

# Westside Vision 2020

## I. OVERALL STATEMENT

The Westside Community Council's Vision of the Westside is that we maintain our authentic, vital, wholesome, eclectic community as we continue to evolve. We value new development and changes that are contextually appropriate and supportive of the existing community in our historic Westside. We strive to care for all creatures in their way, responsibly, respectfully and completely. To honor our ancestors and all we hold true.

## II. MOBILITY/CIRCULATION

a. **North-South Route Alternative:** We need another North-South route **from Kellogg Street north to Solano Heights and/or the Dakota tract just north of Solano Heights**. The best solution(s) will require **studying options for traffic relief, evacuation and hill slide safety, recreation, and nature preservation**. Then we can pick the best option(s) among **Cedar, Cameron or Olive streets** from a neighborhood, circulation and hillside safety perspective. The hope is that this would alleviate traffic along Ventura Avenue and create safe mobility for all.

Cedar Street has been shown in city documents as a new street connecting all the segments from downtown to Mohawk. However, there are significant concerns about hill slide risks and the ability of the narrow streets below Cedar to accommodate new traffic.

In the event that the Cedar Street Extension remains in the plan, it should include bike/pedestrian walkways/landscaping with fruit trees, picnic tables, and other amenities where feasible to provide shade, rest areas, visual interest, and recreation opportunities.

If Cedar Street were extended, the City would be obligated to stabilize the hill – thus **mitigating the slide problem that has been identified along Vince, Lewis, Carr, and El Medio streets**.

b. **East-West Routes:** Current city plans show **Park Row, Simpson, Vince, Stanley, Shoshone, and Dakota** as key **east-west connectors from the river to the hills**. This needs further study to address concerns of **safety and impacts on historical districts**. Also, connectors should have **aligned intersections and traffic calming** where appropriate. Also, ideally these will include **bridges to Ventura River Parkway and bike/walking paths**.

Well maintained, pedestrian-friendly, unobstructed sidewalks are needed to have **wheelchair and stroller accessibility** throughout the Avenue and Westside. **Trees, benches, sufficient setbacks and ease of access** for pedestrians are needed. Complete Streets with these features provide pedestrian safety and accessibility. The goal is to include **bike/pedestrian walkways/landscaping with fruit trees, picnic tables, and other amenities where feasible for shade, rest areas, visual interest, recreation opportunities, activating public spaces.**

c. **Cameron Street for Vehicle and/or Non-vehicle Access:** There is support for the **bicycle/pedestrian connection along Cameron Street** that is identified in city plans. The long-term goal is to open Cameron to through vehicle traffic to relieve traffic overload and high accident rates on Ventura Avenue while ensuring the safety of both vehicle and non-vehicle traffic.

d. **Highway 33/Stanley Avenue:** Improvements are needed to address **congestion and safety** and the left merge on the Highway 33 on- and off-ramps at Stanley Avenue. One option would be to **eliminate the southbound Highway 33 exit at Stanley**. Also, changes should include **access to the Ventura River**.

e. **Evacuation:** A **comprehensive evacuation plan** is needed to **address various disaster scenarios**. Street improvements should be designed to **accommodate temporary one-way traffic or other quick adjustments** should mass evacuation be needed.

f. **Alleys:** Any new alleys should address **safety, business, and residential needs**.

g. **Bike Path:** **More access points** to the bike path west of Ventura Avenue would improve both vehicular traffic and recreational opportunities. The **bike path** should be **widened and have trees and greenery added**.

h. **Direct Connectivity from Neighborhood to Beach:** **Bike lanes, sharrows** (lanes shared with bikes), and **signage along Olive Street to the bike path at Highway 33 and Dubbers** would **provide ease to and celebrate our beach access**.

i. **Ventura Avenue Bike Lanes and Parking:** Study the feasibility of adding **bike lanes along Ventura Avenue**, providing **alternative parking arrangements and a possible Westside parking structure**. A study also could explore Ventura Avenue and Olive Street as one-way streets, however, increased traffic, neighborhood character, and safe traffic crossing impacts need studying.

