

Communication from Public

Name:

Date Submitted: 04/20/2021 05:45 PM

Council File No: 00-9999

Comments for Public Posting: Crime stemming from homelessness is out of control and seriously impacting the quality of life, particularly in the Hollywood Media District. We all feel abandoned by city policies and leaders. Now our lives are in danger with recent hostage and break ins.

Communication from Public

Name: Angela Brooks

Date Submitted: 04/22/2021 08:39 AM

Council File No: 00-9999

Comments for Public Posting: Three days ago, the NY Times published 'If You Care About Social Justice, You Have to Care About Zoning'. I believe our crisis of affordability stems directly from our inability to provide a framework within which we can build, renovate and create a dense, livable city. I have been addressing these issues for 25 years as an architect, sit on the City of West Hollywood Housing Element Task Force and know that we have a unique window of opportunity to make substantive zoning change as a part of our RHNA Housing Element goals to provide more capacity for housing:

- 1: Repeal or correct 1986 Prop U's downzone along all of the commercial boulevards Over the last several decades we have dramatically reduced residential zoning capacity and have lost the potential to house tens of thousands, but gained higher housing costs. In 1986, Ballot Measure Prop U in the City of Los Angeles halved the allowable density on all of our commercial boulevards from 3:1 to 1.5:1, effectively downzoning overnight, lowering the threshold for discretionary approval, creating delays and uncertainties. As a direct result, tens of thousands of housing units did not get built. Because of this one ballot measure, all development now requires discretionary approval to get back to a baseline of 3:1 (3-stories over an entire parcel).....this is a development straight-jacket in our C-zones and along our mixed-use boulevards. Unfortunately, this is precisely where we should have our density...along our commercial mixed-use boulevards!
- 2: Eliminate height restrictions which effectively downzone our commercial boulevards The R1 zone has height limits that reach out of the R1 zone and into the C2 zone, even if density is allowed along the commercial boulevard. If R1 zone/yellow is 49' from any portion of the building in the pink commercial artery, the height is limited to 25' (2-stories). Within 99', it is limited to 33'. Most of our commercial arteries are R1-adjacent! Rather than R1 cholesterol pressing into and hardening our arteries, we should create a 'relief valve' that is a transitional height zone from the C2 into the R1 (the opposite way!). Density at the neighborhood level is best characterized by how buildings, transport, and ultimately people are arranged on the street. Increased density on our commercial boulevards would allow for much more housing around transit, and would contribute to more livable, walkable neighborhoods.
- 3: Comprehensive

Zoning for today and tomorrow includes infrastructure. Most development requires discretionary approvals (because our 'base zoning' is 8 decades old and bears no resemblance to our current city transit, households, neighborhoods or development patterns). This requires political, neighborhood and city approvals, adding years to the development of needed housing. The responsibility for infrastructure (LADWP, Sewer Availability, etc) falls on the developer to determine, after all plans are complete, increasing risk and uncertainty. Risk vs Reward: some of the risk could be placed where it is most effectively controlled, which is at the city. If infrastructure design was consistent/ready and available where density is needed, streamlining would automatically occur. More housing units would get built faster and at less cost. By eliminating discretionary approvals in the Los Angeles region (they should be scarce, not common!) through the creation of a good zoning framework for today and into the future, more housing would get built and our neighborhoods would be more livable. The 'work-arounds' such as the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Ordinance and Measure JJJ, are helpful but they do not get at the root of the problem, which is the lack of comprehensive zoning reform and the restrictive definition of a 'dwelling unit' which precludes shared permanent-housing models. State Bills such as AB1763 are good, but a piecemeal approach, when comprehensive planning is really required. Out of our total developable land, about 75% is zoned for detached single family/duplexes and 25% is for multi-family (approximately opposite the land use of the 1930s). Rather than 'exclusionary zoning' we should have 'inclusionary zoning', more affordability and less restrictions on multi-unit buildings. Some cities have removed all R1 exclusionary zones and Los Angeles could do this too. In particular, we should not let R1 dictate C2. Our zoning policy is making our commercial arteries sick and the result is unaffordability and homelessness, which stretches back into our R1 neighborhoods. Rather, we could house people by removing restrictions on density and incentivizing new shared-house models, especially along our commercial boulevards and our high-opportunity single family neighborhoods that are much less dense. I have attached a letter with graphic representation and data and also the article. Thank you very much, Angela Brooks, FAIA, Principal, Brooks + Scarpa Architects

