





December 20, 2024

Dear Mayor Bass,

We are at a defining moment for the future of Los Angeles. The staggering wealth inequality in our city has deepened an already growing divide, threatening our shared vision of an inclusive, equitable Los Angeles.

During your historic campaign against a billionaire opponent, you declared we were in "a battle for the soul of Los Angeles." Progressives across the city rallied behind you, believing you would stand with working and low-income Angelenos against powerful interests seeking to exclude them from their neighborhoods. Nowhere is this fight more visible than in the battle for the Venice Dell affordable housing project on the Westside. Here, a small but vocal group of wealthy, well-connected residents is attempting to block affordable housing, putting the fight for truly integrated neighborhoods at risk.

As organizations representing constituents in Council District 11 (CD 11) and across Los Angeles, we are outraged by the recent actions of the City's Board of Transportation Commissioners (BOTC). Their decision last week was a clear attempt to derail the Venice Dell Community affordable housing project, which would provide 120 desperately needed homes in Venice. We urge you to honor your pledges to urgently address homelessness and expedite affordable housing by supporting actions to overturn the BOTC's attempted veto of this vital project.

Despite multiple City Council approvals, the Department of Transportation was directed—outside of its usual process—to create a report and recommendation clearly intended to halt Venice Dell after eight years of work by thousands of community members. The BOTC voted 5-0 to deny the project with minimal questions or discussion.

While questions remain about the legality of this meeting and vote, what matters most is the impact: Venice Dell is now being pronounced dead by City officials, and your office has yet to refute those claims. This is despite the fact that the City Council has repeatedly approved, entitled, and funded this project over many years. None of these votes have been challenged or overturned.

This contradicts your promises to prioritize permanent housing and homelessness. As your office has repeatedly emphasized, the development of affordable housing depends on an expedited and reliable process. Undermining a project born from the City's own RFP sets a dangerous precedent, one that will erode trust within the affordable housing development community and directly cost the City up to \$10 million—not to build housing.

While Venice Dell faces opposition from some local residents, such resistance is unfortunately common, especially in affluent neighborhoods. However, it is inaccurate to claim the project is being "shoved down the community's throats" when it has broad support across Venice and the city at large. We urge you to ensure that all Councilmembers actively advance your housing goals.

CD 11 has long failed to provide its fair share of affordable housing. The data underscores the urgency of reversing this trend:

- CD 11 accounts for only 2.86% of the City's total affordable housing developments completed between 1985 and 2022.
- From 2018 to 2024, the Venice planning area saw just 0.84% of the City's affordable housing approvals, compared to 34% in South and Southeast LA.
- In 2023, after the first year of your Executive Directive 1 (ED1) to streamline affordable housing, CD 11 had only 82 proposed units—0.88% of the citywide total. None of these units were in Venice.
- Of the 109 Venice residents who entered the Inside Safe program last year, nearly half (53) are unhoused again.
- CD 11 is losing its only large-scale interim housing facility, with 154 shelter beds closing at the end of this month.

Now, due to the BOTC's action, CD 11 risks losing one of its few affordable housing developments currently under consideration undermining your administration's priorities to end homelessness

With six unhoused individuals dying in Los Angeles every day, blocking affordable housing and closing shelters is unconscionable. Permanent supportive housing is the only proven solution to ending homelessness and saving lives. Our city urgently needs housing solutions, especially in high-resource areas like CD 11, where families are being displaced at alarming rates due to evictions and rising rents.

We call on you to reverse your office's validation of the BOTC's recommendations for Venice Dell. This project represents years of collective effort by City staff and community members. It aligns with your administration's and the city's stated housing goals and has been designed to meet accessibility and public parking needs. As one Commissioner on the Coastal Commission noted, Venice Dell is a "jewel" for development in the coastal zone.

At this critical juncture, we need your leadership to ensure the project moves forward. Please do the right thing and support the urgent need for truly affordable and permanent housing for Angeleno families.

We look forward to your response, and welcome an opportunity to meet and discuss this with you.

Sincerely,

Abundant Housing Los Angeles
ACLU of Southern California
ACT-LA
Active San Gabriel Valley
Africa Town Coalition
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)
AAPI Equity Alliance

Black Women for Wellness
California Native Vote Project
California YIMBY
CD 11 Coalition for Human Rights
Chinatown Community for Equitable Development
Chrysalis
Climate Resolve
CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice)
Coalition for Economic Survival
A Community of Friends
Community Corp. of Santa Monica
Communities for Better Environment
Corporation for Supportive Housing
CTY Housing
Downtown Women's Center
DSA-LA
East LA Community Corporation
Fairfax Mutual Aid
Food for Comrades
Ground Game LA
Health Care 4 Us
Hollywood 4WRD
Housing Action Coalition
Housing Justice 4 Los Angeles
Housing Now!
How The West Was Saved (HTWWS)
Inclusive Action for the City
Inner City Law Center
InnerCity Struggle
Interfaith Solidarity Network
LA Forward
LA Voice
Little Tokyo Service Center
Los Angeles Community Action Network
Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust
Los Angeles Tenants Union, Westside Local
Long Beach Residents Empowered
Long Beach Tenants Union
Mar Vista Voice
Move LA
Natural Resources Defense Council
NoHo Home Alliance
Palms Unhoused Mutual Aid
Public Counsel
Safe Place for Youth
SELAH Neighborhood Homeless Coalition
Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing (SCANPH)
S.P.E.A.K. Out Loud
St Joseph Center
Stonewall Democratic Club
Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE)

Streets for All
Supportive Housing Alliance
TRUST South LA
United Way of Greater Los Angeles
Universal Human Rights Initiative
Urban Environmentalists
Venice Arts Council
Venice Family Clinic
Venice Japanese American Memorial Monument Committee
Venice Justice Committee
Watts Labor Community Action Committee
We The Unhoused
Westside Activists
Westside for Everyone
Where Has All The (Affordable) Housing Gone?