

**Westwood South of Santa Monica Blvd
Homeowner's Association**
Incorporated November 8, 1971
P. O. Box 64213
Los Angeles, CA 90064-0213

January 14, 2014

Santa Monica City Council
c/o Santa Monica City Clerk
1685 Main Street, Room 102
Post Office Box 2200
Santa Monica, CA 90407 / Via Email: clerk@smgov.net

To include in official record: council@smgov.net, jing.yeo@smgov.net

**RE: Development Agreement 10-002/EIR 10-002, Bergamot Transit Village Center
Development Agreement: 1681 26th Street**

Dear Honorable Councilmembers:

The boundaries of our Westwood South of Santa Monica Blvd. Homeowners Association, Santa Monica and Pico Blvds. on the north and south, Beverly Glen and Sepulveda Blvds. on the east and west, place our community directly en route to the 405 and 10 freeways from Westwood Village, Century City and UCLA. We find that our major east-west arterials, Santa Monica, Olympic and Pico Blvds. not only carry significant traffic from the major activity and employment centers in our area, but they also carry significant peak hour traffic coming and going to and from Santa Monica and the employment opportunities found in your city. In many respects, we have become the door mat for developments surrounding our community. And, quite frankly, we are a door mat that is wearing quite thin with the quality of life in our community negatively impacted by the traffic that travels through our area. As you well know, when traffic on major arterials clogs, drivers often divert through local residential streets. We find our major arterials crawling at peak hours and our local streets carrying more and more commuter cut-through traffic. We find our own mobility greatly diminished; no longer do any of us willingly head west in the afternoon knowing that our efforts to return home will be greatly delayed by eastbound traffic. Friends in Santa Monica don't come our way for dinner; we carry our pot luck offerings west to save our friends the aggravation of afternoon Olympic, Santa Monica and Pico Blvd. congestion. And, while east-west travel is dreadful, the dearth of north-south through street options makes travel in those directions equally frustrating.

With the coming of the EXPO line, we see a blossoming of proposed land use projects seeking designations as "transit oriented developments." Our concerns over the once proposed Bundy Village project in Los Angeles resulted in a halt to that project not long ago. That supposed "transit oriented project," like many others, was a "transit ADJACENT project" not entitled to take advantage of opportunities afforded to true transit oriented projects. (One must note, however, that a concentration of "transit oriented projects" will bring with them cumulative impacts that must be considered and evaluated. In "As You Like It" Shakespeare asks: "Can one desire too much of a good thing?". (Act IV, Scene I). While there will, no doubt, be excellent opportunities to encourage transit use for properties within walking distance of the transit line, the mere existence of this train should not open up a gold rush to development for developers who seek to increase density on the Westside without regard for the state of the infrastructure and respect for the quality of life of those who already live and work here. We have not yet had experience with evaluating the impact that the EXPO Line will have on the use of the automobile. Will the train allow for significant new

transit ridership or will we see primarily a shift of riders from other forms of public transit? How much new development can the Olympic corridor absorb given the fact that its major intersections in West Los Angeles are already operating at gridlock levels? How realistic is it for the cities of Los Angeles and Santa Monica to proceed with plans to develop “their” portions of the Olympic Corridor without a multi-jurisdictional plan to ensure the continued (and improved) functioning of the major arterials in the area? And, finally, what exactly should a “transit oriented development” consist of in this part of the county where infrastructure is stretched to the max and crumbling?

We know too well from our experience that we can expect significant traffic impacts from new office development. The EIR submitted for Alternative 3 of the Hines project now under consideration would add an additional 374,423 square feet of office space to the area which is projected to significantly impact traffic at 13 intersections in Los Angeles and an additional 14 intersections in Santa Monica. There is great potential to block not only access to the 10 freeway, but also access to the new EXPO Line stations. Many of our area residents rely upon Santa Monica/UCLA and St. John’s Hospitals and their physicians for medical care. It is harder and harder to access those facilities from West Los Angeles as key intersections experience significant delay. As those freeway on and off ramps in the area become more congested, commuters will wander to less congested alternatives spreading the negative impacts of this project far and wide. Already, the 10 freeway off ramps to Santa Monica destinations are backed up for noticeable distances onto the freeway and not only delay those seeking to exit the freeway, but also slow those who wish to drive past the Santa Monica exits. Both the I-10 and 405 operate above capacity many hours of the day.