April 20, 2021

Los Angeles County Supervisors
Los Angeles City Council Members
Mayor of Los Angeles



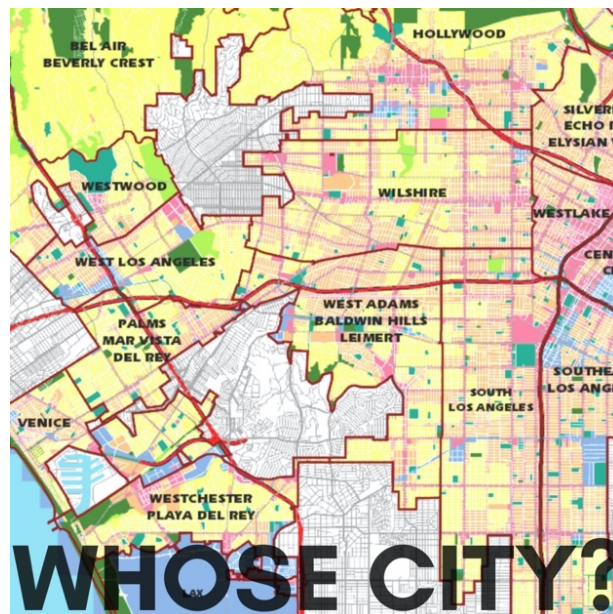
3929 W. 139th Street
Hawthorne, CA 90250

Re: The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) and creating a more equitable and livable city and county.

To my Supervisors, Council Members and Mayor,

I believe our homelessness challenge is not insurmountable. We know that homes end homelessness. The problem is that we are not creating enough homes.

What connects us all, what makes livable neighborhoods, are our pink mixed-use commercial zones that weave throughout the region. I believe that concentrating on these boulevards and their edges, increasing the density of them, is a 'no-brainer' and the RHNA updates give you a unique opportunity to work together to make them stronger. All 88 cities in the county are currently studying future housing capacity and now is a perfect time to coordinate and collaborate on updated zoning to support this goal. The Los Angeles County region is a living, breathing organism; it is the heart that pumps the blood to the places where all of us live and work. The City of Los Angeles is 40% of the total county population and is a crucial link in the region's livability. These observations are specific to Los Angeles, but related to other areas. These are issues that I believe are paramount to unlock the key to house everyone, based on my decades of experience working in the region as an architect, a housing policy advocate and social justice designer. R1 (yellow) and C2 (pink/salmon) represent the majority of our residential and commercial zones, so I use them and not others for clarity.



1: Repeal or correct 1986 Prop U's downzone along all of the commercial boulevards

Over the last several decades we have dramatically reduced residential zoning capacity and have lost the potential to house tens of thousands, but gained higher housing costs. In 1986, Ballot Measure Prop U in the City of Los Angeles halved the allowable density on all of our commercial boulevards from 3:1 to 1.5:1, effectively downzoning overnight, lowering the threshold for discretionary approval, creating delays and uncertainties. As a direct result, tens of thousands of housing units did not get built. Because of this one ballot measure, all development now requires discretionary approval to get back to a baseline of 3:1 (3-stories over an entire parcel).....this is a development straight-jacket in our C-zones and along our mixed-use boulevards. Unfortunately, this is precisely where we should have our density...along our commercial mixed-use boulevards!

Links:

<https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/proposition-u/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proposition_U

<http://www.betterinstitutions.com/blog/2016/5/16/keep-los-angeles-affordable-repeal-proposition-u>

