** (For example, an existing legal non-conforming 8-story building with a 3:1 existing FAR and substandard parking could be rebuilt to the same height and density, provided the parking is provided per today's Code requirements.)

*Resources Required to Implement:*

- Staff and decision-maker time to amend Zoning Code.

**Workplan Issue #3: Development Opportunities for the Beverly Hilton Hotel/Robinson's May Site, and the former railroad right-of-way (westerly, Parcels 1 and 2).**

**a) The Beverly Hilton Hotel/Robinson's-May Site**



The CSC described this property as a "Trophy Property" and as a "World Class" location and development opportunity. The Committee agreed that the preference would be to develop the site in a unified manner with uses that are compatible with the existing anchor hotel use rather than on a piecemeal basis. Quality architecture and landscaping are both

critical as this location also serves as a gateway to the City.

Current Uses:

The current site conditions were described as underutilized. The hotel and retail stores, including Robinsons-May, do not generate a great deal of business activity or traffic. Most of the traffic in the immediate area is not related to on-site activities; it is cut-through or passer-by traffic. The large parking lot is not very attractive, and the hotel has a dated feel. The department store has a recently executed 25-year lease and serves as the only large mid-priced department store in the City. At the same time, the site is a critical gateway into the City, and is the largest underdeveloped parcel in Beverly Hills.

Potential Uses/Development Standards

The CSC felt that quality architecture and landscaping are critical because of the gateway location. The Santa Monica Boulevard (south) side of the parcel is currently unattractive and needs upgrading. The site will soon be affected by roadway improvements to Santa Monica Boulevard that will extend beyond the site to Moreno Drive. Other considerations include whether or not the City could impose redevelopment standards, as well as what type of revenue is generated through sales tax, and transient occupancy tax (bed tax) vs. other types of potential uses such as housing.

Suggested uses include public parking, hotel, housing and retail. An arched walkway or bridge connecting the site to the retail area south of Santa Monica Boulevard was also suggested. Support was also voiced for redeveloping the site in such a way that the proposed uses would not adversely impact the existing hotel on the site or the City's Business Triangle (particularly Rodeo Drive businesses).

A residential use on the back of the lot would be the least intrusive location to the neighboring residential properties across Wilshire Boulevard, and these new residential units would have nice views of the golf course; would not look down on the neighboring homes; and could interact with the hotel and generate tax revenue.

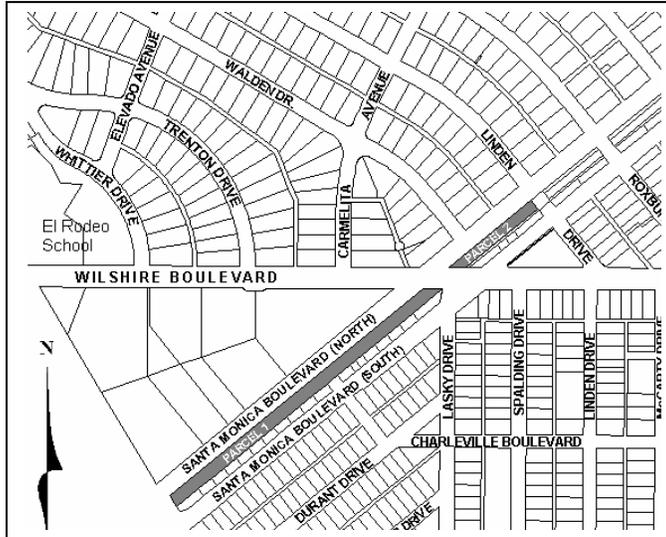
Additional height should be considered for portions of the site since the current 45-foot height restriction would not allow sufficient development potential. The increased height should be limited to the westerly and southerly sections of the site adjacent to the golf course and away from the nearby residential area. The increase in height should not exceed the height of the existing hotel building. As incentive for a unified development, the Committee also felt that additional density should be considered.

