

# Kristopher Valentine

## At Large Candidate for Venice Neighborhood Council Mobility Position

Angelinos are known for spending much of their time in a car. It is reported that the average commute time is 29 minutes in Los Angeles, and that sounds like on a good day to me. And yet despite how long our commute is by car, it's still the easiest way to get from point A to point B in LA. The city was designed for the automobile and the automobile only. Perhaps in the 1950's this was a luxury, but with today's population it's a nightmare.

In order to modernize our transportation system we need to find ways to decrease traffic congestion, expand public transportation, and make our neighborhoods more bike and pedestrian friendly. It seems like the city is working on the first two issues with smart signals, expansions of metro lines, and the proposed "Subway to the Sea". The issue of bike and pedestrian access however feel very neglected.

I support the Backbone Bikeway Network. It shouldn't be impossible or dangerous to get from one part of L.A. to another via bike. With our climate cycling should be heavily promoted and supported by the city. If they did some very simple things, like basic road maintenance, the amount of cyclist commuting would increase. Every time an Angelino puts down their car keys and picks up a bike it is beneficial to their health, saves them money, decreases traffic, and reduces air and noise pollution. Bicycling is therefore one of the most advantageous activities that can be done on a daily basis.

Venice has a very high number of cyclist and bike enthusiast, but unfortunately our neighborhood is not always easy or safe for cyclist to get around. Part of the reason was due to the fact that the region's developer was inspired by Venice, Italy. Pacific Ave once was Trolleyway and used by Pacific Electric trolley cars, and Windward Ave, Main Street, and Grand Blvd were Gondola filled canals. Unfortunately the public transportation system was dismantled in favor of the car. Venice was not designed for automobiles, and as of a result there are parking problems, frequent traffic congestion, and too few bike lanes.

There are many things that we can do to increase mobility in Venice both in the short and long term. Some such issues to discuss:

Bike theft – This is the number one crime occurring in Venice and the police are working on cracking these bicycle-theft rings. We need to get the word out to cyclist to keep their bikes indoors, to use secure u-locks when out, and to file police reports immediately when stolen. The more bike theft that occurs the more people will be deterred from riding.

Bike racks – When people go to First Fridays or to the boardwalk on weekends bike racks are sparse, and those existing are filled to capacity. This again is another disincentive for people to ride their bikes. We need the city to properly install more bike racks around Venice so that the maximum amount of bikes can be safely parked and locked.

Bike valet – Abbot Kinney has many restaurants that offer valet parking, some of which are illegally parking on residential streets or blocking public parking. We need to have city code enforced to stop such abuses. This problem points out how bad parking is. We want our local businesses to thrive, and I think one such idea to ensure a flow of customers is to have them offer bike valet services. Considering the cities financial problems it's important to work with local businesses that support bicycling.

Bike path – The one place in Venice that is specifically for cyclists is the bike path on the boardwalk. Unfortunately it is covered with sand, and used by pedestrians for walking. We need to work with the city to get the bike paths routinely cleaned, and with the police and parks department to enforce city code. Due to budget cutbacks we may need to come up with volunteers that can clean the path if the city will no longer pay someone to do it. There also should be a push to expand the bike path from Washington Blvd. to the Marina so that cyclist can avoid Pacific Ave and Speedway.

Pacific Ave – It's very narrow, unsafe for cyclist and pedestrians, and not the best looking street in Venice. We need to work on a long-term beautification program that would include the creation of a bike lane. That is much more feasible than installing sidewalks. This has been discussed in the past, but due to budget cutbacks has never got off the ground.

Speedway - Due to the hazards of bicycling on Pacific, and the fact the bike path ends at Washington, Speedway becomes the only viable option for cyclists. Unfortunately it is a one-way street and Police will not allow cyclist to ride their bikes the “wrong” way. Though it is narrow, there is room to install bike lanes going both directions on the street. This should be looked into and studied.

Lincoln Blvd. – Due to the lack of bike paths many cyclists will use the sidewalk, which is not great for them or pedestrians. Due to the amount of pedestrian being struck by cars at the cross section of Lincoln and Palms there has been an upsurge in the push for a stoplight there. This would be beneficial for cyclist, as it would prevent potential cyclist/vehicle collisions. Bike paths on this street seem feasible, and I don't understand why they do not exist.

Parking – There just isn't enough in Venice. We need make sure that any new development or business are not allowed an exemption from providing parking spaces, which are required by the Venice Specific Plan. The VNC needs to make this clear to developers and our Land Use and Planning Committee that any proposed project must provide the spaces required.

These are just some of the ideas I have, and I know there are many more. If elected to the Venice Neighborhood Council I will push these issues forward by creating a Mobility Committee.