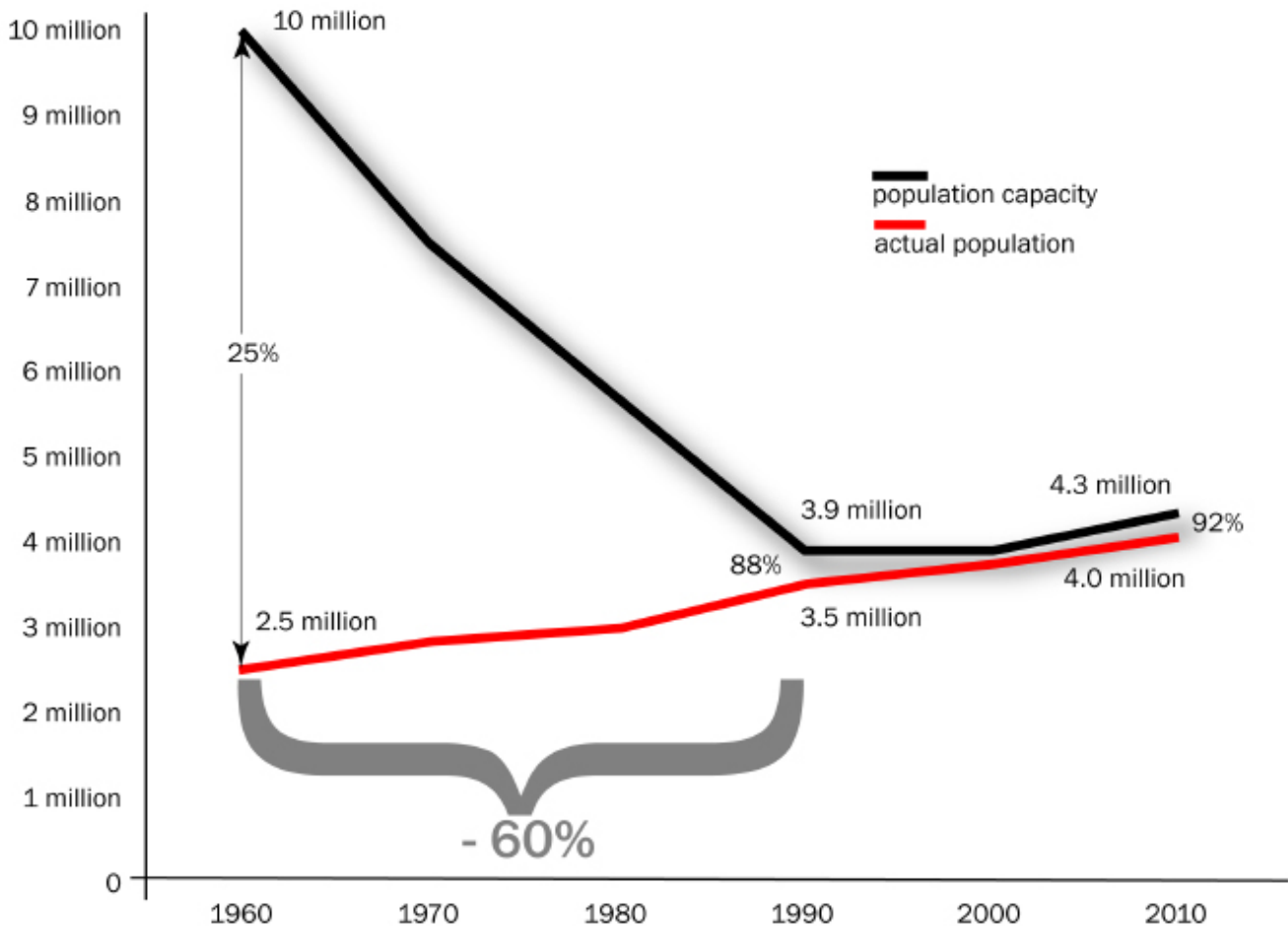


Fig. 1-1: Down-Zoning versus Population Growth

Data Sources: Census and all 104 Community Plans (cumulative population capacity)

Chart from [dissertation of UCLA PhD student Greg Morrow](#).

2: Eliminate height restrictions which effectively downzone our commercial boulevards

