

## Palms Neighborhood Council Planning & Land Use Committee Report

February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Meeting

**Motion: Recommend to the General Assembly support for JMB Realty's proposed 731,000 square foot Century City Center (<http://www.centurycitycenter.com>)**

**Committee Vote: 3-1-0**

**Background:** The PLU Committee held two Committee meetings on this proposed development – one with a presentation by the developer, JMB Realty, and the other with a presentation by a coalition opposing the project. Public comment was taken from more than 16 stakeholders.

### Committee Summary and Recommendation

The building's design was supported by all members of the Committee because it sets a precedent as a LEED Platinum office building that actively encourages workers to take alternate forms of transportation over single use vehicles. The Committee expressed support of the positive impact that this "green" project will have on changing building design in Los Angeles. Despite this, two major issues have caused this development to be contested on the grounds of:

1. Sufficient traffic mitigation
  - a. Can JMB ever do enough to put concerns at ease regarding traffic? Seemingly not. But they have offered a lot and are willing to consider more.
  - b. As was pointed out by one attending constituent, JMB didn't create the transit problem on the Westside and it won't be solving it either (nor should it be responsible to).
2. Trip credits
  - a. JMB, unlike previous developments under the Century City North Specific Plan, has devised a way to legally declare it is responsible for fewer trips in and out of Century City (the plan sets limitations on trips per thousand square feet).
  - b. While this does mean that JMB is, in essence, playing by a different set of rules than previous developers, City Planning and LADOT have allowed their declaration to stand.

A majority of the Committee felt that we may not like the way JMB went about determining its trip credits--redefining the requirements it would have to adhere to and potentially setting a precedent for how future projects get approved in the City of Los Angeles—but that it is ultimately up to City Planning, LADOT, or the City Council to take a hard line in the face of developers attempting to bend the rules. Ultimately, the Committee was left to choose between supporting a project with a great number of community benefits, and a chance of negotiating even better traffic mitigations than are currently offered... OR opposing the project, thereby prolonging the tragedy of an empty lot in a high commercial district, delaying the creation of good jobs in Los Angeles, potentially hindering a multi-modal Century City transit hub, and gambling that a new project or developer offers a better deal in the future. If the influence of the Palms NC (in conjunction with a few other like-minded community organizations) had the ability to stop this project on principle, the Committee may have made a different recommendation to the Board. Instead, the Committee recommends supporting the project, but encourages the Board to seek support for an update to community plans, and hold the City accountable for upholding City ordinance with a willingness to say "NO" or negotiate a better deal.