Given the state of the infrastructure/roadways, what then is the most appropriate use of land to be developed in this area? It is troubling to note that traffic projections included in the Hines project EIR appear to significantly under count the projected traffic to be generated by a project of this size. How can a project for over 374,000 square feet of office space be projected to add only 250 to 275 additional peak hour trips? This appears to be a serious undercount made possible by an unproven hypothesis presented by the developer. The truth of a major traffic study cannot be based upon an unproven theory that “creative office space” will generate fewer trips than traditional office space. Furthermore, the claim that creative office space tenants do not work traditional work hours is not one likely to solve the congestion problems in West Los Angeles. Perhaps at a time when rush hour was defined as a one to two hour peak travel period such an observation might prove relevant. However, the reality of the situation on the Westside is that the afternoon peak hour traffic period spans an almost FIVE hour time frame – from 3 pm to nearly 8 pm. Workers who leave early or stay later find that the streets are still clogged when they depart. It is more likely that a project of this size will generate more in the range of at least 3,000 additional commuter trips during peak travel hours. Numbers of this magnitude will have ripple effects throughout the West Los Angeles arterial network from Sunset Blvd. on the north pushing as far south as possible (keeping in mind that there is a dearth of through north-south streets available to connect the east-west arterials). Not only will commute times be affected, but the response times for public safety (fire and police) will also be negatively impacted and will place lives at heightened risk.

We have challenged claims made by JMB in Century related to the numbers of staff people that they, as landlord can expect per each 1,000 square feet of office space. Our research has shown that organizations are budgeting smaller office space per employee. While historical figures allowed for 200 to 300 square feet per person, those working in creative spaces often house two to three times the numbers of people. Even in more traditional offices such as CB Real Estate in Downtown Los Angeles, there have been significant efforts to reduce the amount of space provided for each employee as recently reported in the press. In an October 30, 2013 Los Angeles Times article, CBRE’s new office plans were described: “Real estate brokerage CBRE’s staff in downtown L.A. now has no assigned desks or offices, with employees roaming freely. It views it as an example for other white collar firms.” “The

firm's goal was to reduce rent costs by using its office space more efficiently and to create a template for other CBRE offices around the world.” (See: <http://www.latimes.com/business/realestate/la-fi-property-report-20131031,0,424426.story#ixzz2qNY11lc2>) The net result is that CBRE expects to save approximately 30% of their occupancy expenses by eliminating large private offices and moving to shared work areas. It is reasonable to expect that the trend reported here will be adopted by at least some (if not most) of the tenants that would occupy the Hines project. What factual data has been gathered from nearby office space occupied by “creative” organizations? What analysis can be done based upon the experiences of nearby employers in similar types of office settings?

Santa Monica’s shortfall of housing stock is well documented and there is tremendous need to increase housing so that those working in the city will not have to travel long distances to get to work (thus adding to the traffic woes of the region and their personal stress levels while decreasing time spent for family and other important activities). A project alternative that significantly reduces or removes the commercial office space (that will generate significantly more traffic than is identified in the EIR) would be one much more compatible with the surrounding communities and one whose impact is significantly less onerous. We ask that the Santa Monica City Council reject alternative 3 as presented and work to identify a project that will not add to our already existing traffic nightmare.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Barbara Broide
President

cc: Ron Gould, David Martin, City of Santa Monica
Councilmember Paul Koretz, LA City CD 5 (paul.koretz@lacity.org)
Shawn Bayliss, Planning Deputy, LA City CD 5 (shawn.bayliss@lacity.org)
Councilmember Mike Bonin, LA City CD 11 (mike.bonin@lacity.org)
Tricia Keane, Planning Deputy, LA City CD 11 (tricia.keane@lacity.org)