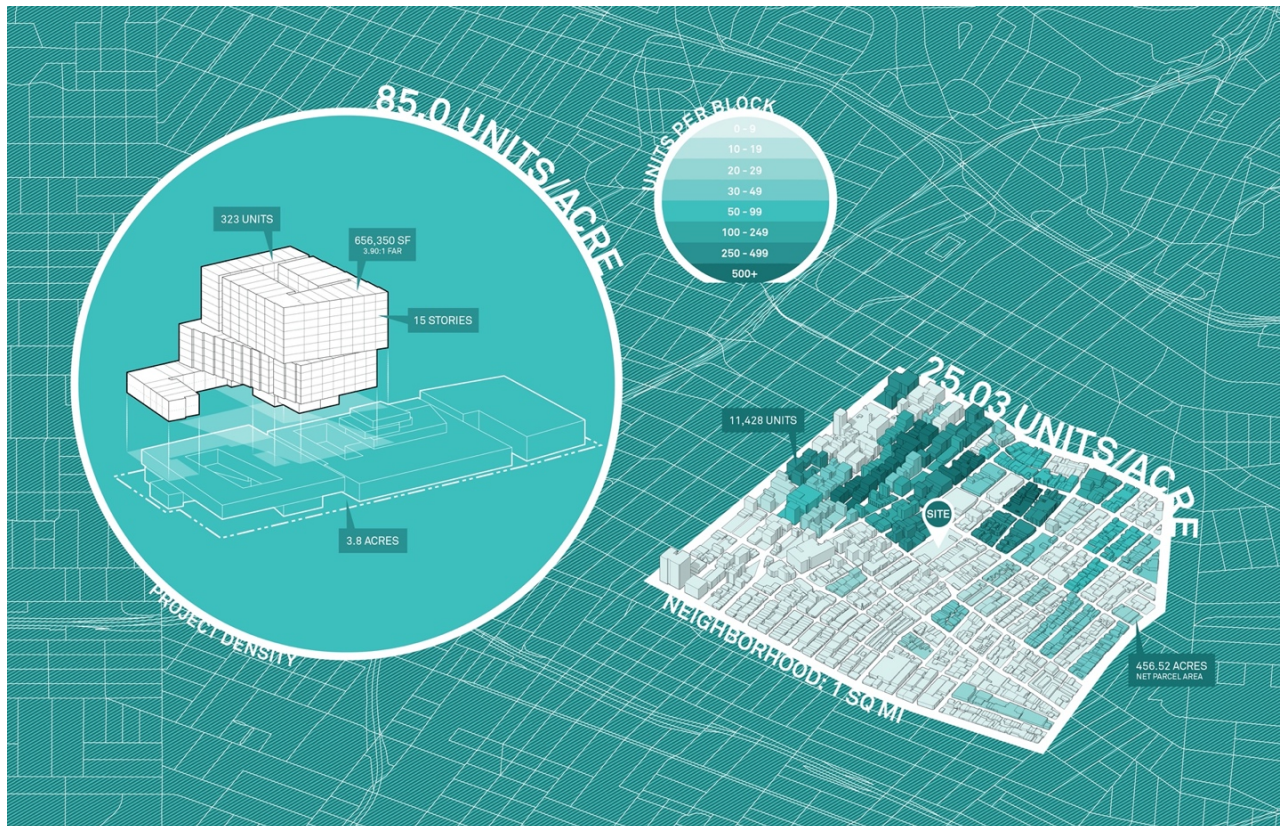
The R1 zone has height limits that reach out of the R1 zone and into the C2 zone, even if density is allowed along the commercial boulevard. If R1 zone/yellow is 49' from any portion of the building in the pink commercial artery, the height is limited to 25' (2-stories). Within 99', it is limited to 33'. Most of our commercial arteries are R1-adjacent! Rather than R1 cholesterol pressing into and hardening our arteries, we should create a 'relief valve' that is a transitional height zone from the C2 into the R1 (the opposite way!). Density at the neighborhood level is best characterized by how buildings, transport, and ultimately people are arranged on the street. Increased density on our commercial boulevards would allow for much more housing around transit, and would contribute to more livable, walkable neighborhoods.



3: Comprehensive Zoning for today and tomorrow includes infrastructure

Most development requires discretionary approvals (because our 'base zoning' is 8 decades old and bears no resemblance to our current city transit, households, neighborhoods or development patterns). This requires political, neighborhood and city approvals, adding years to the development of needed housing. The responsibility for infrastructure (LADWP, Sewer Availability, etc) falls on the developer to determine, after all plans are complete, increasing risk and uncertainty. Risk vs Reward: some of the risk could be placed where it is most effectively controlled, which is at the city. If infrastructure design was consistent/ready and available where density is needed, streamlining would automatically occur. More housing units would get built faster and at less cost. By eliminating discretionary approvals in the Los Angeles region (they should be scarce, not common!) through the creation of a good zoning framework for today and into the future, more housing would get built and our neighborhoods would be more livable. The 'work-arounds' such as the Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Ordinance and Measure JJJ, are helpful but they do not get at the root of the problem, which is the lack of comprehensive zoning reform and the restrictive definition of a 'dwelling unit' which precludes shared permanent-housing models. State Bills such as AB1763 are good, but a piecemeal approach, when comprehensive planning is really required.