j. **Traffic Slowing on Wide Residential Street Thoroughfares:** Explore ways to **slow traffic on wide thoroughfares through residential areas**, including **Cedar/Poli streets, Park Row, Ramona, Dakota, Seneca, Shoshone, Cameron**, and possibly others. Solutions could be bike lanes, sharrows, speed humps or other options. The Neighborhood Traffic Management Program that was in effect until budget cuts stopped it in 2008 could be worth revisiting.

k. **Public Transit:** Public transit improvements need to better serve residents and workers. Examples would include **bus pullouts, bus shelters, bus loop routes** on the Westside, and a **transfer point from the north-south Gold Coast route to a VISTA intercity route**. A **Vista Stop at Olive and Stanley** where the school district lot is **or along Ventura Avenue with a place to park cars** would limit commuter traffic could help. A **shuttle or trolley service** would include a **Westside loop route**.

l. **Lighting:** Improve safety with **increased street and pedestrian crossing lights**. Full cutoff exterior light fixtures that stay within the property line need to be required where facing the street or neighboring properties, to **improve visibility and safety while minimizing light pollution and glare**. A light study needs to determine the appropriate temperature of the street lights. Guidelines for building lights also should be considered to be compatible with neighbors.

m. **Tram:** A tram is desired to link the Westside from Stanley Avenue and/or Kellogg Park to City Hall and the County Government Center.

### III. **PARKING**

a. Require onsite parking in **sufficient capacity for occupant needs, traffic flow and safety and to keep sidewalks clear of vehicles and other obstructions**. Parking variance requests must be accompanied by data to demonstrate that parking will be adequate for the proposed and likely uses of the property. Incentivization of alternative modes of transportation may be used to support variances provided they accurately accommodate parking realities. If there are parking variances, our hope is that it is for housing that serves all low-income brackets and that contributions to public transit are required.

### IV. **DENSITY AND VIEWSHEDS**

a. **Compatibility:** The goal of the following requirements is to provide clear guidance for **development that is compatible with the existing neighborhood context and will provide adequate access to sunlight, air, and views**.

To preserve the unique character and encourage the existing mix of residential and commercial uses within a walkable setting, height limits should be established along the Ventura Avenue Corridor, similar to how they have been in Specific Plan documents for Midtown, Downtown, Victoria, and Saticoy/Wells. The below suggested height limits are based on the height of the existing Casa de Anza building so construction stays in scale with the neighborhood.

In general, densities and heights along Ventura Avenue should be no higher than the Casa De Anza (Avenue Library) building -- total height.

For lots fronting our major streets, exterior walls within the first 20 feet from the street property line should be no taller than 30 feet along Ventura Avenue and 24 feet along Olive Street. These should be measured from the midpoint of the sidewalk to the lowest of any of the following: midpoint of the parapet (top visual portion of the wall), midpoint of top of roof, or midpoint of eave where the roof slope is maximum 1 vertical unit size to 2 units horizontal.

Additional height may be allowed for a taller story that is stepped back from the street façade of the building at a ratio of at least 2 feet horizontal for every 1 foot vertical.

For development adjacent to residential properties, exterior walls at zero to 5 feet from the shared property line should be no taller than 10 feet. Exterior walls from 5 to 10 feet from the shared property line should be no taller than 20 feet. This would be measured from the midpoint of natural grade at the property line to the lowest of any of the following: midpoint of the parapet, midpoint of top of roof, or midpoint of eave where the roof slope is 1:2 or less.