BRENTWOOD Community Council

149 S. Barrington Ave., Box 194, Los Angeles, CA 90049

January 10, 2013

www.brentwoodcommunitycouncil.org

Santa Monica City Council
c/o City Clerk
1685 Main Street, Room 102
PO Box 2200 Santa Monica, CA 90407

Sent via Email: clerk@smgov.net

Make part of Official Record: council@smgov.net, jing.yeo@smgov.net

RE: Development Agreement 10-002, Environmental Impact Report 10-002, Bergamot Transit Village Center Development Agreement, 1681 26th Street

Brentwood Community Council Opposition to Alternative 3 of the Hines Papermate project

Dear Honorable Council Members:

The Brentwood Community Council ("BCC") is the broadest based Brentwood community organization. The BCC has 25 seats, including homeowner groups, multi-family dwellings, members-at-large, and organizations including public and private schools, religious, public safety, volunteer, environmental, and business districts. The BCC represents over 50,000 residents from Mulholland (north), Wilshire (south), 405 freeway (east), and 26th St. (west).

The Brentwood community is gridlocked by traffic passing through our area to reach outlying destinations, mostly to avoid the clogged main traffic arteries in an attempt to save time. The large amount of commercial office space on the eastern edge of Santa Monica contributes very significantly to our traffic problems, and we are extremely concerned about the proposal to build more commercial office space in this area.

No doubt you are aware that Santa Monica residents and commuters are subject to the same gridlock getting in and out of the area. The cities of Los Angeles and Santa Monica simply lack the infrastructure to add thousands of additional peak hour commuters to this gridlocked area.

The EIR for Alternative 3, which we understand is the project under consideration, states that adding an additional 374,423 sf of office space in this area to this intersection will significantly and unavoidably impact traffic at 13 intersections in Los Angeles and an additional 14 intersections in Santa Monica.

This includes Brentwood intersections such as Barrington/Wilshire and Barrington/Montana. In addition, access routes to the I-10 freeway and points south of Brentwood are blocked by

significant and unavoidable impacts at intersections such as Bundy/Olympic, Bundy/Pico, and Barrington/Santa Monica.

These significant impacts on their own would be reason to object to this proposed project. But the impacts listed in the EIR very significantly understate the actual traffic impacts:

- The impacts to major streets like Sunset Blvd. and San Vicente were not even studied in the developer's traffic analysis- Gridlock on the I-10 and I-405 causes many commuters from Santa Monica to cut through Brentwood on Sunset and San Vicente Boulevards to access the I-405 to get to the I-405 and points east. No intersections on Sunset or San Vicente were even studied, and hence the actual number of impacted intersections is under-reported. We've seen in the traffic studies of other large scale development projects in the Olympic Corridor such as this one that traffic impacts extend all the way up to Sunset.
- The traffic analysis inexplicably reports only 250 to 275 additional peak hour trips from 374,423 sf of commercial office space. This is absurd, and likely understates the actual increase in the number of peak hour trips by a factor of 10. As is described below, the actual number is more likely to be at least 3,000 additional commutes during peak hours, which would significantly impact many more intersections in Santa Monica and Los Angeles than those listed in the EIR.

The developer claims that "creative office space" generates fewer trips than traditional space. This is a completely unproven and unjustifiable assertion made by the developer that is not backed up by any substantive research or by looking at the current "creative" tenants in the immediate area. The developer claims that creative people do not work normal business hours. While this may be true for production people working on remote locations on film shoots, it is simply not the case for the majority of staff for the types of big companies working in traditional office space in the surrounding buildings in Santa Monica.

Existing creative companies in similar buildings surrounding the proposed project include major corporations like Yahoo!, MTV (Viacom), HBO (Time Warner), Hulu (Fox/Disney), Fandango (Comcast), and Lionsgate. The vast majority of staffers in companies such as these work and commute within traditional peak hours on Monday through Friday.

