March 12, 2012

To: Jing Yeo, Santa Monica Planning and Community Development

Subject: Bergamot Transit Village Center [Papermate site] Draft EIR Comment

The Board of the Wilshire/Montana Neighborhood Coalition takes a position only on projects and other things which directly impact our neighborhood and our residents. The proposed Bergamot Transit Village Center (BTV) will impact not only Wilmont, but neighborhoods throughout Santa Monica. In the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), Table 4.16-2 shows intersections which will experience impacts from this project. According to that table, intersections from Venice & Walgrove to Montana & Barrington will experience "significant and unavoidable" effects. This means that all of Santa Monica will be cut off from West LA at certain times.

A fundamental inaccuracy at the heart of the DEIR leads to gross understatement of these and all other impacts.

The project includes 224,272 square feet of residential space in 325 units, 494,927 square feet of creative office space, 46,895 square feet of restaurant/retail space, and 1800 parking spaces.

In volume I, on page 4.13-11 and elsewhere, the DEIR states that calculations assume "one job per 286 sf [square feet] of office use" yielding "1,731 creative office employees." The number of employees, or workers on site, is used to estimate parking needs and infrastructure impacts of the project. It is used to calculate trip generation and transit needs.

Nowhere is the value of 286 square feet validated. It appears to be an obsolete value.

It ignores the trend toward smaller and smaller work spaces. It drastically overstates the space allocated for office workers, and, consequently, understates the number of workers. It may have been accurate for space defined by offices with walls, ceilings, and doors. "Creative" office space is characterized by open plans combining cubicles and open work areas. There are very few, if any, walled offices. An open work area may place several workers at a single table the size of a traditional stand-alone desk.

A December, 2010, Los Angeles Times article, at http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/15/business/la-fi-office-space-20101215, titled *Office walls are closing in on corporate workers* states that, at that time, "the average is down to 200 square feet," describes the average cubicle as 49 square feet, and states that "companies are looking for more ways to compress their real estate footprint."

If these are "average" values, older, more spacious, offices are being balanced by newer, tighter, work spaces.

CoreNet Global (http://www.corenetglobal.org/), a worldwide association for corporate real estate and workplace professionals, just published a survey on current and projected office space needs per worker. It is available on their website at

> http://www.corenetglobal.org/files/home/info_center/global_press_releases/pdf/pr120227_officespace.pdf

The survey is also available on the Wall Street Journal's MarketWatch site at

> http://www.marketwatch.com/story/office-space-per-worker-will-drop-to-100-square-feet-or-below-for-many-companies-within-five-years-according-to-new-research-from-corenet-global-2012-02-28

It describes shrinking office space allocation in North America, following a European trend. It projects space requirements five years into the future, to 2017. For 40% of companies, the average allocation will fall below 100 square feet per worker. The survey includes the statement that:

> The average for all companies for square feet per worker in 2017 will be 151 square feet, compared to 176 square feet today, and 225 square feet in 2010.

We need to be certain that the number of workers used to model project impacts is accurate over the lifetime of the project.

The 2017 CoreNet Global estimate of 151 square feet yields 3278 workers rather than 1730 workers, at 286 square feet per worker, used in the DEIR. There are no easily-available estimates beyond that time. Note that an ***average*** value of 151 square feet includes existing pre-2017 projects with greater amounts of space. Therefore, newer projects, such as BTV, should use a space allocation no greater than 100 square feet per worker, yielding 4950 workers. It may be more accurate for a new project to predict space allocation of 80, or even 75, square feet per worker. Those allocations yield 6187 and 6600 workers respectively.

Obviously, 1800 parking spaces will not accommodate 5000 workers under any foreseeable traffic mitigation program.

Based on current office space values, there is no reason to believe that the figure of 286 square feet per worker, or a population of only 1731 workers, used in the DEIR is valid. Therefore, calculations based on the number of creative office workers cannot be considered valid.

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Office walls are closing in on corporate workers

Businesses used to provide 500 to 700 square feet of work space per employee, but the average is down to 200 square feet — and shrinking. The recession and an emphasis on teamwork accelerated the trend, and younger staffers prefer less.

December 15, 2010 | By Roger Vincent, Los Angeles Times

The walls are closing in on white-collar workers — their office environments are shrinking, propelled by new technology, a changing corporate culture and the age-old imperative to save a buck.

Although personal workstations won't disappear, the sprawling warrens of cubicles and private offices that have defined the workplace for the last few decades are heading the way of Rolodexes and typewriters. The shift is of tectonic proportions, experts on the workplace say.

In the 1970s, American corporations typically thought they needed 500 to 700 square feet per employee to build an effective office. Today's average is a little more than 200 square feet per person, and the space allocation could hit a mere 50 square feet by 2015, said Peter Miscovich, who studies workplace trends as a managing director at brokerage Jones Lang LaSalle.

"We're at a very interesting inflection point in real estate history," Miscovich said. "The next 10 years will be very different than the last 30."

Companies have been gradually dialing back on office size and grandness for years, but the recession accelerated the trend as sobered owners let go of their old floor plans and tried new ways to speed productivity, attract talent and cut costs.

There are other factors at play in the push to make work spaces smaller and more communal. Many companies are emphasizing teamwork, and younger employees accustomed to working anywhere but at a desk are turning up their noses at the hierarchical formality of traditional offices. In addition, familiar technologies such as laptop computers, cellphones and videoconferencing are finally beginning to affect the way offices are laid out.

"These tech advances and different ways of working are occurring in parallel with the recession — and then there is the generational shift," Miscovich said. "It's all sort of happening at once."

Office tenants who renew their leases these days often cut their space total 10% to 30%, according to Jones Lang LaSalle. The term "restacking" has emerged to describe the common process of making offices more efficient by changing the floor layout, reducing paper file storage space and introducing smaller, uniform workstations.

