Council Meeting of
December 15, 2009

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

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Community Development - City Council consideration of the City of Torrance 2009 Draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Expenditure: None

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Community Development Director that the City Council conduct a workshop to receive public comments and for the City Council to provide direction to staff on the 2009 Draft General General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Funding

Not applicable

BACKGROUND

Since the Fall of 2004, the City has been in the process of updating the General Plan. Through a series of public workshops, various commission meetings, phone surveys, interviews with community members, and extensive public outreach and input, the key issues were identified by which the Draft General Plan was formulated.

On November 10, 2009, the City Council conducted their first public workshop on the 2009 Draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Report. During the meeting, the City Council received comments from the public and provided staff with comments and direction with respect to the Draft General Plan Land Use Element. The Council requested aerial map exhibits to be provided as they relate to the six study areas where land use changes are being recommended. Aerial maps of the six study areas and responses to the questions raised during the November 10th workshop are attached.

ANALYSIS

The purpose of tonight's workshop is for the Council to continue to review the Draft Land Use Element and provide staff with direction on changes they would like to have incorporated into the General Plan, provide initial feedback and specific direction on the Draft Circulation and Infrastructure, Safety, Noise, Community Resources and Housing elements and EIR, and receive public input from the audience.

General Plan Designation and Zoning

In land use planning, there are two levels of designation for properties. The General Plan designation is a broader, more long-term expression of what a city envisions for an area. The zoning expresses precisely which kinds of uses are allowed along with development standards for any given area. A single General Plan designation can encompass several different zones that relate to the varying levels of intensity of development appropriate to the specific areas

and the specific development standards for each zone. For example, the General Commercial General Plan designation encompasses the Retail Commercial Zone, the General Commercial Zone, the Limited Commercial Zone and several other commercial zones, each with specific uses allowed and specific development standards tailored to the surrounding area.

While good planning practice generally dictates that when General Plan designations are changed, zoning changes should follow soon thereafter, because we are a Charter City, we have no legal obligation to rezone to be in conformance with the General Plan. In some cases, the City may wish to wait until it sees some interest in moving an area in the direction of the new General Plan designation. In any case, the changing of a General Plan designation has no effect on existing uses. The Municipal Code specifies that the underlying zoning takes precedence, so until the zoning is changed on any parcel, uses are fully legal and have no restraints other than the existing zoning requirements. At such time as the zoning is change, uses that no longer meet the requirements of the new zone become legal non-conforming and may remain as long as they continue to function, with the caveat that there will be restrictions on their ability to expand or rebuild. However, as zoning code updated, these restrictions can be made less onerous and allow greater flexibility to the businesses made legal non-conforming by the zoning change.

General Plan Elements

While most attention has been paid to the Land Use and Housing Elements, the General Plan contains several other elements as well. The Circulation and Infrastructure Element outlines the policies for planning for the safe and efficient means of movement of people and goods, as well as ways of accommodating alternative modes of transportation to the automobile. A city-wide traffic study was prepared in conjunction with the Circulation and Infrastructure Element to support the recommended policies and programs of the plan. The Community Resources Element incorporates the goals and policies of three previously separate elements, Open Space, Parks and Recreation, and Conservation, as well as emerging issues such as climate change, historic preservation, sustainable development practices. The Safety Element addresses both natural and human related activity hazards to ensure the protection and well being of residents and properties. The Noise Element strives to minimize noise impacts from stationary and mobile sources to protect and preserve the neighborhood quality of life through the planning of land uses and circulation system.

Land Use Element

Through the Planning Commission community workshops and gathering public input, seven study areas were identified as areas in transition, experiencing stagnation, or in need of reinvestment: 1) Crenshaw/Amsler, 2) Western Avenue South, 3) Border Avenue, 4) Western Avenue North, 5) Redondo Beach Boulevard, 6) Jefferson/Oak, and 7) East Victor Precinct. A more in depth description of each of these study areas is attached. After further consideration, the East Victor Precinct was withdrawn because the current land uses were determined to be functioning effectively. Though some of the study areas will provide opportunities for new housing, they were selected prior to the commencement of the Housing Element update and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process. These areas were seen as opportunities to revitalize underperforming properties through land use policies. The land area, which these six study areas encompass, represents less than two percent of the total area of the City.