Future development standards will need to take into consideration the fact that the Santa Monica/Wilshire Boulevard intersection is a high traffic area and any future development needs to take into account not only the uses, but also the ingress/egress to and from the site; circulation and access within the site; parking; and traffic impacts.

#### Parking Supply

Shared parking for all users of the site (hotel, residential and retail) will be critical to make the project work. The Committee also discussed and recommended providing additional parking to support businesses to the south on Little Santa Monica Boulevard. This assumes that there would be a bridge or some other means of connecting the two sites.

### (b) Former Railroad Right-of-Way (Parcels 1 and 2)



Existing allowable uses for these privately-owned, currently vacant, undeveloped parcels is limited to open space, transportation and surface parking. The property is zoned T-1, abuts a C-3 zone, and is in close proximity to two major hotels, the high school, and older buildings with small-scale local-serving retail businesses along Santa Monica Boulevard. Parking in this area is in short supply. The parcel includes lots with a very shallow 60-foot

depth, which allows for limited access from both the north and south roadways. Its proximity to the City's border and future Santa Monica Boulevard roadway improvements further complicates the development opportunities.

#### Uses/Opportunities

- Create incentives to encourage the unified development of the parcels on Little Santa Monica Boulevard with the T-1 zoned property behind it.
- Allow mixed-use development.

#### Development Potential

- Provide incentives for unified development (i.e., the concurrent development of both the C-3 and T-1 zoned parcels).
- For the T-1 zone: if NOT used for transit purposes, allow development consistent with C-3 standards of 45-foot height and 2:1 FAR.
- Allow additional height as an incentive for mixed-use development that includes residential uses.
- Closely review the proposed architectural treatment for the building elevations facing both Santa Monica Boulevard roadways as this is a critical intersection with Wilshire Boulevard and serves as a gateway to the City. A minority felt that additional height and density above what is currently permissible should not be allowed in this area due to small lot sizes and visual impacts that taller buildings might create for this low-scale corner.

### Parking Supply

- To maximize parking opportunities in an area with a noticeable shortage, consider allowing parking encroachments below the sidewalk.
- Initiate a parking strategy or program for additional parking in this area. The City should consider providing public parking as one of the options.

### **Workplan Issue #4: Mixed-Use Development**

A major issue of the CSC's charge was to consider whether the City should allow a mix of residential and commercial uses in commercial areas. In general, residential uses are not permitted in commercial zones per the existing Code. There are, however, a few exceptions. The RMCP zone allows a mix of commercial and residential uses under certain conditions. A code amendment was also approved recently for an adaptive reuse district for the north side of the 8600 block of Wilshire Boulevard. This zone allows the office space to be converted to apartments with retail uses on the ground floor.

Over the past several years, a number of property owners have approached the City with mixed-use development proposals. This caused the Planning Commission and City Council to engage in deliberations regarding the implementation of a City-wide mixed-use ordinance. As this debate was coming to fruition, the General Plan committees began their process, and the City Council felt it would be appropriate for study in this comprehensive process of developing goals and a vision for the City's future, and deferred development of this ordinance until recommendations have been received from the General Plan committees.

As mentioned in the Workplan section of this report, the CSC studied mixed-use at several sessions. A presentation and Question-and-Answer session was held with a local architect who has developed a number of mixed-use projects in Southern California. Another presentation and session was hosted by Bill Trimble, Senior Planner with the City of Pasadena, and Paul Silvern, a partner with Hamilton, Rabinovitz and Altschuler (a firm specializing in land use, real estate and fiscal impact analysis). Discussions were also held on this subject as it arose during regular committee meetings over the course of the last 18 months.

Factors considered in making recommendations for mixed-use include:

- Housing Element goals for the creation of new housing for all income groups.
- Opportunities to create a concentration of different uses that would reduce vehicle trips.
- Uses and incentives that benefit the City's tax base and revenue.
- Concerns raised by developers stating that the 45-foot height limit renders mixed-use projects economically infeasible.
- Are incentives appropriate and/or necessary for apartments and/or condominiums?

