

ORANGE LINE TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

JULY 2016

LOS ANGELES
TRANSIT
NEIGHBORHOOD
PLANS



Executive Summary

During the initial phase of the public planning process for the Orange Line Transit Neighborhood Plans (TNP), the Los Angeles Department of City Planning hosted four community workshops for residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to identify opportunities to enhance neighborhoods surrounding transit stations. This project aims to develop land use, zoning, and design regulations for the neighborhoods surrounding five Metro Orange Line stations in the south San Fernando Valley: North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Sepulveda, Reseda, and Sherman Way. The study area generally includes the corridors and some residential areas within a 15-minute walk or ½-mile radius of each station. Each community workshop focused on the neighborhoods surrounding a specific station or stations, though staff welcomed comments on neighborhoods surrounding all stations at all meetings.

- Van Nuys & Sepulveda Stations: Monday, July 11, 2016 from 6 – 8 p.m. at the Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center Community Room;
- Sherman Way Station: Wednesday, July 13, 2016 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. at the Canoga Park Branch Library;
- North Hollywood Station: Wednesday, July 20, 2016 from 6 – 8 p.m. at the North Hollywood Senior Center;
- Reseda Station: Saturday, July 23, 2016 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Columbia College Hollywood.

The TNP team promoted the event through a mailing of more than 6,300 flyers; an email interest list; offices and organizations such as Neighborhood Councils, the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment newsletter, Council District offices, and Business Improvement District groups; flyers posted at civic institutions, recreation centers, and libraries; social media such as the online platforms NextDoor, Facebook, and Twitter; and the project's website www.latnp.com. The TNP team gathered input from community residents, business owners, employees, Orange Line users, and other stakeholders about their thoughts, ideas, and concerns for the future of their neighborhood as it develops around transit. All comments inform the Department's analysis; however, the regulations developed through this planning process will generally address issues related to land use, development, and urban design. Comments from the public featured several recurring themes:

- There is a need for neighborhood-serving commercial, such as grocery stores, restaurants, and cafes.
- Outdoor space and green space are community amenities and should be encouraged in new development through parklets, plazas, green alleys, community gardens, and outdoor dining areas.
- Density is generally appropriate in close proximity to the station but should taper down farther from the station or corridors.
- It's important to have adequate parking for new development and at the transit stations.
- Homelessness and affordable housing are issues across the City and need to be addressed.
- The San Fernando Valley heat is a deterrent from walking and biking places; new development should provide trees and shade elements, such as awnings or arcades, to encourage street activity.
- Both real and perceived safety and security of pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists is of utmost importance at the stations, along corridors, and on the Orange Line bicycle path.
- Maintenance and upkeep is an issue in many of the commercial areas, including litter and graffiti, and deters people from walking, bicycling, and riding the Metro Orange Line.

Reseda Station

Land Use

Participants voiced a desire for neighborhood-serving uses such as cafes, restaurants or microbreweries, convenience stores, and grocery stores. Oxnard Street was identified as the area with the most opportunity for new investment and development, though opinions differed on the best use of the industrial land along the street, some of which is currently vacant.

- Most Orange Line passengers see this station as a transfer point, but not a destination; need more uses to “go to” or meet friends
- There should be more commercial and residential uses near the station since they have longer hours of operation than office uses, and would make the area feel safer – a good example is Westfield Village, which has 18-hour use and is walkable with ample seating and open space
- There should be brick-and-mortar restaurants; currently there are just a few food trucks
- Need to protect and incentivize small businesses and “mom-and-pop stores”
- The clothing shops in the “Alley in the Valley” are a good use and should be encouraged
- Civic uses could include a library
- The industrial land is “outdated” and there is no heavy industrial operating there anymore since the freight line is gone; the area could house creative and light industrial uses like recording and studio space
- The vacant industrial areas feel unsafe at night, and should be activated with shops or housing
- Should ensure that some of the existing light industrial jobs-producing uses aren’t displaced
- There’s potential for hybrid industrial with live/work lofts and flexible zoning
- There are already artist-in-residence spaces at the San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center – this could be fostered by additional arts uses and live/work spaces similar to uses in the Arts District downtown or the NoHo Arts District
- An increased mix of uses will allow better access to amenities, so you don’t have to drive to everything you need
- Flexible-use spaces, such as parking lots, should be encouraged to support community activities
 - Parking lots could be used for community movie screenings
 - A Farmers Market would be a good use of the Metro parking lot on the weekend; there have been a few attempts at a regular Farmers Market in this area, but the City should provide additional guidance on creating a successful and sustainable Farmers Market
- The vacant UNILAB property is an opportunity site, and could be redeveloped as mixed use with office, commercial, and residential
- The area is primarily residential, with few job centers
- The number of auto uses should be limited; the community doesn’t want regional-serving uses such as car dealerships, but a local auto repair shop is convenient
- New development could provide amenities such as: pocket parks, public restrooms, drinking fountains, public art, childcare, tot lots (playgrounds), community gardens, affordable housing, and green walls
- Sunset Triangle is a good example of a mix of shopping, walking, and biking that could be used as a model
- The area should have more immediate interventions to revitalize. in addition to long-term plans