The image below illustrates potential new housing above the downtown So Ca Flower Market, (entitlements approved after 3 years) a with a project density of 85 units/acre, the surrounding neighborhood is only 25 units/acre. Los Angeles' downtown core (where dense, tall housing should be located) has +25% industrially zoned land where it is illegal to build apartments, even though most of the industry is light or non-existent.



UrbanFootprint, the world's first and only Urban Intelligence Platform, was named among the most innovative companies of 2021 and they are ranked #2 in the Social Good category of the list. With interactive dashboards and city and neighborhood data in one place, it is a great tool for urban design, a comprehensive urban, climate and community tool: <https://urbanfootprint.com/>

3: Risk vs Reward for Permits and Approvals

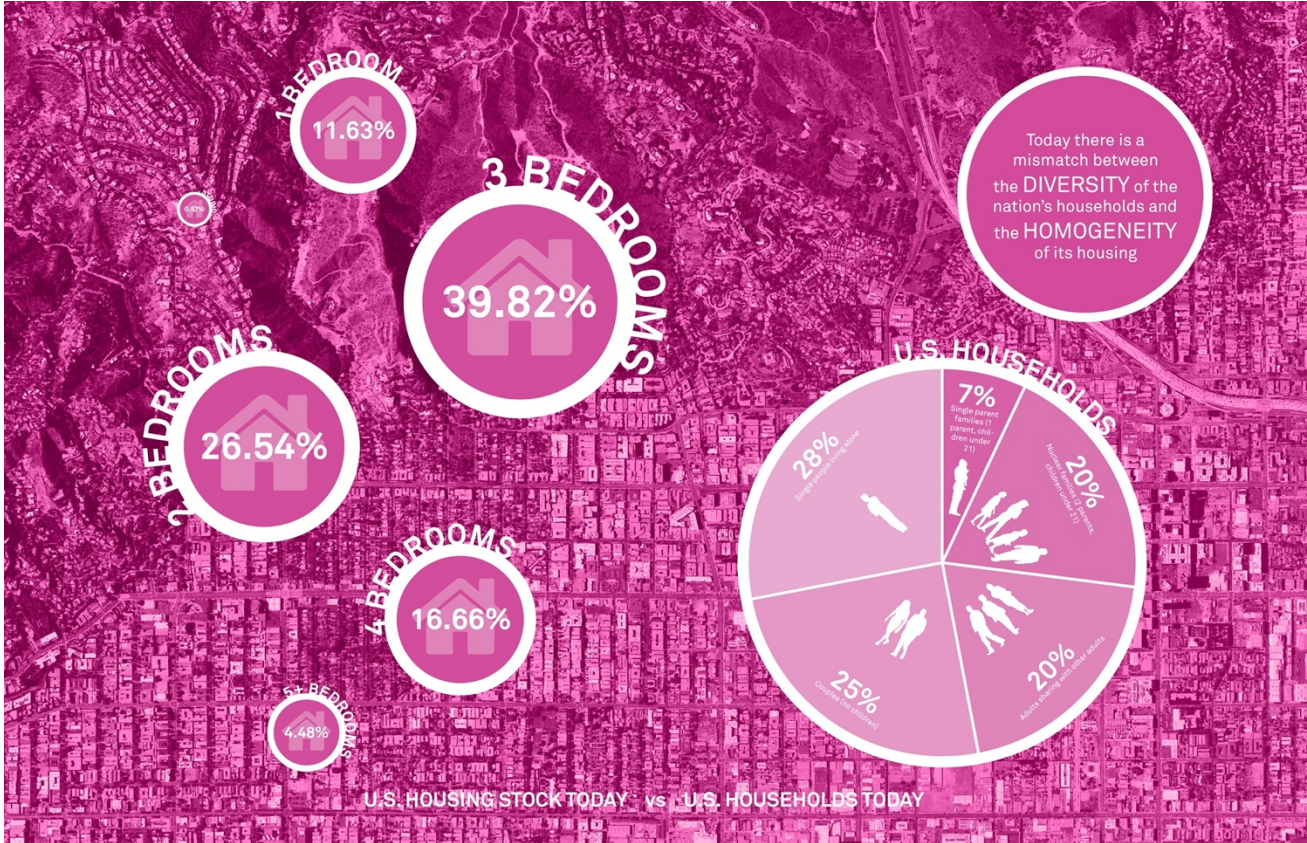
Obtaining approvals and building permits takes an extraordinary amount of time, specialty and legal consultation, and leaves the developer open to possible CEQA legal action which stops or slows down beneficial projects. Our zoning framework is sick and has little to do with the way people actually live, or the way a healthy city is supposed to operate. 'Risk vs Reward' is lopsided and the onus is always on the development team to navigate a byzantine system, with no certainty. If we, as a society, are serious about solving homelessness, then Risk should be more balanced. For instance, currently a shared permanent-housing model is illegal. The non-profit Skid Row Housing Trust rehabilitated an apartment building that consisted of rooms with shared baths and showers on each floor and a common kitchen on the ground floor. The Zoning Code does not allow this type of permanent housing...even though the density is over 500 dwelling units/acre and is permanent housing for many people. The Risk is attributed to the non-profit developer who has to explain and cajole the building plan checkers to allow this- this is not incentivized, so why would any other developer try this as a new project? We need new models of housing types like this, allowed by-right, for both private and non-profit developers. All dwelling units do not need their own bathrooms and kitchens to be called 'home' for some.