The properties Crenshaw/Amsler study area consists of a bowling alley and a mixture of industrial buildings constructed in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The 1992 General Plan

land use designation of Business Park was never realized in this area. After further consideration and testimony received at the workshops, the proposed Medium-High Density Residential was considered unsuitable for this area, and therefore staff recommends that the entire study area be designated as General Commercial.

The properties located in the Western Avenue South and Border Avenue study areas are within the Industrial Redevelopment Project Area. The properties Western Avenue South study area contain a mixture of commercial and industrial building developed from the early 1950's to the mid 1980's. The Border Avenue study area comprise of small, narrow, shallow properties not suitable for business park development and a mixture of residential buildings converted for commercial or industrial use and commercial buildings that were primarily constructed in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's. Like the Crenshaw/Amsler study area, the Business Park development never came into fruition due in large part to the constraints in lot size and configuration.

After further consideration, the initial recommendation to designate the Western Avenue South study area Medium Density Residential was deemed inappropriate for the area. Instead, it is recommended that these properties be designated General Commercial. For the Border Avenue study area, Residential-Office designation is proposed, which would encourage office, low impact commercial and light industrial uses, and live-work, mixed-use development. To ensure compatibility with existing and future residential development, commercial and industrial uses would be restricted to those operations that do not generate significant impact such as noise, vibrations, or odors to surrounding properties.

The Local Commercial properties located within Western Avenue North study area will be designated General Commercial with the intention of encouraging the recycling of aging and obsolete commercial and industrial properties.

The Redondo Beach Boulevard study area consists of single-family and multiple-family residences developed in the 1950's and 1960's interspersed between commercial clusters located at major intersections. The change from Medium Density Residential to Medium-High Density Residential proposed for the Redondo Beach Boulevard corridor west of Crenshaw Boulevard is to reflect the as built density that exist on most of these properties. The section of the Redondo Beach Boulevard corridor east of Crenshaw Boulevard will be amended from Local Commercial to Residential-Office to provided opportunities for multiple-family residential, neighborhood compatible commercial, and mixed-use development. The Roadium swap meet site, which is surrounded by residential uses, will be amended from General Commercial to Medium Density Residential.

The Jefferson/Oak study area is comprised of heavy industrial, self storage warehouse, research and development, office and industrial park uses, a church, and a recently developed multiple-family residential project. In 2004, the former Business Park designated properties on the east side of Oak Street and north side of Jefferson Street were designated Medium Density Residential as part of the entitlements for the residential project. The residential development replaced heavy industrial uses that were not compatible with Wilson Park located to the south and cleaned up contaminated industrial properties. The Business Park designated properties fronting Crenshaw Boulevard, Carson Street, and Plaza Del Amo will be designated General Commercial. Under the Draft General Plan, no existing or additional Light

Industrial, Heavy Industrial, or Business Park designated properties are proposed to be redesignated as residential.

The Local Commercial land use designation is proposed to be eliminated under the General Plan update. Local Commercial properties currently comprise less than two percent of the total land area of the City. This designation was intended for neighborhood serving, pedestrian oriented commercial development with maximum floor area ratio of 0.40. The designation did not function as it was envisioned. Instead of facilitating neighborhood compatible uses, the restrictive floor area ratio encouraged automobile dependent uses, such as gasoline stations and drive-through restaurants. Under the proposed General Plan, the Local Commercial properties would be incorporated into the General Commercial and Residential-Office designations. Essentially the same uses allowed by the Local Commercial designation are allowed within the General Commercial and Residential-Office Designation. In addition, the General Commercial and Residential-Office designations would provide for greater flexibility of use without compromising the quality of life of existing neighborhoods and the ability to develop mixed-use projects. The response from property owners of Local Commercial parcels to this change have been overwhelming favorable.

