

Dear Wilmont:

On Wed, @ 5:30 pm March 18, the Planning Commission will vote on new zoning language to be recommended for consideration by the Santa Monica City Council. Pertinent items will affect Wilmont, including:

- Tier 3 - Extra tall, dense buildings on Wilshire
- Wilshire Activity Center
- 1801 Wilshire – potentially an unofficial “Activity Center”

Advocates of accelerated zoning (higher, denser, faster) will certainly be in attendance to comment before the Commission. Please consider appearing in the City Hall chambers to make your voice heard.

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**Relevant information:**

Over the past 2 years, Wilmont members and other residents sent hundreds of emails and appeared at the Zoning Town Hall to protest, among other things, heights and density on Wilshire, parcel consolidation, the Wilshire Activity Centers and Tier 3. Wilmont board members sent resolutions and testified at nearly all 35 zoning meetings.

Notwithstanding Wilmont resident’s emails, public testimony or commentary, and repeated recommendations by Wilmont and other adjacent neighborhood organization’s to ban Tier 3 and the parcel consolidation that would allow it on Wilshire Boulevard, city staff just published a new report that maintains “throughout the ZOU process, comments received from the public questioned the appropriateness of Tier 3 development along *eastern portions of Wilshire* (italics ours).

We have no idea where staff considers the boundary between east and west Wilshire Boulevard to be; further, any arbitrary boundary is of no moment to us.

The Chamber of Commerce and developers are advocating for Tier 3 anywhere on Wilshire.

*TIER 3*

Impact: 9<sup>th</sup> Street to Centinela along Wilshire Boulevard

An average 2-story apartment in Wilmont is 23’ high. Tier 3 can be 60’ high with an extra 12-18’ on 30% of the roof for stairwells, water towers, etc. Tier 3 also allows extra density; more apartment units would fit on each site. All new buildings on Wilshire will have underground parking garages that exit on residential streets.

Our Opinion:

- Tier 3 (60’ tall) buildings would canyonize Wilshire
- Tier 3 apartments are overly dense for our low-density neighborhood
- Wilmont is beyond reach of Expo; big housing projects increase traffic and parking issues
- Thousands of new residents would exit subterranean parking lots onto residential Wilmont streets
- Increased traffic is inimical to walking and biking

- Resident-serving, local businesses would compete with bigger, branded stores

### *“ACTIVITY” CENTERS*

Along with fellow Neighborhood Council members, we oppose “Activity” Centers citywide, especially one located at Ocean Park/Lincoln. If implemented, this “Activity” Center would create more traffic on Lincoln Boulevard, soon to be bisected by a ground-level Expo line.

#### *14<sup>th</sup> ST. “ACTIVITY” CENTER*

Impact: 9<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> streets between Wilshire Boulevard and Montana, Ave., including Lincoln Middle School.

- Includes area from Euclid to 16<sup>th</sup> Street on both sides of Wilshire (north and south sides)
- 70’ tall shopping center and housing project
- Dense apartments – denser than the rest of Wilmont
- Hotel (one of more than ten new/expanded hotels to built in the City)
- Large subterranean parking lot(s) that could be used to support parking from around the City generating more traffic in Wilmont.

#### Our Opinion:

- A Mixed Use project more than 3 times the height of adjacent apartments would cast shadows and overwhelm the surrounding residential districts
- A multi-block, dense housing project would multiply traffic problems for surrounding residents
- Large subterranean parking garages that exit into Wilmont would hinder local traffic, biking and walking
- Increased traffic would make Lincoln Middle School students unsafe
- Hotels belong in tourist areas and Downtown

#### *1801 WILSHIRE – AN UNOFFICIAL “ACTIVITY” CENTER?*

Impact: 16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Street, Wilshire Boulevard to Montana Avenue

Staff changed this 2-acre property into arguably the largest Mixed Use footprint on Wilshire Boulevard, making it an invitation for over-scale development next to 1-2 story apartments and homes.

- 1801 Wilshire had a “mixed” zoning designation. The front along Wilshire was zoned Mixed Use. The back, now a surface parking lot, was zoned Low Density Housing.
- Like A-lots, the surface parking lot serves as a buffer zone between adjacent apartments and businesses.
- Wilmont homes and apartments are low density and low rise (23 feet high).
- This area is exceptionally low rise: primarily 1-2 story apartments and home (19th street is less than 2 lanes wide.)

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#### **NEW INFORMATION:**

City Staff has recently published a new map that changes the whole 2-acre property to a

single Mixed Use property with no open-air parking lot i.e., eliminating the buffer zone. Development could abut residential housing of 1-2 story homes and the existing surface parking lot could be covered with dense, 47' high apartments.

Under current zoning, 23' apartments could be built on the parking lot, but each apartment must have *individual* setbacks and green space. By eliminating the individual residential parcels, the green space is lost. Now developers can build a higher and denser building.

Our Opinion:

- The current LUCE designation for 1801 Wilshire is correct and must not be changed.
- 1801 Wilshire is beyond ½ mile of Expo. Creating a very large housing project far from Expo would create more car trips.
- A 2-acre underground parking garage would mean hundreds of cars exiting onto two narrow, residential streets, increasing traffic on all surrounding streets. The bigger the project, the bigger the parking garage and resultant flows (e.g. Whole Foods/23<sup>rd</sup> & Wilshire Blvd.)
- A substantial Mixed Use footprint on Wilshire invites development agreements for a hotel, a “parking district”, extra large housing project and other aspects of an “Activity” Center.

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On Wednesday evening, 3/18, the Planning Commission votes on Tier 3, the Activity Centers and 1801 Wilshire.

The City Council begins their Zoning Ordinance deliberations in April.

**Resident Action:**

The City needs to hear what YOU want.

#1 - Email about your concerns and ideas

If you've written before, please write again. Developers, consultants, lobbyists and the Chamber of Commerce are targeting staff and officials, any decision-influencer 'sitting on the fence.'

SEND TO: kyle.ferstead@smgov.net (Planning Commission Clerk)

COPY: council@smgov.net (City Council Clerk)

#2 - Speak at the Zoning Planning Commission Meeting Wed. March 18

This will be the last Commission meeting about the Zoning Ordinance.

This Wed. March 18 – 5:30pm (an early start)

City Hall (Free Parking)

#3 - Attend the City Council Zoning Session Tues. April 14; City Hall

The City Council will hear public testimony on all zoning issues before making their FINAL decisions. Democracy is a participatory sport: please make your voice heard.

Thank you all for your determination and efforts.

Best regards,

Laurence Eubank, Chair