



Memo to the Palisades Community regarding Gladstones (from the PPCC Executive Committee)

Many Palisadians have raised questions and concerns about the Gladstones redevelopment project and the recent Coastal Commission approval of a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the project. Although the PPCC Board has not taken a position on the project, the Executive Committee (EC) is concerned about an apparent pattern of non-disclosure and/or unexplained failure by government officials and the concessionaire/developer to communicate important facts with PPCC and the Palisades community. We hope to obtain answers from project proponents at a special PPCC meeting, set for October 30, 2025. Meanwhile, in the interest of transparency we share the following information.

Timeline/Key Facts¹

2016-2017: The County Board of Supervisors (BOS) issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new restaurant concession at the Gladstones site (the current concession was then set to expire). Community leaders and residents advocated for a bus turnaround in the parking lot to serve constituents who live and work on the west end of Sunset Blvd., where buses do not travel (there is no space for a turnaround). At then-Supervisor Kuehl's insistence, a turnaround requirement was added to the RFP; eventually PCH Beach Associates (PBA) was selected as the project concessionaire/developer.

May 2018: County Beaches & Harbors (B&H) and Supervisor Kuehl's staff briefed PPCC on the proposed new project for the Gladstones site (with a bus turnaround in the parking lot); members expressed concerns about height, footprint, sq. footage and viewshed protection; we were told that the required regulatory approval process, including CEQA and CDP approval, would take several years, that the Supervisor was also concerned about the viewshed, that "many people would be weighing in" as the process unfolded, and that the Supervisor thought that the project "is very cool." **This was the last time PPCC heard from our Supervisor/s, their deputies, B&H, or any staffers about the project, until seven years later,** when Supervisor Horvath's deputy Zac Gaidzik (representative to PPCC for Kuehl and then Horvath, since 2018) suddenly announced in *August 2025* that the Coastal Commission would soon hear the project, which would include a bus turnaround (see below).

2019-2020: After numerous postponements of expected updates to PPCC, the concessionaire (PBA) showed a **model of a proposed Frank Gehry-designed, Wolfgang Puck restaurant** to the public in June 2019, at a meeting room in Caruso's Palisades Village. The model was *different from the now-approved, current restaurant design*. During this time frame, updates/briefings to PPCC continued to be postponed, both before and after the Covid crisis.

June 2021: PBA (Thomas Tellefsen) gave a project update to PPCC; no plans, drawings or models were shown. He explained the many steps required to obtain project approvals, confirmed that a bus turnaround would be included, and noted that, while making some design adjustments, PBA was still proceeding with the "same vision" as previously shown to the public. In response to concerns about light and noise from the restaurant, Tellefsen acknowledged that residents had raised these concerns during the 2019 meeting when the model was shown, but stated that PBA was still "working to try and resolve these issues" and that **he would return to address concerns. He never did.**

¹ These facts are based on publicly available resources, including: documents posted on websites of the LA County Board of Supervisors, LA County Beaches & Harbors, the State Legislature and the California Coastal Commission, as well as PPCC meeting minutes (on www.pacpalicc.org); government staff and community members also provided information.

2022-2023: The LA County Beach Commission held meetings related to the concession agreement, but neither PBA nor any government representative informed PPCC of these meetings. In September 2022 (unknown to PPCC), the BOS, on B&H's recommendation, approved then-project plans (at a lower height and less sq. footage than the now-approved project) and issued a *categorical CEQA exemption*. ***PPCC was not informed of these actions or the then-project plans***, and there were no updates to PPCC on the project's status during these years.

2024: Again, there were no project updates in 2024. However, In an obscure legislative process unknown to PPCC or the community, **initiated by the Governor and with Sen. Allen's knowledge**, in August 2024 the state Senate Budget Committee **chaired by Sen. Wiener** (author of SB 79) drafted language of a "trailer bill" that was tacked on to the main state budget bill (AB 178) for the next year, which **exempted the project from state law and any city permitting and approval processes**, other than county and Coastal Commission approval. As a result, the California Resources Code was amended *to benefit PBA and proponents of the project* by effectively streamlining project approvals (which, as the Coastal Commission later remarked, eliminated a city requirement to post on-site public notice of the CDP hearing – which in fact was not posted by any of the CDP applicants (PBA, the county/B&H and the state/CalParks). Since Gladstones is located in Sen. Allen's district and his staff acknowledged that he knew about the trailer bill (which he also voted for), we asked his staff who in the first place proposed or suggested the idea for this legislative help (*i.e.*, who requested this apparent favor of the Governor), and *why we were never notified of these actions*; we've not had a response. Again, ***no county or state official, their staffers, or PBA, ever informed PPCC or the community of this bill and the significant change in state law specifically to benefit project proponents.***

2025: The County Beach Commission held a special meeting in March 2025 to discuss an extension of the Gladstones concession agreement; again, PPCC was not informed of this meeting (or of other Beach Commission meetings related to this project). In April 2025, *unknown to PPCC*, on a *motion by Supervisor Horvath*, the BOS approved new updated/current plans for the project (taller in height, with larger sq. footage than prior plans) and re-confirmed the prior categorical CEQA exemption. ***PPCC was never notified of these plans or actions at any time by any governmental official or staffer or PBA.*** And in August 2025, *in the first project update to PPCC in many years*, Supervisor Horvath's deputy Zac Gaidzik announced briefly that the Gladstones project was proceeding, that it would be heard by the Coastal Commission in two months (not specifying a date), and that it would include a bus turnaround (which PPCC had long supported, not knowing about any plans to include more structures and other transit-related elements in the parking lot). PPCC never received written notice of the October 8th CDP hearing, only later learning of the hearing agenda, which stated that the plans included "transportation stations"(a "misnomer," according to Gaidzik). Moreover, we first learned of the actual project plans when they were posted on the Coastal Commission website only a few days before the hearing. ***Again, neither PBA nor any governmental representatives had previously shared the project plans, sought input from PPCC or the community, or provided an opportunity for residents' questions and concerns to be addressed before the project was approved.***

No satisfactory explanation has been offered to date for the failure to notify, inform or keep PPCC and the community apprised of the status and plans for this project – other than the limited briefings that took place years ago, long before the current plans were developed, or the sudden announcement this past August of a Coastal Commission hearing. We hope that sufficient information and answers will be now provided by project proponents at the October 30th PPCC meeting, so that the community can better assess the project and its potential impacts.

By the PPCC EC:

Sue Kohl, President; Quentin Fleming, Vice-President; Jenny Li, Treasurer; Beth Holden Garland, Secretary;
Maryam Zar, Chair Emeritus; Christina Spitz, Elected Rep (At-large); John Padden, Organizational Rep (P.R.I.D.E.)
October 16, 2025