Urban Design

Participants identified a need for a cohesive design style to unify and define the area. Comments also highlighted a desire for pedestrian orientation and walkability.

- The industrial buildings don't seem to have much intentional design
- New buildings need articulation; should have interesting design "but not too interesting"
- The buildings should be visible and accessible from the street and sidewalk
- The ground floors should have windows, and not just be blank walls
- Adaptive reuse of older buildings should be encouraged, similar to San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter
- Hanging district banners on utility poles could create a sense of identity
- There should be wayfinding signage to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to nearby attractions, such as "LA River and Reseda Park - 5 minute walk"
- Trees should be low maintenance and not block signage, and tree roots should not damage the sidewalk
- The LADWP facility at Oxnard Street and Wilbur Avenue should be a demonstration site for xeriscaping

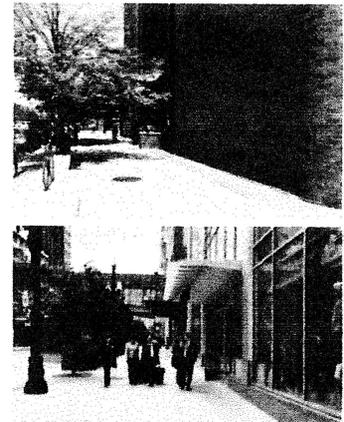


Figure 6 Pedestrian experience of transparent and non-transparent facade Source *Journal of Urban Design*

Mobility & Parking

Many speakers mentioned the need for improvements that will address pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Concerns were also raised over a lack of parking in the dense residential area south of the station. Comments included:

- The City should encourage shared parking between different uses at non-peak times; there is underutilized parking in the industrial area when employees aren't there which could be used for parking in the evening by restaurants, residential, etc.
- The area is not pedestrian friendly and it is difficult to cross Reseda Boulevard – the area needs more crosswalks and midblock crossings, and for development to generally be more pedestrian-friendly; there should be a pedestrian scramble crosswalk at the intersection of Reseda Boulevard and Oxnard Street
- The City should use rubber sidewalks; the material is good for pedestrians and allows growth of tree roots without buckling the pavement
- The Orange Line bike path is nice to use for walking and biking
- There should be a bicycle repair station with locked bicycle boxes and showers near the station
- The area needs protected bicycle lanes and amenities; it feels unsafe biking on Reseda Boulevard and Wilbur Avenue due to high traffic speeds and lack of protection from cars
- Bicycle corrals would be good; they're a more efficient use of space since you can fit 10 bicycles where one car would fit, and leave more room on the sidewalk for pedestrians
- The traffic lights don't seem to be synchronized; this will become a bigger issue if there is growth



Figure 7 "Pedestrian scramble" crosswalk near transit station Source *City of Santa Monica*

ORANGE LINE TRANSIT NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP & INITIAL CONCEPTS: SUMMARY OF COMMENTS
NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2017



Executive Summary

The Orange Line Transit Neighborhood Plans (TNP) project aims to develop land use, zoning, and design regulations for the neighborhoods surrounding five Metro Orange Line stations in the south San Fernando Valley: North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Sepulveda, Reseda, and Sherman Way. The study area generally includes the corridors and some residential areas within a 15-minute walk or ½-mile radius of each station.

During the first phase of the public planning process, in the first half of 2016, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning hosted four community workshops to identify opportunities to enhance neighborhoods surrounding transit stations, as well as several other small focus groups with specific stakeholder groups. Staff gathered input from the general public, including community residents, business owners, employees, transit users, and other participants about their thoughts, ideas, and concerns for the future of their neighborhood as it develops around transit, summarized here: <http://www.latnp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Orange-Line-TNP-Summary-of-Comments-2.pdf>.

Using the comments received through the first phase of outreach, in combination with station area context, existing City plans and policies, demographic analysis, and planning best practices, staff developed initial land use and zoning concepts for targeted changes in development rights and design regulations. These initial concepts were presented at two community workshops, on November 2, 2017 from 6-8:30 p.m. at the San Fernando Valley Arts & Cultural Center in Tarzana, and on November 15, 2017 from 6-8:30 p.m. at Van Nuys City Hall. Following these meetings, materials were made available online and staff solicited additional comments through the end of December.

The community workshops were promoted through a mailing of more than 10,000 flyers; an email blast to an interest list of nearly 400; organizations such as Neighborhood Councils, Council District offices, and Business Improvement District groups; flyers posted at civic institutions, recreation centers, and libraries; social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and Nextdoor (in coordination with the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment); and the project's website www.latnp.org. All comments inform the Department's analysis; however, the regulations developed through this planning process will generally address issues related to land use, development, and urban design.

Comments on all station areas featured several recurring themes:

- Many participants stated that pedestrian enhancements are needed to encourage people to walk and use transit rather than drive or own cars; pleasant waiting areas and more amenities at the stations that address everyday needs (markets, shopping, snack kiosks) would encourage transit use.
 - Several comments cited a need for enhanced connectivity between the Orange Line and destinations such as CSUN, Warner Center, and Porter Ranch, and the addition of more localized transit options such as shuttle buses that serve restaurants, shops, and theaters in order for transit to become their preferred option for daily trips.
 - Comments generally pointed to a need for improved first/last mile connections.
- Many commenters expressed a desire to have additional housing and a greater variety of housing options.
 - A number of comments were received from a coalition that is calling for an overall increase of 100,000 to 120,000 housing units within the plan area, with density bonuses that match regulations created by voter-approved Measure JJJ at a minimum. They also stated that all property within a ½-mile radius of the station a minimum density of at least 1 unit per 1,200 square feet of lot area.
 - Participants commented that they would like to see more opportunities for smaller and more affordable for-sale homes for first-time homebuyers, such as townhomes.
 - Some participants favored rezoning single-family neighborhoods to create opportunities for multifamily development as a way to increase housing units while minimizing resident displacement.
- Several participants mentioned a need for affordable housing and senior housing.

- Some commenters said that to achieve additional “Bonus” development rights, projects should be required to provide a higher percentage of affordable housing; one commenter stated that at least 50 percent of units in these projects should be affordable to low- or moderate-income households.
- A few commenters stated that until the Orange Line is converted to a higher capacity rail line, there should not be an increase in residential density or conversion of any single-family homes to other uses or higher densities, and that only increases in commercial density are appropriate.
- A few commenters raised concerns regarding the sufficiency of public services, such as police, to serve current residents in addition to any new residents.
- Most participants supported the idea of design regulations that would make new development more pedestrian-friendly and walkable; some commenters felt that regulations should not be overly rigid, and should allow for a variety of architectural styles and building types.
 - One commenter mentioned that taller buildings should be encouraged to provide shade from the sunlight and reduce the effects of the San Fernando Valley heat on pedestrians.
- Some participants suggested that there should be development incentives for smaller parcels to encourage “fine grained urbanism,” as opposed to large-scale developments that assemble multiple parcels.
- Comments regarding the best use of industrial land varied. Some commenters felt that it is important to preserve industrial land for jobs and not allow any residential development, others felt that these areas should be able to have at least 50 percent residential, allow live/work units, or be rezoned for residential development.
- Opinions on parking requirements also varied. Many commenters stated that there should be “sufficient” parking for commuters and businesses, but supported parking reductions as an incentive for reuse of historical buildings or small businesses. Others commented that there should be no parking requirements for new development near transit stations, and that market forces should decide how much parking to provide. Still others stated that there currently is not enough parking, and that future development should provide more than current requirements.
- Several commenters cited a need for open space in these neighborhoods. A few participants commented that the station areas need functional open space, including edible, productive landscaping, such as fruit trees and other species that provide food for people experiencing homelessness as well as the surrounding community.



Figure 1 Corporate edible garden for employees in La Jolla.
Source: GardenEnvy

Reseda Station

Land Use

Many participants commented that they are supportive of allowing ground-floor retail along Reseda Boulevard, and facilitating better connections from the transit station to destinations to the north and south. Several commenters said that they would like to see new mixed-use development at the intersections of Reseda/Oxnard and Reseda/Victory. Many participants also supported restrictions on tenant sizes in new development along Reseda Boulevard to encourage small businesses. One commenter added that regulations should require, rather than allow, neighborhood-serving ground-floor commercial on Reseda Boulevard. Some commenters felt that restaurants and retail are not as viable on Oxnard Street.

Several commenters also expressed support for rezoning the institutional uses that are currently designated for the Residential Agriculture zone (including the Los Angeles Jewish Home, Discovery School, and Montessori School). One participant noted that these institutions are important to the community, are large employers, and are not going to leave. Another commenter recommended rezoning the land owned by the Discovery School north of Calvert Street to a more appropriate zone for institutional uses.

Many commenters expressed support for having a focus on the arts in the station area, and encouraging live/work artist spaces or lofts in the “Mixed Artcraft” area. Some noted that arts uses, such as Columbia College Hollywood and the San

Fernando Valley Arts and Cultural Center, are existing community anchors, and would support further fostering these uses. However, concerns were raised about the potential for displacement of existing businesses in the industrial area near Oxnard Street and Yolanda Avenue. Concern was raised by one commenter about the potential for marijuana uses to locate in the industrial area.

Other comments included:

- Create a destination within the neighborhood for people to hang out same as the pedestrian-friendly environment along Brand Avenue in Glendale.
- Fill the empty buildings first, before building anything new.
- Reseda should have mixed-use development and changes should be focused there; such change could create a place like Ventura Boulevard with entertainment uses and activities.
- Support uses that might work for younger residents in the Reseda Station area: fitness center, Starbucks, and brand name restaurants such as Chipotle.
- Retain the existing zoning except for corridors and commercial areas.
- Focus changes in the industrial near Oxnard Street and Yolanda Avenue, and allow residential here.
- The former Unilab site has been vacant for several years – it needs a shot in the arm.
- In the existing industrial areas, support restricting residential uses north of the Orange Line, but allowing limited Live/Work units to be developed south of the Orange Line.
- Don't want to see new housing developed next to the transmission power lines that run parallel to Wilbur Avenue due to potential health risks.
- Add "Residential Amenity" area to all blocks adjacent to community commercial.
- There are currently a lot of offices and accountants. Should encourage social service agencies and disabled group homes to locate near medical facilities.
- Don't change the neighborhood near Erwin Street/Etiwanda Avenue; don't change anything on Hesperia Avenue, in a single-family neighborhood to the east of the station area.
- Keep the area southwest of the Oxnard Street/Lindley Avenue intersection RD2-1 (low density multifamily residential), as those condominiums provide a transition between the higher-intensity station area to the single-family (R1) neighborhood to the east.
- Because of the Downtown Los Angeles Arts District and the NoHo Arts District, the arts district concept might not work in Reseda Station area.
- Multiple lots north of the Oxnard Street are currently designated "Residential Agriculture" (RA), but have been already subdivided and built out; it's fine to rezone those lots to match the existing uses.
- Don't like the idea of having bars near the station.
- Paladino's bar, north of the Orange Line, is good to have at this station; alcohol uses such as breweries and bars near the transit stations is okay.
- Support upzoning single-family residential areas.
- Retaining some areas for local agriculture is good.

