



REST IN PEACE, TERMITES  
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# Santa Monica Daily Press

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THE BEAMING AND STREAMING ISSUE

## Controversy brews at VA

BY MELODY HANATANI  
Daily Press Staff Writer

WEST L.A. Standing in front of the main hospital on the Veterans Affairs campus on Wednesday, surrounded by young and old soldiers of past wars, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., proudly announced plans to develop a master plan that would outline the use of space on the 388-acre parcel of property.

Just a few miles west some fear that recently enacted legislation authored by the California senator would have unintended consequences on a widely celebrated move that happened last summer — the designation of three vacant buildings on the campus to house homeless veterans services.

The new law bans future commercial development at the VA as well as enhanced-use leases, which often led to the sale of land to private entities, but would not stop homeless service providers from moving onto the property, according to federal and county officials.

For some of the proponents that have pushed for the designation of the buildings, such as City Councilmember Bobby Shriver and City Hall, the concerns are centered around the ban of so-called enhanced-use leases — long-term leases that often led to the



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A LITTLE FACE TIME: Sen. Dianne Feinstein D-Calif., (center) and Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky (right) speak to a group of concerned war veterans in front of the VA Hospital on Wednesday.

sale of the property, leading to commercialization on the VA campus, a path often criticized by veterans that argue the piece of land in question is sacred for those that have served in wars. They argue that in the absence of enhanced-use leases comes difficulty for

potential providers of homeless services to secure financing, possibly delaying the use of the three designated buildings for homeless veterans for up to a year if not longer.

"The VA's lawyers and the Santa Monica lawyers have advised that this may

cause a very substantial delay at putting the buildings to work," Shriver said on Thursday. "I hope that's not true and I'm relying on the federal officials to make sure that's not true."

Former Veterans Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson announced in August that the trifecta of buildings located on the northern part of the campus would be used to support the county's roughly 15,000 homeless veterans. The buildings were constructed for mental patients and are believed to have been sitting dormant for more than 25 years.

"As a citizen, it's just frustrating to see something is so needed ... and to have our elected representatives just sitting on their hands," said Santa Monica resident Jean Sedillos, who was among the people that pushed for the designation.

Both Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Los Angeles, and Feinstein, who co-authored the legislation that was passed as part of a \$555 billion spending bill last month, assured that there would be no unintended consequences causing a delay in moving the homeless veteran services use forward.

The designation was supported by Waxman, Feinstein and L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky.

"I strongly support the VA's plan for

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## A landmark is born

Nu Wilshire's art deco facade will be kept intact in perpetuity

BY MELODY HANATANI | Daily Press Staff Writer

MID-CITY A 1930s era art deco-style movie house on Wilshire Boulevard that is fated for a life of retail was recently designated as an historical and cultural landmark, ensuring that the trademark old-Hollywood facade would be preserved in perpetuity.

The Landmarks Commission voted unanimously on Monday night to designate the Nu Wilshire Theater at 1314 Wilshire Blvd. as a historic piece of Santa Monica's past. The theater, which was designed by the late architect John

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FACE OF THE PAST: The facade of the Nu Wilshire theater on Wilshire Boulevard has been named a landmark by the city.

## Coalition wants to limit development

BY MELODY HANATANI | Daily Press Staff Writer

CITY HALL A group of residents concerned about the growing density and accompanying traffic in the city have filed a notice with the City Clerk's Office that it intends to submit an initiative that would limit commercial development in Santa Monica.

The Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City (SMCLC) filed the notice on Monday, preparing for a petitioning campaign in which the organization will have to collect more than 5,500 signatures of registered voters within the next six months to qualify for the November ballot.

The coalition seeks to limit all new commercial development in the city to less than 75,000 total square feet a year, about the size of two supermarkets. The initiative

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### QUICK RESPONSE

Photo courtesy Glenn Roland

Santa Monica Fire Department personnel respond to the corner of Sixth Street and Pacific Avenue on Thursday morning. There was no further information as of press time.

# Coalition notifies city of intentions

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would allow new development approvals to exceed the maximum during any given year as long as the average annual square footage calculated over the following four years would fall below the 75,000 threshold, according to the initiative.

The initiative is meant to improve traffic on the Westside, which Diana Gordon, the co-chairman of SMCLC, called "unbearable."

"This is an historic moment," Gordon said on Thursday. "Residents will have the power to decide how to limit traffic in the future."

"Traffic is only going to get much worse and residents now have the opportunity to take the city back," she added.

City officials have raised concerns that the initiative would curb the formulation of the Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE), the update of the general plan which will guide development in the city for the next 20 years. City planners have held numerous community workshops over the past few years, which have been attended by several hundred residents and business owners. A draft of the LUCE is expected this summer.

Mayor Herb Katz called the initiative destructive and does nothing but instill fear in the public.

**TRAFFIC IS ONLY GOING TO GET MUCH WORSE AND RESIDENTS NOW HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE THE CITY BACK."**

Diana Gordon, Co-chairman, Santa Monica Coalition for a Livable City

"Thinking of an arbitrary 75,000 square foot a year doesn't really solve (traffic)," Katz said on Thursday. "It just doesn't make sense and it really is, I believe, something to screw us up and stop us from doing what we should do."

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