4: Help the Silos Effectively Communicate (see #3)

The onus is on the architect and developer to navigate multiple approvals through the city silos (LADWP, Planning, B&S, BOE, Metro, Transportation, Fire), each with their own personnel, own varying and changing submittal requirements, supervisors and fees. Online one-stop digital plan submittal is a basic need for both private and non-profit developers (other cities successfully do this and could be a template). This could save time. The Urban Design Studio, with proper authority, could be the glue that provides for effective communication among silos for the design team and developer.

5: Incentivize and allow as standard, new models of housing

In LA County 8% of the population identifies as Black, but 33% make up the homeless population, so creating/allowing/incentivizing new shared-housing models will lower the cost of housing, allow more density and will be more just. The definition of a dwelling unit could be simply a room with a sink and refrigerator only (similar to a hotel) and this would allow models with shared kitchens and shared showers and bathrooms to exist. The point is that we need more options for everyone. This simply provides a relief valve at this end of the scale for those who are young and need to live independently, those living on limited incomes, people that need a step up or lower rent or do not want an individual kitchen. This is a perfect housing model for young adults and transitional-age-youth who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless. The definition of a typical family has changed and our codes should reflect that. Only about 20% of the US population are traditional families, yet we have a lack of small-unit and shared housing stock.



These 5 ideas are presented in the hope that they will start a conversation and may provide an opportunity for future growth at the same time that we increase livability in the region.

Sincerely,

Angie Brooks, FAIA, Principal Brooks + Scarpa Architects

Current member of the West Hollywood RHNA Advisory Group

I have lived and worked in the Los Angeles region for 33 years, over two decades as Principal of an architectural/planning firm that has been working with non-profit developers of affordable housing over this time. Our firm has researched density, policy and design and has held exhibits, lectures and panel discussions on good density and what constitutes a livable city. We have published 'Ordinary and Extraordinary: Brooks + Scarpa' about the housing, schools and other spaces we have created to enrich the cultural fabric of our cities- as architects, we work across disciplines including landscape architecture, planning and environmental design.

Cc:

Los Angeles City Planning Commission: Samantha Millman, Caroline Choe, David Ambroz, Helen Leung, Karen E. Mack, Dana M. Perlman, Yvette Lopez-Ledesma, Ajay Relan

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Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department (HCIDLA)