A case in point is Southern California Gas Co., which is remaking its headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. The utility arrived in 1991 as the prestigious anchor tenant of the new 50-story Gas Co. Tower, setting up offices that were among the best corporate America had to offer.

"When we moved in almost 20 years ago, the office was really on the cutting edge of space design," said Pamela Fair, the utility's vice president in charge of support services.

That old space plan put most workers in three-sided cubicles with walls too high to see over. Each is like a mini office with room for a personal computer and large monitor. There are ample file drawers and additional storage cabinets nearby. Managers' offices with spectacular views line the outer walls.

Now, having renewed its lease in its namesake tower, the Gas Co. is cutting its space from 15 floors down to 12 in what may be the largest office makeover underway in Southern California. (The office also has about 12% fewer employees than in 1991.) Among the changes will be fewer private offices and more compact standardized workstations for those who spend their days in the office.

Workers such as account executives who spend the bulk of their time in the field will use small "touch down stations" placed invitingly in front of big windows when they do visit the office. Cubicles will be laid out in a manner meant to encourage collaboration, and there will be more "teaming" rooms, like small conference rooms, where small groups can work together.

Informal meeting spaces and comfortable common areas where workers can plug in laptops are becoming standard fixtures for many businesses, said Larry Rivard, area sales director for office furniture manufacturer Steelcase Inc.

"A lot of people want to get away from the cubicle," he said.

Part of the reason is economics. Although cubicles have shrunk from an average of 64 feet to 49 feet in recent years, Rivard said, companies are looking for more ways to compress their real estate footprint. They also want to encourage worker collaboration and present themselves as forward-thinking businesses capable of attracting the best young talent.

Age makes a difference, workplace experts say. Baby boomers longed for a corner office and expected to separate their work lives from their home lives.

"Younger workers' lives are all integrated, not segregated," Rivard said. "They have learned to work anywhere — at a kitchen table or wherever." Many don't feel a need to spend time in company quarters.

Rob Jernigan, an architect and baby boomer, calls them "the backpack kids" because they grew up in an age when they could carry everything they needed at school or elsewhere in their backpacks. "Laptops can do what a computer the size of a house used to do," he said.

Jernigan's firm, Gensler, is designing offices that squeeze together workstations while setting aside a few rooms where employees can conduct meetings or have private phone conversations. Ideally, such designs create workplaces that are more efficient and pleasant while utilizing fewer square feet per employee.

Not that increased togetherness is always welcome, of course. People who talk too loud on the telephone can disrupt dozens of co-workers, some of whom might long for more personal space and privacy.

"We have a lot of people who spend full time here, and many of them like to have a place go to," the Gas Co.'s Fair said. "We need to recognize that."

The company gave employees a chance to comment on which type of new workstations they like best. Their feedback is still being analyzed. "If there are major red flags, we'll see what we can do," Fair said.

Nevertheless, the more compact, collaborative workplace is here to stay, industry observers said. Space is becoming less of a status symbol.

"A lot of people who grew up in workstations find it effective to manage out on the floor and have less need to be isolated in an office in order to show power and control," said Judy Caruthers of Jones Lang LaSalle, who helps companies plan their space needs.

More dramatic change is on the way, her colleague Miscovich said.

"We are just now becoming accustomed to the PC," he said. "It may take us another 30 years to fully engage and adapt with mobility, [but] the mobile Internet may be bigger than electricity as a technological advancement."

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NEWS RELEASE

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Office Space Per Worker Will Drop to 100 Square Feet or Below For Many Companies Within Five Years, According To New Research from CoreNet Global

ATLANTA, GA February 28, 2012 – New data released today from CoreNet Global show for the first time that for many companies, the average allocation of office space per person in North America will fall to 100 square feet or below within the next five years.

By 2017, at least 40% of the companies responding indicated they will reach this all-time low benchmark of individual space utilization, which has been the case in Europe for the past several years but is now heading for the Americas.

The average per worker in 2017 will be 151 square feet per worker, compared to 176 square feet today, and 225 square feet in 2010.

"The main reason for the declines," said Richard Kadzis, CoreNet Global's Vice President of Strategic Communications, "is the huge increase in collaborative and team-oriented space inside a growing number of companies that are stressing 'smaller but smarter' workplaces against the backdrop of continuing economic uncertainty and cost containment."

CoreNet Global, which conducted the survey, is the worldwide association for corporate real estate and workplace professionals.

Today, just 24 percent of the respondents reported that the average space per office worker is 100 square feet or less; however, 40 percent reported that within five years, the average space per office worker would be 100 square feet or less.

It is clear that the amount of space dedicated solely to specific employees is steadily shrinking. A majority of the respondents, 55 percent, reported that square feet per worker has already decreased between 5 and 25 percent over the last five years.

"There are number of additional factors contributing to the decline in the amount of space per worker," said Kadzis. "More companies are adopting open floor plans in which employees do not have any permanently designated space at all; rather they use unassigned space when they are in the office, settings that often change daily. This trend is enabled by technology and by cost measures, as they require smaller foot prints."

CoreNet Global will continue to track this downward pressure on designated office space per worker over time.

The CoreNet Global benchmark survey was conducted in February 2012. More than 465 global managers of corporate real estate responded.

CoreNet Global is the world's leading association for corporate real estate (CRE) and workplace professionals, service providers, and economic developers. Our more than 7,000 members, who include 70% of the top 100 U.S. companies and nearly half of the Global 2000, meet locally, globally and virtually to develop networks, share knowledge, learn and thrive professionally.

CoreNet Global itself reduced its total office space and space per person by nearly 20% last year in a transformation of its downtown Atlanta headquarters.