Housing Element

State law requires cities to provide an adequate number of sites for housing to allow for the production of the regional share of housing to accommodate forecasted population growth. The Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) determines Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for each city within its boundaries. The RHNA numbers are updated every five to seven years or as mandated by the State legislature. The State is attempting to coordinate the RHNA cycle to coincide with the Housing Element update cycle. For the 2008-2014 planning period, the Torrance's RHNA is 1,828 total units. As of August 2009, 1,063 new housing units remain out of the City's total housing unit allocation. All of the remaining units to be constructed fall under the very low to moderate income level categories. Under the State's housing laws, a jurisdiction is not obligated to produce the entire RHNA during the planning period, but provide the opportunity for the production of those units by identifying potential sites to meet its RHNA. In identifying an adequate number of sites to fulfill the City's RHNA in the Housing Element, the Housing Element is eligible to be certified by the State's Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The Housing Element that will be presented to HCD will identify sufficient sites to meet, but not exceed the City's targeted RHNA number.

The Western Avenue South and Crenshaw-Amsler study areas had accounted for the potential construction of 251 new housing units in satisfying the City's RHNA. Since these areas are being recommended to be designated General Commercial instead of Medium Density and Medium Density Residential, suitable alternative sites would need to be identified in order to satisfy the City's RHNA. There are potential sites within the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan district that permit housing with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit and can accommodate enough units to make up the RHNA deficit.

Under State law (SB2), all California cities are required to make provisions within its Housing Element and zoning code for addressing emergency shelters for the homeless. To comply with State law, a zoning district would need to be identified that would allow an emergency shelter by right. The City will evaluate the M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District for this purpose.

RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS

The Community Development Director recommends that the City Council conduct a workshop to receive public comments and for the City Council to provide direction to staff on any specific issues that the Council may have regarding the 2009 Draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR). In order for the Council's comments to be incorporated and issues addressed in the final draft of the General Plan, staff requests that any specific concerns and potential changes the Council may have are clearly stated during the workshop. Once all of the Council's comments are gathered and issues addressed, staff recommends that the City Council move forward with adoption of the General Plan and certification of the EIR at the public hearing to be held on January 19, 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

JEFFERY W. GIBSON
Community Development Director

By _____
Ted Semaan, Manager
Redevelopment & General Plan Divisions

CONCUR:

_____
Jeffery W. Gibson
Community Development Director

NOTED:

_____
LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

Attachments:
A. Comment Matrix November 10, 2009 Workshop
B. Study Area Descriptions
C. Local Commercial vs. General Commercial & Residential Office Comparison
D. Correspondence
E. Aerial maps of Study Areas (limited distribution)

TORRANCE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Responses to Questions from November 10, 2009
City Council Workshop

Question or Comment	Response
Land Use Element	
1. Why are the study areas not included on the table on page H-83?	Page H-83 looks at those properties that are being considered as part of our RHNA allocation. Of the study areas, only Crenshaw/Amsler, the Roadium, and Western South are providing housing sites that can be counted toward meeting the RHNA.
2. What does Residential-Office mean on Border Avenue?	The Residential-Office category as it relates to Border Avenue is envisioned to allow the creation of live/work units, artist's lofts and other living units in conjunction with existing businesses. The designation would not require that living units be added to businesses, but would allow that option to those who wished to make use of it. In addition, it is not envisioned that the Border area would be transitioning to traditional office uses, but that the lighter industrial uses currently existing there would become a part of a more diversified light industrial area that would be home to not only the businesses, but in some cases to the people who run or work in the business.
3. Can we make non-productive industrial areas more productive?	Making non-productive industrial areas productive is in part a function of the market and in part a function of the specific area, so in some cases the City may be able to successfully stimulate industrial redevelopment while in others we may not be as successful. In the case of the Western South area, inclusion in the Industrial Redevelopment Project in 1983 was intended to encourage re-use and rehabilitation of aging industrial properties through a number of incentives; however, at least in the Western South area, that has not proven effective. It may be, in part, because that particular area is surrounded by residential uses, which can be an inhibiting factor for industrial users.
4. What happens to existing businesses on Border Avenue if the General Plan change is made?	If the General Plan change is made to the Border Avenue focus area, nothing will happen to the existing businesses. In the case of Border

