

Becky Romero

From: Irvin Samuel <irvinsamuels@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 10, 2024 9:14 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Mina Semenza
Subject: Regarding the new Parking Lot on Gardena Boulevard

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Gardena City Council Members,

I look at the new parking lot on Gardena Blvd and I ask myself "I wonder why they decided to make this into a parking lot. Oh well it's probably because the last one was starting to get filled up". And I ask myself why they built the last one and it's probably because the street parking was starting to get filled up. Whatever the sequence of events that led us to have hundreds of parking spaces on Gardena Blvd, I ask myself what is the plan when the new parking lot reaches capacity? Perhaps we should encourage different ways for our residents to get to Gardena Blvd instead of giving away large swaths of our community to asphalt lots that serve only one purpose: car storage. Car storage in a space that is limited and that is ripe for building people centered spaces and if we step back and consider *why* people drive here it may provide some clarity.

I recently found out about a study between two neighborhoods in NYC, with similar income levels, densities, and proximity to transit. One neighborhood built a certain number of parking spots into their housing and the other didn't. What the study found was that the neighborhood with parking spots had a higher rate of car ownership despite having a similar income and proximity to transit. This really put into perspective for me the fact that people drive just because they expect a parking spot to usher them into their destination. It's the same reason why I take the J Line into DTLA because that expectation might not always pan out into reality. Here in Gardena we can use our land much more efficiently if we think about the long term effects of expecting everybody to visit Gardena Blvd via car. It's not a scalable design pattern so I encourage the city to think differently about how we plan the future of our Main Street.

Here are some ideas that come to mind:

1. Gardena boulevard is severely lacking in bike parking or scooter parking or anything that isn't car parking. We could easily create [20 bike parking spaces](#) by just taking two of the 49 spaces and installing some bike racks. That would hardly put a dent in our already abundant car parking supply but encourage so much more active transportation. Whenever that day comes I can assure you I'll be the first to use them.
2. We can easily use that space to host community events such as food truck pop ups, movie nights, outdoor seating for local restaurants, etc... I recently went to Smorgasburg in DTLA and they made excellent use of a large parking area and used it to host a vendor marketplace with hundreds of Angelenos showing up to support. Many opportunities are ripe for the taking that I hope the council has already taken into consideration.
3. The city should encourage bringing destinations closer together. The new development on the corner of Gardena Blvd and Normandie is a great example of building homes near destinations to encourage walking to support local businesses. This is particularly true for the section of Gardena Blvd that is already zoned for both residential and commercial use, which is, in fact, one of the few areas in the city with CR zoning. When people don't have to make unnecessary car trips and have the option to walk to a nearby business it greatly contributes to the neighborhood feel. Having people walk around creates a feeling of belonging in a place, something that currently fades away on Gardena Blvd in the evening. An empty parking lot doesn't exactly contribute to that feeling.

As a longtime Gardena resident I hope to see the potential of our Main Street fully realized, and I hope the city can take progressive measures to get there.

Best,
Irvin Samuel