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L.A. Planning Commission Hopes New Principles Will Help Them to "Do Real Planning"

"Demand a walkable city," "Offer basic design standards," and "Require density around transit," exhort the three top principles in the 14-point "Do Real Planning!" set just released by the Los Angeles Planning Commission, whose members were told at their 2005 appointment by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa to become the agents of change in land use and development.

Championed by new City Planning Director Gail Goldberg, who has criticized the city's lax community plans and tries to make them tougher, reports *Los Angeles Times* writer Steve Hyman, many of the principles "represent bold steps into territory largely untrod by previous planning commissions."

Among others, the "(o)ffer basic design standards" principle reads, "Our goal should be to eliminate the sea of stucco boxes, blank walls, street-front parking lots and other inhospitable streetscapes."

The "(a)dvance homes for every income" principle points out, "Every upzoning should carry with it an obligation to provide, preferably through on-site units but at least via monetary contribution, units for the poor and middle class."

The "(n)eutralize mansionization" principle appeals, "Let's be the champions of a city-wide solution to prevent out-of-scale residences."

The "(n)arrow road widenings" principle cautions against indiscriminately enlarging roads near new projects, explaining, "This rarely solves, and often invites, more passenger car congestion, and typically undermines our walkability goals."

Planning commissioners hope the City Council will embrace the principles as it works on new ordinances, the writer reports, noting that the council has usually, but not always, followed the commission's recommendations over the past year.

The other of the commission's newly announced principles say, "Eliminate department bottlenecks," "Locate jobs near housing," "Produce green buildings," "Landscape in abundance," "Arrest visual blight," "Nurture planning leadership," "Identify smart parking requirements," and "Give project input early."

See the set at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/>. -- *Los Angeles Times* 4/24/2007

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