Additional height may be allowed for a taller story that is stepped back from the property line at a ratio of at least 2 feet horizontal for every 1 foot vertical.

b. **Density and Height:** Density and **three stories would be generally contained** to transportation corridors – Ventura Avenue and Olive Street – and must be done in a way that **does not dwarf what exists**.

c. **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and tiny homes are preferred alternatives to mass development** in growing our housing stock and **should be incentivized**. These provide a better feel, more **consistent with Westside neighborhood history and improve evacuation safety**. Incentives could include reduced fees and a streamlined permitting process.

d. **State Residential Requirements:** The **5300 units** required by the state for Ventura to meet its new housing plan guidelines need to be **distributed equitably throughout the city** with the **capacity of the infrastructure to be considered**. Also, the **city should advocate that the state revisit the numbers and associate Ventura County's composition with like counties to the north** and not lump Ventura County and its residential buildout requirements with the Southern California Association of Governments and Los Angeles County.

e. **Further Break Down of High Density Category:** Since we are the highest density neighborhood in the city, we would like to see the **neighborhood high density designation of 21 to 54 units per acre broken down into 2 or 3 subcategories** so all housing added is in a range of densities rather than only the most dense.

**See Attachment - Addendums Pages 1 and 2 – city density map and description**

## **V. HOUSING AND BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION ACCESSIBILITIES**

a. **Housing and Businesses that Meet Needs of Disabled Individuals:** If adding **units for persons with disabilities**, they must include the **range of sizes** in the building. Many wheelchair users need a second **bedroom for a live-in caregiver, excess medical equipment, and children**. **Blind and hearing impaired** should be included in accessible unit **options** although one unit can be built with all three sets of features. Building only a small one-bedroom is not appropriate. **Housing and businesses** must **comply** with the **Americans with Disabilities Act** for example with **doorways and other access points for wheelchair accessibility**.

## **VI. BUSINESS AND COMMERCE**

a. **The Mix:** We are the oldest area of the city and designed for **industry, retail and the arts**. We need to **preserve** all as part of **our identity** and **be open for innovation**. The city should encourage and **incentivize high tech, green, climate protecting and other job creating business that is healthy for our community**. **Incent capital investments in existing businesses, properties and buildings**. Ensure the Westside is a **thriving mix of housing and business; not a bedroom community**.

b. **Westside Business Association:** There is support for a Westside business association, similar to the Downtown Ventura Partners, and there should be a policy statement to strengthen ongoing **advocacy** for improving Ventura Avenue area businesses, just as Downtown Ventura has an advocacy organization. Seed money and grant opportunities need to be identified to make it happen. Strategies should be included to create **strong business, residential, and community ties and reflect community input**.

c. **Training Facilities:** We would like a **training facility/a vocational school** on the Westside.

d. **Stanley Avenue Area and Northward**

i. **Stanley Avenue Gateway:** In the future, **Stanley Avenue at Ventura Avenue should be a "town center"** for the Westside's North Avenue area, providing it is economically feasible and the owners agree. This would include a **neighborhood market as an anchor**, and we would like the **city's Economic Development Department could help attract**. The Stanley gateway would include **neighborhood retail with pedestrian friendly smart streets**.

ii. **Commercial/Industrial:** The area **north of Stanley Avenue and west of Ventura Avenue** should be zoned to **support existing commerce/industrial and not changed to a mixed use/urban general neighborhood** so to **prevent it from becoming a bedroom community**.

iii. **Behavioral Hospital:** **Vista Del Mar Hospital** meets a **crucial mental health need**. Any expansion necessitates a **second access road that is separate from the current residential neighborhood access, both for emergency and non-emergency access**.

## VII. SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

a. **City/Westside Input:** Any **development/uses proposed** at the city's **northern Sphere of Influence** in the **Canada Larga/Casitas Vista area** need **notifying of and input from the city and the Westside area**, which would be impacted.

## VIII. HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

a. **Mission Aqueduct:** Policies must **preserve the Mission Aqueduct along the bottom of the hillside east of Ventura Avenue**. **Further study** is needed identifying exactly where is the aqueduct and what exactly are the remains.

b. **Historic Survey:** We support the recommended **Conservation areas, and/or possibly others for further study (see city's Historic Survey)**. (These are the **El Medio, Vince-Lewis and Barry areas** that currently aren't identified as historic districts and are examples of a period architecture worth preserving.)

