

Council Meeting of
February 27, 2007

Honorable Mayor and Members
Of the Torrance City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

Subject: Community Development Department Activities and Projects

Recommendation

The Community Development Department recommends that the City Council review information regarding current activities and projects in the Community Development Department.

Background and Analysis

The Community Development Department focuses on both short and long term planning for the community, redevelopment, housing, transportation planning, building and code enforcement. Combining services formerly provided by the Planning, Building and Safety and Engineering Departments, the Department looks at all stages of development throughout the community, with a goal of maintaining Torrance as a balanced community; one which will meet the needs of our residents both now and in the future by employing innovative and creative solutions to address mobility, land use compatibility, housing, infrastructure needs, safety and environmental issues.

Aside from the day to day activities required to keep planning and building functioning in the City, the Department is currently working on a planned one-stop permitting center, certain street and median improvement projects and a pilot Green Building Program. In addition, there are several long-term projects, including the General Plan Update, the Strategic Plan renewal, Historic Preservation and Downtown.

General Plan Update

The initial phase of the General Plan renewal is complete, with a number of public workshops having been held to discuss the current state of the City and identify areas of concern as well as of stability and potential transition. Based on the input from these sessions, rough drafts of the various elements are being prepared. These drafts will be reviewed by staff, and then returned for additional workshop sessions to the various commissions. In addition, workshops are being planned for smaller areas of the City, to identify issues of importance for the specific areas as well as citywide concerns. This information will be used both for the General Plan and for the Strategic Plan. The General Plan Update will most likely extend out another year, in order to complete the required Environmental Impact Report, review the draft and make any adjustments prior

to forwarding the final draft to the City Council, as well as to take advantage of information gained in the Strategic Plan Renewal.

Strategic Plan Renewal

The plan for the renewal of the City's Strategic Plan was approved earlier this month. This process is expected to take at least a year and will involve extensive community outreach, both through use of focus groups as well as a statistically valid survey of the business and residential communities. While the Strategic Plan and the General Plan are very different documents, each require extensive input from the community, and will complement each other as they reflect to the maximum extent possible the vision, ideals and values of the City and its residents.

Historic Preservation

Recently the Council approved placement of the "Historic Torrance Founded 1912" signs on the perimeter of the original Torrance Tract. In addition, the Department has been working closely with the Torrance Historical Society to develop a handbook of voluntary guidelines for development within the Historic areas of the City, as well as an ordinance that will allow residents to take advantage of the property tax incentives available through the Mills Act for Historic Preservation of their properties. These items will be coming forward for Council approval shortly.

Downtown Visioning

As a part of the Strategic Plan process, a group will be formed to discuss Downtown Torrance. This group will provide input for the Strategic Plan, but will also be tasked with looking at the future of Downtown Torrance and formulating a vision that will allow the Downtown to grow into a more vibrant destination within the City.

These projects represent the commitment of the Community Development Department to work with the community to formulate a comprehensive vision for the City as a whole, as well as for the Historic and Downtown areas of the City.

Respectfully submitted,



JEFFERY W. GIBSON
Community Development Director

CONCUR:



LeROY J. JACKSON
City Manager