Recommendations:

General Mixed-Use Recommendations:

Most commercial zones are appropriate locations for ground floor commercial uses with residential units on upper levels. (Exceptions to this general recommendation are discussed in the individual geographic sub-area recommendations of this report.) A minority felt that there is a potential conflict between the commercial and residential use in mixed development on a site and the lack of usable outdoor living spaces. In addition, there was concern that residential uses may not be compatible with municipal service uses in some areas of the City.

- Require high quality architectural design and construction.
- Allow up to 55 feet in height for mixed-use development on commercial corridors that abut residential zones with a 55-foot height limit.
- Increased height and density may be appropriate in some areas to encourage the construction of additional housing units. Any modifications to development standards to allow for such an increase should be determined on a area-specific basis to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood character and uses.

Location-Specific Mixed-Use Recommendations:

- For Wilshire Boulevard:
  1. Do not allow incentives or trade-offs for additional height or density in commercial areas that abut R-1 zones.
  2. Allow adaptive reuse of existing older buildings provided the ground floor is retained as commercial.
  3. Consider mixed-use as potential use on a unified development on the block between Stanley Drive and Le Doux Road.

- For Olympic Boulevard:
  1. Allow mixed-use or adaptive reuse between Beverly Drive and Robertson Boulevard.
  2. Allow mixed-use development within existing code allowances for height and density.
  
- For the Industrial Area:
  1. Allow mixed-used or adaptive reuse for privately-owned property as long as the ground floor is used for commercial office purposes.
  2. Encourage mixed-use development on City-owned properties with retail uses on the ground floor.
  
- Consider mixed-use as a potential use for Parcels 1 and 2 under a unified development plan (for the C-3 and T-1 lots).

DISCLAIMER

The members of the General Plan Commercial Standards Topic Committee include some property owners within the Commercial (C-3) Zones in the City of Beverly Hills and these areas were part of the discussions of the group. Land/property ownership was disclosed as part of the application process for all General Plan Topic Committee Members and was considered during the selection process.

## **Glossary of Terms**

<b><u>Adaptive Reuse:</u></b>	The conversion of an existing building to another use. (For example, an office building that is converted to apartments.)
<b><u>CUP:</u></b>	Conditional Use Permit. A discretionary permit that allows certain uses defined in the Municipal Code if the City finds that the proposed location of such a use will not be detrimental to adjacent property or to the public welfare (e.g., hotels, religious institutions, vehicle sales, etc.)
<b><u>FAR:</u></b>	Floor Area Ratio. The ratio of floor area to site area. (For example, a 7500 square foot lot with a 2:1 FAR would have a maximum FAR of 15,000 s.f. (2 x 7500 s.f.)
<b><u>In-Lieu Parking District:</u></b>	Commercially-zoned properties that are eligible to satisfy all or part of the requirements for parking spaces through the payment of an in-lieu fee to the City.
<b><u>Legal Non-Conforming Building:</u></b>	A building constructed under previous code allowances (e.g., height, setbacks, parking) which have since changed.
<b><u>Mixed-Use:</u></b>	Development projects that contain more than one use such as commercial on the ground floor with residential uses above.
<b><u>Pedestrian Uses:</u></b>	Commercial uses that encourage walk-in customers. A pedestrian-friendly environment is intended to create a vibrant atmosphere that stimulates economic investment and a sense of place. Safety is enhanced by activities that encourage “eyes on the street.”
<b><u>Public Right-of-Way:</u></b>	Sidewalks, streets, alleys and other areas that are public property and not privately owned.
<b><u>Setbacks:</u></b>	The minimum distance between the front, back or side lot line and the closes element of a building or structure on that site area.
<b><u>Transitional Ordinance:</u></b>	A set of standards developed to buffer commercial uses from residential areas.