

6/10/25 City Council Meeting – Ord. No. 2025-20

Mayor Pachota and Council Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Kristin Hoffschmidt, and I am speaking for Venice Thrives, a non-partisan community organization that works to protect what makes Venice special.

I'm here to address Ordinance No. 2025-20, related to changing the zoning designation for the properties located at 225 Park Boulevard South and 528 Menendez Street. This change would mean that these sites near the center of downtown Venice that are currently zoned as high density, multi-family residential would be changed to low-density, single-family residential.

This change is contrary to the 2022 update of the City of Venice's Land Development Regulations, which eliminated single-family as a permitted use in the RMF-4 zoning district.

This change is also contrary to the core goals of housing density and affordability for John Nolen's planned apartment district. The staff comments in the Staff Report that was included with the materials for this agenda item noted that "The apartment district is integral to the fabric of the original plan and consistent with today's 'smart growth' or New Urbanist principles, which were followed by Nolen during his era as well."

The staff comments also pointed out that this site is ideal for concentrated, multi-family density, rather than single-family density, because the proximity of goods and services reduces the need for car trips. The staff comments also noted that this location is "one of the most appropriate in the city" to concentrate population in smaller scale, multi-family developments that meet the need for what planning professionals have termed "missing middle" housing.

Venice Thrives urges the Council to follow the Land Development Regulations and the intent of the John Nolen plan. We ask you to consider the need to increase, rather than reduce, zoning for more affordable housing as it is becoming increasingly scarce. Local employers and workers are asking for solutions to the lack of workforce housing, and the apartment district is currently zoned to fit this need. Please honor the regulations and plans that are in place, rather than making exceptions, to protect what makes Venice special and a great place to live and visit.

Thank you for your consideration.