## IX. PARKS & RECREATION

a. **Parks, Recreation, Open Space Sites:** The following sites are of interest for parks, recreation, and open space: **Selby area open space** along the Eastern Hillside and Valley of Ventura Avenue as appropriate; **Joint use sites for all school properties**

for both park and school use such as **EP Foster, Sheridan Way, DeAnza, Foster property Avenue School (between Stanley Avenue and Shell Road), and Ventura Unified School District headquarters. Any development in the area should be required to contribute substantial public park open space** in addition to allowing green and open spaces on private property. **Connectivity** should occur **between open space, paths, bikeways, parks, etc., from Botanical Gardens to Ventura Bike Path and Ventura River Parkway.** Though the Gardens and River are beyond the identified plan area, stating the desired connectivity is necessary to create a well-connected network of trails, bikeways, parks, and open space for all populations.

b. **Westside Pool:** The plan should address the **commitment for a Westside community pool** whether at Harry Lyons/De Anza or elsewhere and should **leverage the money the city and school district committed in the 1990s.**

c. **Bridge to Ventura River:** We need a bridge and **better access to Ventura River.**

d. **Skate Park: Expand the Skate Park at Westpark.**

e. **Dog Park:** We need to have an **off-leash dog park similar to Arroyo Verde Park** on the Westside, possibly around Grant Park or elsewhere.

f. **Gun Range Status:** Explore the feasibility of maintaining the gun range near Grant Park versus moving it because of potential safety issues related to increased public use at the Botanical Gardens and potential disturbance for residents. Survey the community to determine advantages versus disadvantages and risks of leaving or relocating and adapting its hours.

g. **Creative Recreation:** We welcome suggestions that are creative and maximize the Westside's recreational potential for example a zip line down the hill.

## **X. PROTECTION OF EXISTING RESIDENCES & BUSINESSES**

a. **Existing residences and businesses should be protected** as a matter of policy and/or stated intent. The WCC supports a **diverse and inclusive population** with policies and intentions to **leave in place and support as much as possible existing residents and businesses.**

b. **Healthy Businesses Near Schools: Healthy businesses and NOT Cannabis, smoke shop and liquor stores** are appropriate **near residences and schools.**

## **XI. TECHNOLOGICAL ACCESS**

a. **Charging Stations:** Microgrids that provides the community with a **place to plug in and charge their electronics and available to the community and accessible in emergencies** are necessary. Possibly a resource trailer, and/or solar panels with battery backup, generators, and/or charging stations at **Kellogg Park, Avenue Adult Center, De Anza Academy of Technology and Arts, School District Headquarters** and/or the **Housing Authority** or **Westpark** community centers.

## **XII. WESTSIDE PLAN/DEVELOPMENT CODE LANGUAGE AND POLICY**

a. **Accessibility and Partnership with the People:** The **general plan and city planning documents need to be clear, simple and formatted in a way laypeople can easily understand**. The review process needs to include a **public forum and incorporate community council and general community input into projects**, and that includes **input from the public and a Design Review Committee or similar body** of local subject matter expert volunteer professionals from throughout the city. The **development standards need to minimize subjectivity** in the process. The **city's own requirements also need to be followed**, and **warrants and exceptions should only be allowed when the developer can demonstrate a benefit to the community at large**. The **general plan and zoning ordinance need to be consistent with one another**. **Ample advance notice of changes also need to clearly be identified in projects that are being revised**. **Radius of notification should be proportional to size of the projects**; the bigger the project, the broader the notification area, and the earlier in the process the notification. We request the following: Update city development map to include more specifics on projects. Include a link to project documents. The online project map is a great addition and needs more detail. **Expand notification area**. 300' is too small. **The city needs to improve effectiveness of communication to the public**.