In addition, "creative" office space puts more people in cubicles than traditional offices. The density of workers in creative space is 8 to 10 people per 1,000 sf, or 100 to 120 sf per person, vs. historical office space averages of 200 to 300 sf per person. In other words, "creative space" can easily house 2 to 3 times the number of people of traditional office space, translating into more vehicle trips. We urge Santa Monica ~~should~~ to independently confirm these numbers with existing building owners in the area, and not just take the word of Hines.

independently confirm these numbers with existing building owners in the area; and not just take the word of Hines.

The net result is that 374,423 sf of space can easily bring in more than 3,000 additional commuters during peak hours, not the paltry 250 to 275 that the developer asserts. This is the case even if assumptions are made that some workers take the Expo Line, that some of the square footage is used for hallways and elevator banks not desks, and some people don't work traditional hours.

We respectfully request the City of Santa Monica not approve any project that adds so significantly to the already unbearable conditions that the residents and workers of Santa Monica, Brentwood, and others on the Westside already experience. Our objections to the project as currently proposed, are due to the large amount of commercial office space included, and we ask that the Santa Monica City Council reject this project as currently proposed.

Sincerely,



Lauren Cole, Transportation Chair
Brentwood Community Council

Cc:

Ron Gould (Rod.gould@smgov.net)

David Martin (David.Martin@smgov.net)

Councilmember Mike Bonin, CD11 Los Angeles (mike.bonin@lacity.org)

Tricia Kean, CD11, Los Angeles (Tricia.keane@lacity.org)

Nancy Freedman, Chair, Brentwood Community Council (gjf165@gmail.com)



January 23, 2014

Santa Monica City Council
c/o City Clerk
1685 Main Street, Room 102
PO Box 2200 Santa Monica, CA 90407

Sent via Email: clerk@smgov.net, jing.yeo@smgov.net

Make part of Official Record: council@smgov.net, jing.yeo@smgov.net
RE: Development Agreement 10-002, Environmental Impact Report 10-002, Bergamot Transit Village Center Development Agreement, 1681 26th Street

Brentwood Homeowners Association Opposition to Alternative 3 of the Hines Papermate project.

Dear Honorable Council Members:

The Brentwood Homeowners Association ("BHA") encompasses a territory of approximately 3,500 single-family homes west of the 405 and north of San Vicente Boulevard. The proposed Bergamot Transit Village Center Development would impose significant adverse environmental impacts on our community.

Brentwood is currently gridlocked by traffic passing through our area to reach outlying destinations, primarily to avoid the clogged main traffic arteries between Santa Monica and the 405 Freeway. The dearth of adequate housing and the existing number of commercial office developments on the eastern edge of Santa Monica already contribute significantly to our traffic problems, and we are extremely concerned about the proposal to build **even more** commercial office space in this area. Neither Los Angeles nor Santa Monica now possess the infrastructure to add the 7000 additional car trips disclosed in the Environmental Impact Report.

Alternative 3 of the EIR, which we understand is the project under consideration, also states that adding an additional 374,423 square feet of office space in this area will significantly and unavoidably impact traffic at 13 intersections in Los Angeles and an additional 14 intersections in Santa Monica, including Brentwood intersections that are already functioning at LOS D and F. Traffic is already gridlocked in these areas, and emergency vehicles have increasing difficulty in navigating through the area during peak hours. In addition, the EIR identifies significant and unavoidable impacts at intersections such as Bundy/Olympic, Bundy/Pico, and Barrington/Santa Monica, which blocks our access to the 10 Freeway and points south of Brentwood.

The project is far too big for this site and would have too many negative impacts. With three times as much square footage devoted to commercial space versus residential, it increases car trips **threefold**.

BHA joins with other local homeowners groups and community advocates in protesting the approval of this project as currently designed. This project must be scaled down and re-constituted with more space allocated to residential and less to commercial space. Please reject this project as currently proposed.

Sincerely,

Raymond Klein, Secretary

Brentwood Homeowners Association

Cc:

Ron Gould (Rod.gould@smgov.net)

David Martin (David.Martin@smgov.net)

Councilmember Mike Bonin, CD11 Los Angeles (mike.bonin@lacity.org)

Tricia Kean, CD11, Los Angeles (Tricia.keane@lacity.org)