Council Meeting of
April 17, 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, the old Downtown.

The recently approved Oversized Vehicle Ordinance is in the early stages of implementation, and the Department continues our efforts of traffic management and focused traffic calming. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is in the process of installing components of their Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) on Pacific Coast Highway. The system will allow the use of CCTV cameras at intersections for signal control and will be a part of the larger South Bay Signal Synchronization Program.

Oversized Vehicle Ordinance Update

The City Council adopted the Oversized Vehicle (OV) Ordinance in late March 2006. Signage has been installed at City portals advising of the parking restrictions and approximately 205 resident OV owners have registered their vehicles into the City data base and obtained permits.

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.

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.

Projects of Interest in the Area

The property at 131 Palos Verdes Blvd, known as the Pat's Ski Shop site has been graded and construction will begin on a two story mixed-up project with 8,325 square feet of commercial space and 23 residential condominium units. The retail center at 3801 Pacific Coast Highway is currently in the process of remodeling incorporating

façade modifications and interior changes to the existing market on the property. The 14 unit condominium project at Pacific Coast Highway and Palos Verdes is complete and on the market. The number of Precise Plan applications to remodel single family homes in the Hillside Area has remained steady with 41 applications filed last calendar year, and six to date this year.

These programs represent the commitment of the Community Development Department to work with the community to formulate a comprehensive vision for the City as a whole.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffery W. Gibson
Community Development Director

CONCUR:

LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager