



Mayor Eric Garcetti

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The new "Neighborhood Conservation Unit" will work to protect neighborhood character in residential districts such as the 52nd Place Tifal Brothers Tract HPOZ.

Protecting Los Angeles' Neighborhood Character – A Comprehensive Strategy

by Ken Bernstein – Principal City Planner

Los Angeles' General Plan Framework, the City's guiding vision, aims to focus the City's future growth and development around transit stations, while protecting stable single-family and lower-density neighborhoods. Preserving the character of lower-scale neighborhoods has become ever more challenging recently with the resurgence of the local economy accelerating the trend toward demolitions and "mansionsization" – the construction of new homes that may be out-of-scale within their neighborhoods.

To address these issues, the Department has requested and received budgetary approval for four new positions to create a "Neighborhood Conservation Unit" – two positions to reduce a significant

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DEVELOPMENT SERVICE CENTERS:

Metro Public Counter
201 N. Figueroa St., 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 482-7077

Valley Public Counter
6262 Van Nuys Blvd., 2nd Floor
Van Nuys, CA 91401
(818) 374-5050



Los Angeles
Department
of City Planning





A Message From the Director

Dear Stakeholder,

This issue of *pLanning* focuses on the Department of City Planning's on-going and new neighborhood conservation efforts that range from the establishment and maintenance of Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs), and a new Interim Control Ordinance to temporarily address mansionization issues, to the Office of Historic Resources and Getty Conservation Institute's launch of HistoricPlacesLA. The Department is committed to protecting neighborhood character and will be developing tools to guide appropriate change in a soon to be staffed "Neighborhood Conservation Unit".

This issue also highlights *Planning Day*, an annual training event where Department staff visit specific neighborhoods – this year it was Venice, Playa Vista, LAX, San Pedro, and Wilmington – and learn about the local economy, the built environment, as well as recent development projects and planning activities. We want to thank the team of volunteer Department staff, as well as the generous donations of time and accommodation by host venues, organizations, and Council Districts 11 and 15. They were all instrumental in making the event such a success.

Lastly, this issue highlights the fruitful career of Alan Bell, our esteemed Deputy Director, who retired from City service in January. Alan will be missed in the Department, and we wish him the best in his retirement.

Sincerely,

Michael J. LoGrande
Director of Planning

HistoricPlacesLA: A Coming of Age for Los Angeles' Preservation Movement

by Janet Hansen – Senior City Planner

On February 24th, the City of Los Angeles and Getty Conservation Institute launched HistoricPlacesLA.org, the first online information and management system specifically created to inventory, map, and describe significant historic resources in Los Angeles. The system enables robust searches of the rich information on the City's historic resources.

This new system will make fully searchable the findings of SurveyLA, Los Angeles' first-ever citywide survey of historic resources. SurveyLA represents the most ambitious historic resources survey in the United States and is a multi-year public/private partnership between the City and the Getty, including both the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and the Getty Foundation. Users will be able to search for historic resources by theme, architect, geographic area, address, key words, and much more.

Although data entry into HistoricPlacesLA is still in progress, the goal is to include all of the City's Historic-Cultural Monuments, Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs), and properties listed in the National and California Registers.



HistoricPlacesLA includes information about designated Historic-Cultural Monuments such as the Watts Towers. (Photo by Stephen Schaffer)

HistoricPlacesLA is an invaluable and unparalleled source of information on historic resources for City staff, preservation professionals, developers, visitors, students, Los Angeles history and architecture enthusiasts, and other stakeholders. It showcases the diversity of historic resources in Los Angeles and features places of architectural, social, and cultural significance. The system includes all building types, as well as historic districts, landscapes, signs, streetlights, and bridges.

HistoricPlacesLA is powered by Arches, a new open-source, web- and geospatially-based information platform built to inventory, and ultimately to protect, cultural heritage places internationally. Arches was developed by the GCI and the World Monuments Fund. Importantly, HistoricPlacesLA is the first customization of Arches by the GCI, giving the City of Los Angeles the most advanced cultural resources inventory management system in the nation and putting Los Angeles at the forefront of historic preservation. Because the system was developed following state and federal preservation standards and terminology, it is also applicable to municipalities and agencies nationally.

HistoricPlacesLA is a living system that will grow over time as more survey work is completed, resources are added, and properties are designated. It is a critical tool for protecting and preserving the character of Los Angeles as the City continues to grow and change. ♣



The Griffith Observatory is another iconic historic resource that the website showcases. (Photo by Stephen Schaffer)





DCP Staff Explores the Coastal Communities

by Martiza Przekop & Erin Strelch – City Planning Associates

This past October the Department of City Planning, led by a team of volunteer Department staff, hosted a field day training event for fellow Planning Department staff entitled Planning Day. Over 170 members of the Department participated in this immersive, full-day event that every year focuses on exploring distinct regions within the City of Los Angeles and expanding knowledge of planning practices.

The event highlighted the coastal communities of Council Districts 11 and 15, with four uniquely themed tours that highlighted four major topics: economic development, tourism, historic preservation, and sensitive coastal areas. Beginning with a kick-off event hosted by USC, which featured a keynote presentation by USC Vice-President Lloyd Silberstein on the USC Master Plan, Department staff split into groups to travel to Venice, Playa Vista, LAX, San Pedro, and Wilmington, where they met elected officials, and local community and business leaders, and were offered walking tours and presentations at each location. The tours included:

1 Venice Surf & Turf

Presented planning topics including historic preservation, community identity, architecture, and the latest creative office trends, capped off by a guided tour inside Google Los Angeles.

2 Playa Vista/LAX/Ballona Creek

Participants toured the Hercules Campus – a group of several emerging media and technology companies housed within historical buildings – took a naturalist-led walk through the Ballona Wetlands, and visited Los Angeles International Airport for a presentation on the facility's expansion efforts.

3 San Pedro S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math)

Focused along the redeveloping LA Waterfront, this tour explored the planning challenges and potential of waterfront and port adjacent community revitalization alongside one of the busiest cargo ports in the nation. Stops included the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium; Crafted, a unique artist marketplace; and the Warner Grand Theatre.

4 San Pedro's Military Past, Present and Future

This included a comprehensive tour of current and former military bases and assets throughout the coastal San Pedro community, including historic underground bunkers, barracks and even a battleship. This tour gave participants an in depth look at the history of our coastal defense system from WWI through the Cold War to today, and how such sites have been and are continuing to be transformed into a variety of community serving uses. Issues explored included conflicts between historic preservation and adaptive reuse, federal regulations and neighborhood interests. ♣



Exploring residential life along the Venice canals.



Naturalist-led walk through the Ballona Wetlands.



Staff met with the creators of Crafted, an artist marketplace, in San Pedro.



On board the U.S.S. Iowa Battleship.

Alan Bell

Deputy Director



This past January, the Department bid adieu to our Deputy Director, Alan Bell, who retired after 35 years with the City of Los Angeles. Alan leaves behind a tremendous legacy in transforming planning for Los Angeles. For several years in the 1990s, he was one of the key staff members driving the preparation and adoption of the City's General Plan Framework, our strategy for managing the City's long-range growth in population, housing, and jobs.

Alan spent a decade in our Department working in Code Studies, preparing amendments to the City's zoning code. One of his most far-reaching code efforts was his work spearheading the creation of the City's Adaptive Reuse Ordinance (ARO), to facilitate the conversion of under-utilized historic commercial buildings to housing. Since its adoption in 1999, the ARO has resulted in more than 70 adaptive reuse projects in downtown alone, creating more than 9,000 housing units and housing tens of thousands of new downtown residents. More than any other measure, it has been the new residential base that has sparked downtown's renaissance and the boom in entertainment, restaurants, and other amenities that we're seeing today. In his years at Code Studies, Alan became the City's foremost expert in the intricacies of the zoning code, and also learned how to fix the code to achieve positive planning results – time and time again.

We want to thank Alan for his dedication, tireless work, and tremendous achievements for the City of Los Angeles. He has always been forward-looking and creative in his approach to planning and policy-making, and his leadership will be truly missed. We wish for him wonderful new adventures as he moves on to his next life chapter. ♣



Protecting Los Angeles' Neighborhood Character

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backlog in creating new Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs), or historic districts, and two additional positions to create new controls to address mansionization issues across the City. Although final authorization for these positions was delayed for several months due to the City's civil service process, the Department is now able to proceed with hiring these new planners.

As the Department prepared to launch this new unit, it created a four-pronged strategy to address neighborhood character issues across the City. First, Planning staff drafted two Interim Control Ordinances (ICOs) – one ordinance prohibiting demolitions and substantial alterations of homes in five proposed HPOZs, and a second ordinance limiting the scale of new construction in 15 additional neighborhoods. These ICOs were adopted by the City Council on March 25th and are meant to “hit the pause button” on demolitions and mansionization activity in areas experiencing significant change, providing time to craft permanent development regulations in these neighborhoods. The ICOs can be in effect for up to two years.



The Interim Control Ordinance (ICO) will address the issue of oversized development prevalent in residential areas of the City.

Oxford Square. Finally, the Department will create permanent, contextual zoning tools to address neighborhood character in the other ICO neighborhoods through re:code LA, the comprehensive re-write of Los Angeles' 1946 zoning code.

Neighborhood conservation remains a significant priority for the Department in other ways, particularly through the work of the Office of Historic Resources (OHR), whose HPOZ Unit now oversees 30 historic districts across the City, encompassing over 18,000 properties. SurveyLA, the OHR's Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey Project that is now more than 75% complete, has identified numerous neighborhoods that are eligible for historic district status, and has also identified other “non-historic” neighborhoods that feature unique characteristics worthy of protection through targeted plans or zoning controls. To stimulate a citywide discussion on neighborhood preservation, the OHR hosted a citywide Los Angeles Historic Neighborhoods Conference last fall, in partnership with the Los Angeles Conservancy, attracting over 200 attendees.

The Department of City Planning will continue partnering with communities throughout the City, preserving neighborhood character in order to fulfill a key component of the Department's mission statement – to “realize a vision of Los Angeles as a collection of healthy and sustainable neighborhoods, each with a distinct sense of place.”

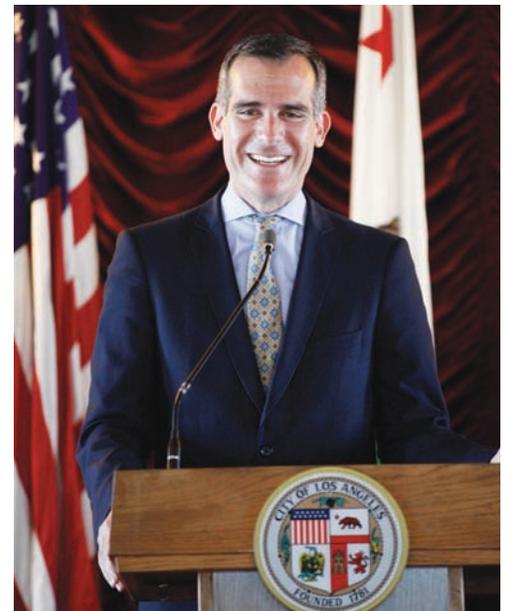
Second, the Department will prepare amendments to the Baseline Mansionization Ordinance (BMO), originally enacted in 2008, to close loopholes that have led to the construction of larger homes.

Third, Planning staff will move forward to adopt five new HPOZs over the next two years, in significant and cohesive historic neighborhoods: Carthay Square, Sunset Square, Holmby-Westwood, El Sereno, and



our MISSION

To create and implement plans, policies and programs that realize a vision of Los Angeles as a collection of healthy and sustainable neighborhoods, each with a distinct sense of place, based on a foundation of mobility, economic vitality and improved quality of life for all residents.



Mayor Garcetti introduced HistoricPlacesLA at a launch event hosted by the Getty Conservation Institute and the City at the Tom Bradley Room of City Hall. The Mayor was joined by Tim Whalen, Director, Getty Conservation Institute, Ken Bernstein, Manager, Office of Historic Resources and Linda Dishman, Director, Los Angeles Conservancy. (Photo by Ryan Miller/Capture Imaging)

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