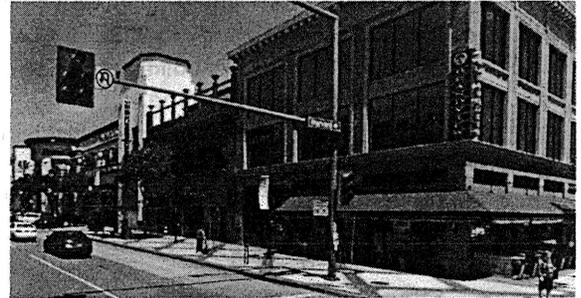


Figure 6 Brand Blvd. in Glendale. Source: Google Streetview

Housing

Commenters were supportive of more housing and more housing types, including housing affordable to a range of incomes. Specific comments included:

- Recognizing the need to accommodate increased population at all lower income levels, encourage multifamily properties seeking density bonuses to include a mixture of very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing units by granting them the same density bonuses as would be allowed for inclusion of the equivalent number of very low-income units only.
- It is important to have a variety of housing options – this community needs everything from studio apartments rentals, to 3-bedroom condos, single-level dwellings, and townhouses.

- Where there is no density limit, regulations should call for a mix of unit sizes to ensure options for various household types.
- Want to have more housing options – townhomes, low-scale multifamily, etc. might work along secondary corridors. Support having townhomes on Bessemer Street and Wilbur Avenue, identified as Subarea J.

Urban Design & Open Space

Several commenters expressed support for introducing pedestrian-friendly design regulations. Several commenters expressed approval for 8- to 9-story buildings on Reseda Boulevard and Oxnard Street, with ground-floor commercial and either office or residential above. Other commenters felt that an allowable building height of 75' is too great, and some commented that buildings should be limited to 36' in height. Other comments included:

- Need to require more sustainable building materials, solar panels, and on-site water recycling.
- Need more small parks and pocket parks in the area.
- Explore the possibility of designating the space under the power lines along Crebs Avenue for parks.
- Require tree canopy and use of drought-resistant plants. Require that new construction and major remodeling along Ventura and Reseda Boulevards plant drought tolerant trees along their street frontage and encourage the use of drought resistant plants in all zones.
- Want public art at the station, similar to other Metro stations such as North Hollywood, and other placemaking improvements.
- Support design standards. Would like to see this become a place like Green Street in Pasadena – it's nice.
- Design standards should allow for security fencing.
- Concerned with height and massing – want more façade treatments and articulation (scared of what is happening in North Hollywood).
- Upgrade the commercial, retail, and office spaces along Reseda Boulevard to require increased setback and wider sidewalks to increase pedestrian friendliness for all new construction or major remodels.
- Encourage mixed-use development along Reseda Boulevard, and require a 16' floor height for the first story commercial or retail space.
- Support the concept to encourage mixed-use development along the Reseda corridor; the proposed changes would be consistent with 6-story developments planned farther north on Reseda Boulevard.
- Should have 6-story buildings on Reseda Boulevard, 4 stories in front (step back at 4 stories).
- Concerned that TNP boundaries and intensity can trigger another TOC south of the Freeway on Ventura Boulevard.
- Increased FAR is too great (should be less than 1).
- Support 5+ stories.
- Increase FARs within the Reseda commercial mixed-use zone to a "Base" of 3 and "Bonus" of 6, and allow building heights of 12 stories.
- Rezone everything between Victory Boulevard, Ventura Freeway, and Lindley and Wilbur Avenues to a mixture of residential amenity, multifamily, and low density multifamily.



Figure 7 Green Street in Pasadena. Source: LACityPix

Mobility

Several comments focused on the need to better connect the Reseda Station to amenities such as the zoo, Los Angeles River, and CSUN; facilitate more north-south connections along streets such as Mason Avenue; and have a local shuttle, circulator bus, or DASH Line. Other comments included:

- Need to include restrooms at the Reseda Station, and more amenities along the entire Orange Line for people to use bike paths – it is currently unfriendly to passengers and riders.
- There was a desire for enhancements that would make it easier to bike and walk.
- There are large blocks in the multifamily area south of the station, identified as Subarea E in the initial concepts, which make it difficult to get anywhere. Need to break up the large city blocks to create more connectivity.
- There are no sidewalks in the single-family residential neighborhood northeast of the station; there are also parking issues in this neighborhood.
- The area around Reseda Station is not like Warner Center – they are working class people who need their personal vehicles for work and won't be taking transit.
- This planning effort has a twenty year outlook so it is important to adequately plan for transit now.