## **XIII. HEAL ZONE**

a. **Healthy Lifestyle:** We want to be in alignment with the West Ventura HEAL (Healthy Eating/Active Living) Zone goals of the early 2000s, providing walking, biking, swimming, and other active living along with healthy eating options.

## **XIV. MISCELLANEOUS**

- a. **Public restrooms** are needed.
- b. **More trees and greenery** should be added to our streets.
- c. We should **maximize** use of **grey water and rain water**.

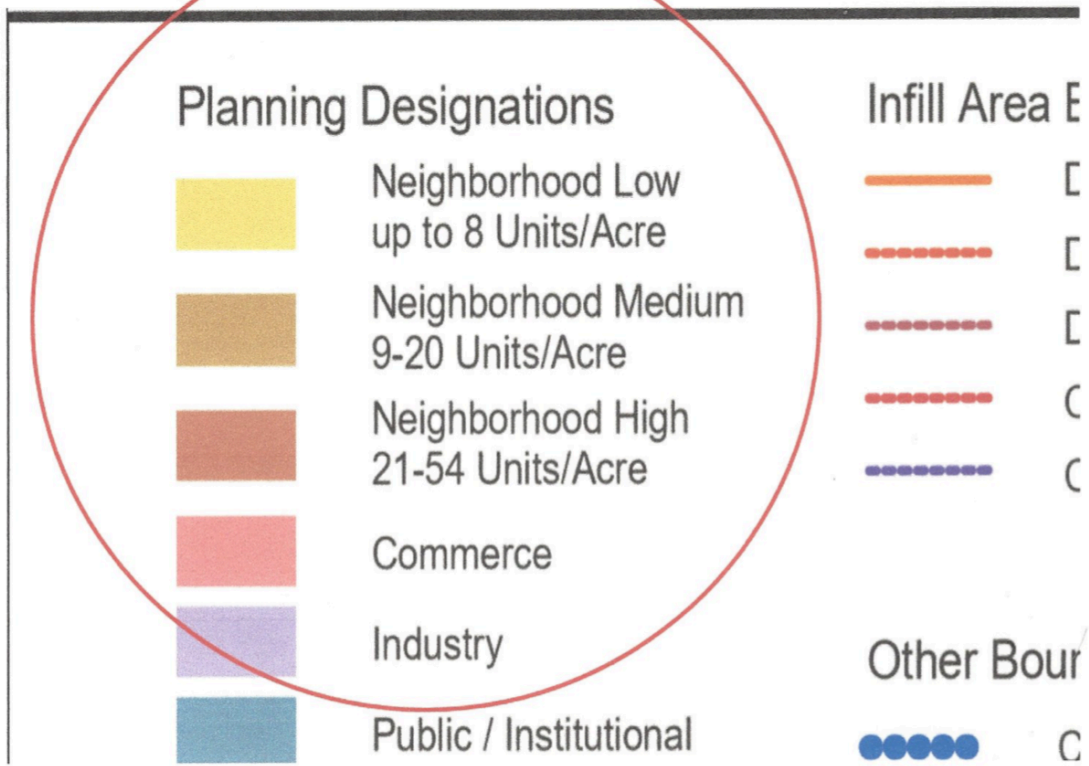


- d. We need **better drainage on Ventura Avenue** when it rains so that there is not the standing water issue that remains for days after it rains.
- e. Incorporate **alternate and environmentally sound building materials** and practices that fit within building codes and safety requirements for the area.
- f. Fire and mold prevention and other **safety measures, environmental preservation** and **natural disaster prevention and response** need to be in place.
- g. **Preserve** our **water** supply.
- h. Any **new construction** must be **within the means of our resources**.
- i. **Housing affordability and stock** is needed **for all** levels of **incomes**.
- j. **Homelessness and Vagrancy:** A more permanent solution is needed to address the homelessness/vagrancy issues along **North Ventura Avenue area** within and at the edge of the city, including the Recreational Vehicles parked just north of the City. We need a coordinated city-county response for safety and well-being within both boundaries.
- k. **Incentives are needed for efficiency upgrades** within **existing housing/apartment tracts maintained by homeowner associations or property management companies**. Upgrades include ADA-compliant accessibility, water conservation devices, etc. (These larger housing tracts are some of the highest users of water, and many have not participated in water conservation programs.)

