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January 17, 2025

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: The Westside Area Plan Project

Dear Honorable Board of Supervisors,

The Los Angeles Conservancy is pleased you will be reviewing the Westside Area Plan (WSAP) at your January 22nd meeting. The Conservancy previously submitted comments during the Draft PEIR stage and made public comment at the Regional Planning Commission. We have seen the plan evolve, and appreciate that many of the proposed changes in the plan seem to respond to community concerns. We also appreciate that a historic context statement has been compiled for this area which include some of Los Angeles County's most important and historic Black communities as well as a wealth of Modern-era resources.

We have met with County Planning Staff on two occasions: once virtually via Zoom and another as part of a community walk in Ladera Heights. We thank them for being receptive to our input and taking the time to meet. Although the plan is well-crafted and attempts to balance the need for growth and change, we believe two changes are still necessary create some safeguards for historic resources. We thank the Board of Supervisors for their dedication to historic neighborhoods. We would support the Westside Area Plan if these two following changes are made.

1. Commit to a Historic Survey of Ladera Heights

The Conservancy is asking the Board of Supervisors to commit to and accelerate a historic survey of Ladera Heights, a neighborhood that is rich in architectural, cultural and social landmarks. As the neighborhood has faced gentrification pressures, historic resources have been significantly



altered. This is largely due to a lack of information available on the neighborhoods, which would be addressed by a survey. The survey would provide information not only on architectural features but would also cover significant people who lived in, and contributed to the rich history that is Ladera Heights. The survey would provide a baseline document for future interpretative efforts, community histories, and research.

Currently, the Los Angeles Conservancy is documenting historic sites lost by both the devastating Palisades and Eaton Fires. In areas like the Pacific Palisades, we are able rely upon Survey LA data to identify and map affected properties. Some of these places may choose not to rebuild, but their history is preserved for future generations. In Altadena, a community that has not been comprehensively surveyed, we are relying on disparate, less-reliable sources, and we fear much history will be lost due to this tragedy. We cannot let the history of Ladera Heights be lost in a similar way.

On October 23, 2024, the Regional Planning Commission amplified our request to prioritize a survey for Ladera Heights. Along with their motion to recommend approval of the project they moved “to recommend to the Board to prioritize a historic survey to preserve the historic and cultural resources of the communities, and cultural capital.” We ask that this be prioritized as an implementation item of the plan, and we feel this is even more important given our recent experience.

2. Maintain Current Zoning of the Jet Inn Motel

Although the majority of proposed changes do not appear problematic from a preservation perspective, there is one site mentioned in the historic context statement that is located in and slated for opportunity sites and appear at risk. It is the “Jet Inn Motel,” at 4542 W. Slauson Avenue and built 1959 in the Googie style. This structure appears threatened by upzoning, which will place greater pressure on its potential redevelopment. Although it has yet to be formally surveyed, it appears to be eligible for historic designation at least at the local level. We ask that immediately-adjacent and underutilized sites along Slauson be identified and considered as suitable for upzoning instead of this Midcentury Modern motel.

Though we understand the motel may have been a problematic use in the past, it still provides economic value to the community. Motels of this vintage are often rehabilitated and can be converted for affordable housing, and serve as convenient lodging for tourists, and also double as film locations – the Safari Inn in Burbank is one such location. As has been done with other similar motels, there is additionally the opportunity for the Jet Inn Motel to be adaptively reused as affordable housing. We have recently learned of one such example in Hollywood, where the Hollywood Downtowner will be repurposed as interim housing for transition age



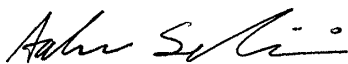
youth. The current C-2 zoning would not preclude this use, but the proposed MXD zone would likely encourage its demolition rather than reuse.

As stated, there appear to be other parcels along Slauson Avenue (immediately west of the Let Inn Motel and toward La Brea) that can accommodate upzoning and are better candidates for redevelopment, including multiple vacant parcels and sites with large surface parking lots. As part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the PEIR planning, it is important to avoid significant adverse impacts to historic resources wherever possible. We are asking the County to do this and reconsider this upzoning by looking to other nearby viable sites that can readily accommodate additional housing density.

About the Los Angeles Conservancy:

The Los Angeles Conservancy is the largest local historic preservation organization in the United States, with nearly 5,000 member households throughout the Los Angeles area. Established in 1978, the Conservancy works to preserve and revitalize the significant architectural and cultural heritage of Los Angeles County through advocacy and education.

Sincerely,



Andrew Salimian
Director of Advocacy