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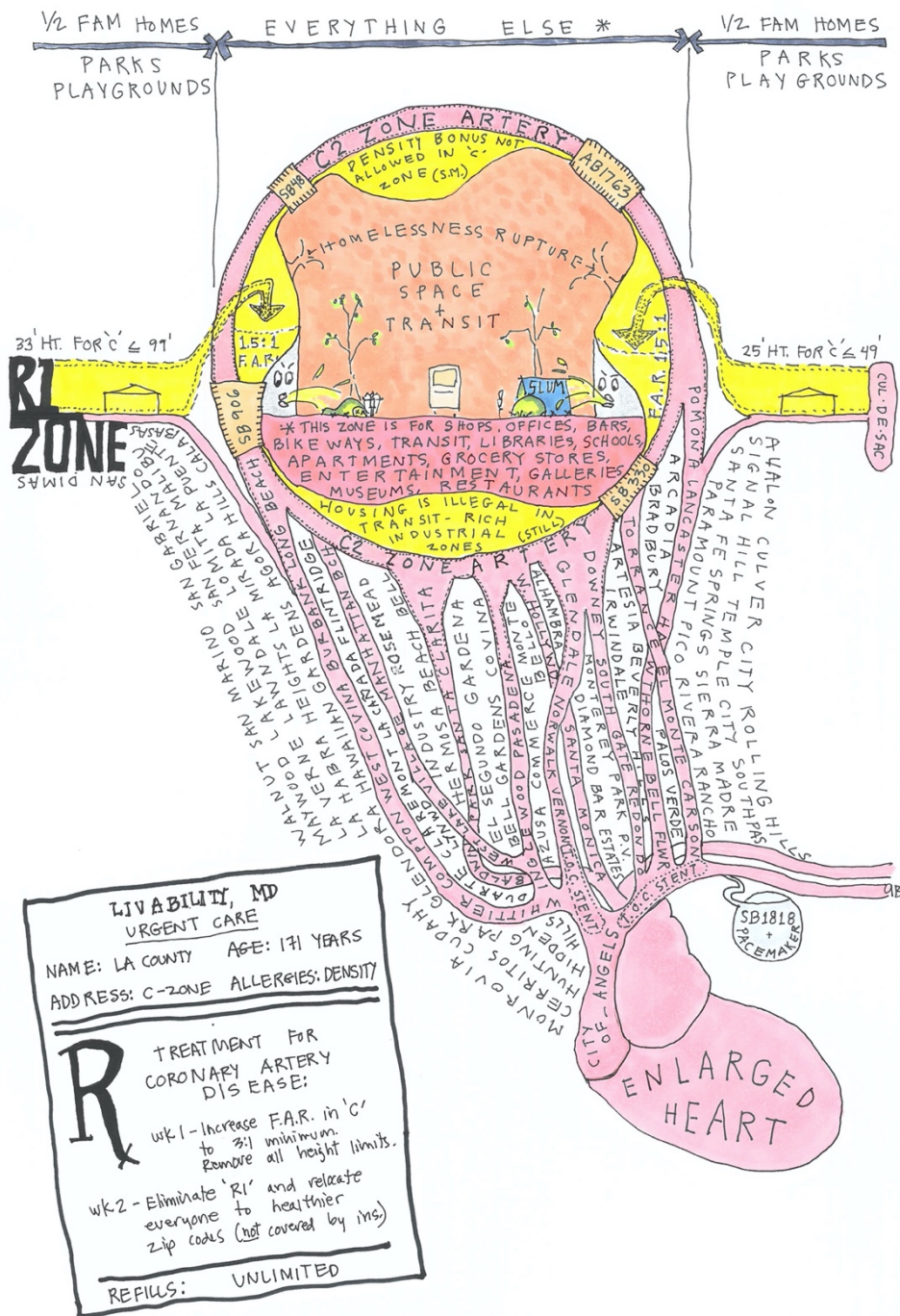
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Communication from Public

Name: Cameron Scott
Date Submitted: 05/25/2021 08:42 AM
Council File No: 00-9999
Comments for Public Posting: Please don't get rid of Weddington Golf Course in Studio City. It is historical, and loved by many <3

Communication from Public

Name: Suzanne Boretz

Date Submitted: 06/02/2021 12:54 PM

Council File No: 00-9999

Comments for Public Posting: As a renter in Los Angeles, I am invested in the actions that the Energy, Climate Change, Environmental Justice, and River Committee will be taking now that LADWP has completed its LA100 study. The IPCC stresses that we have less than 10 years to end our addiction to fossil fuels and cut emissions. I urge the committee to commit Los Angeles to 100% clean, renewable energy by 2030 to align with the science, and do so in a way that empowers its most vulnerable ratepayers. Renters form the backbone of our utility, but right now most of the benefits from LADWP's clean energy programs are going to LA's most affluent communities – the same communities which are using excessive power to begin with. LADWP needs to expand economic protections, accessible enrollment and savings programs for its most vulnerable ratepayers, while making its rate structure more equitable as a whole. Additionally, the move to clean energy should serve to empower communities, not force them out. Clean energy retrofits and incentives must be partnered with protections against gentrification and displacement. You have the power to direct LADWP to transition L.A. to a real clean energy future by 2030. Take a stand with us and commit to 100% renewable energy by 2030 to uplift our communities and workers and guide a new path forward as part of a just recovery.