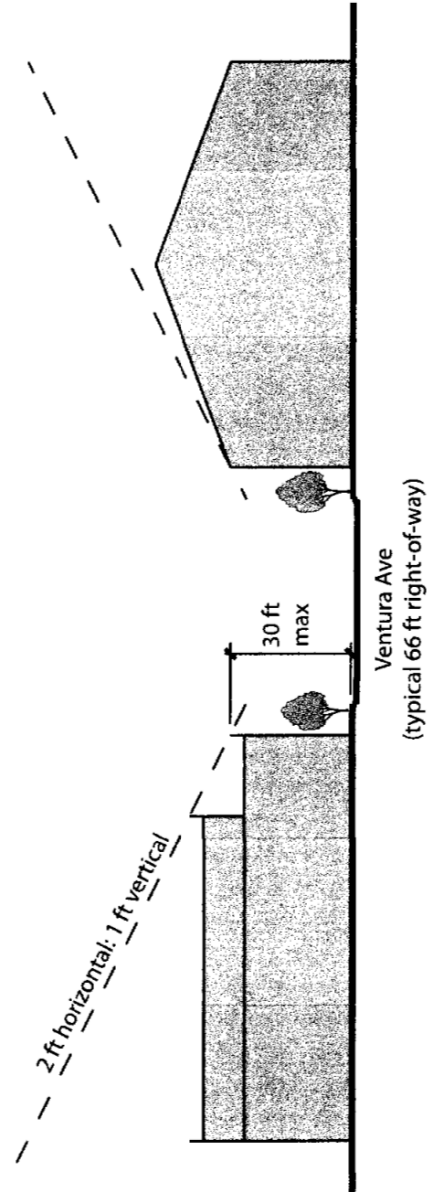
## **XV. SUMMARY**

The Westside is an active, vibrant, healthy, eclectic neighborhood with vast natural resources including our surrounding river, ocean, and hills.





WCC Westside Vision Appendix Page 1 - Ventura Avenue Diagram



Honorable Mayor Rubalcava and City Council  
Planning Commissioners  
Design Review Committee  
Historic Preservation Committee  
City Manager for Distribution to City Department Heads  
Community Development Director  
Public Works Director  
City of Ventura  
501 Poli Street  
Ventura, CA 93001

Cc: Matt Rami, Rami+Associates

Dec. 28, 2020

Dear Honorable Mayor, City Council and City Officials:

On behalf of our Board of Directors and Revitalization Committee Participants, we are excited to submit to you the Westside Community Council's 2020 Westside Vision.

This has been three years in the works and is an update to our 2014 Westside Vision, which also was developed over three years time and submitted to the city and used

as a guide to reflect our Westside values in city planning. This represents input from more than 100 Westsiders and community partners over the years. It is a living document.

Next steps will include rolling out the Spanish language version, publicizing both, and using this document as a reference as we join the city in the General Plan update.

The purpose of our Vision's aligns with that of the General Plan: to provide a successful general plan that leads to a city and a Westside that grows with an active and engaged community, clarity about requirements and values, strategies for equity, health, adaptation and resilience of all our community.

Thank you for your consideration and our always valued community partnership.

Also, special thanks to all the city team who has helped advise us through this process with special thanks to Mayor Sofia Rubalcava, City Community Development Director Peter Gilli, Assistant Community Development Director Neda Zayer, and Matt Rami+Associates for providing their subject matter expertise over these months.

We look forward to working together to create the best possible Ventura future for all.

Very Respectfully and Gratefully,

James Forsythe, Chair  
Westside Community Council

*Pursuant to United States Internal Revenue Service guidelines, this letter confirms you received no goods or services in exchange for this donation. Please retain this letter for your records.*

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