Question or Comment	Response
	Avenue, nothing will happen because it is envisioned that the zoning for the area will be such that the existing businesses will be able to remain and expand or co-exist with the newer live/work units that may come into the area. However, if, as in the case of the Crenshaw/Amsler focus area, the General Plan designation was such that the existing businesses would not conform under the new designation, there would still be no effect on the existing businesses until such time as the zoning on the property was changed. At that time, the businesses would become legal non-conforming uses, and there would be some restrictions on building or expansion of the business, as set forth in the Section 93.7.3 of the Municipal Code (Division 9: Land Use).
Circulation and Infrastructure Element	
No comments were made regarding the Circulation and Infrastructure Element.	
Community Resources Element	
No comments were made regarding the Community Resources Element.	
Safety Element	
No comments were made regarding the Safety Element.	
Noise Element	
No comments were made regarding the Noise Element.	▪
Housing Element	
1. Can we meet our Regional Housing Need Assessment (RHNA) number?	We believe that we can demonstrate that sufficient sites are available to accommodate housing development for all of the income ranges consistent with the City's RHNA allocation.
2. If all changes proposed were made would we be over our RHNA numbers?	Many of the changes proposed in the General Plan are not intended to address RHNA concerns. Rather, they are intended to reflect development that is already taking place or encourage redevelopment of underperforming areas. Of those areas proposed for land use changes, the City would meet its RHNA allocation, with only a very small cushion for sites that may be rejected by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) as not meeting its criteria for a suitable site.

Question or Comment	Response
3. What can count for RHNA?	For this 2008-2014 Housing Element cycle, two general categories of housing can count toward the RHNA: 1) housing that has been constructed or entitled between 2006 and 2008, and 2) vacant or underutilized residential or mixed-use sites that have the ability to accommodate new housing. In looking at the Housing Element, HCD counts those sites that we have identified as being used to meet our RHNA allocation, provided that the City can demonstrate that there is a reasonable expectation that those properties could be developed within the planning period. HCD is looking for indicators such as appropriate zoning, developer interest, vacancies, and sufficiently large parcels for those properties we have identified in the Housing Element.
4. Can the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan area be used for RHNA numbers?	Yes, should the City choose to do so. There are areas within the HBCSP that are currently zoned to allow housing and that would require no re-zoning. This is an option that will be examined.
5. Can we include the multiple-family residential areas along Artesia Boulevard, Crenshaw Boulevard north of Artesia Boulevard, Ocean Avenue, and Emerald Street in our RHNA numbers if we make them more useful?	The existing multi-family areas mentioned are already developed at a higher density than would be currently feasible without essentially demolishing the existing units and starting from scratch and even then, not many net new units would be gained. This is not financially realistic, and HCD is unlikely to accept any of these areas as being actual possibilities for units applicable to our RHNA.
6. Can we use Cabrillo Avenue north of Sepulveda Boulevard for RHNA numbers?	Many of the properties along Cabrillo Avenue are currently developed at densities consistent with their land use and zoning designations. There has not been a demonstrable history of properties turning over along Cabrillo Avenue; thus, staff does not feel that a case could be made to HCD that Cabrillo Avenue is a viable area for intensification.
7. What local cities have certified housing elements?	In Los Angeles County, as of December 1, 2009 (according to HCD's web site), the following cities have certified housing elements for the 2008-2014 planning period: Agoura Hills, Alhambra, Burbank, Calabasas, Claremont, El Monte, Glendale, Huntington Park, Industry, La Puente, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Monterey Park, Rolling Hills Estates, San Dimas, San Fernando, Santa Fe Springs, Santa Monica, and Vernon.
General Comments	

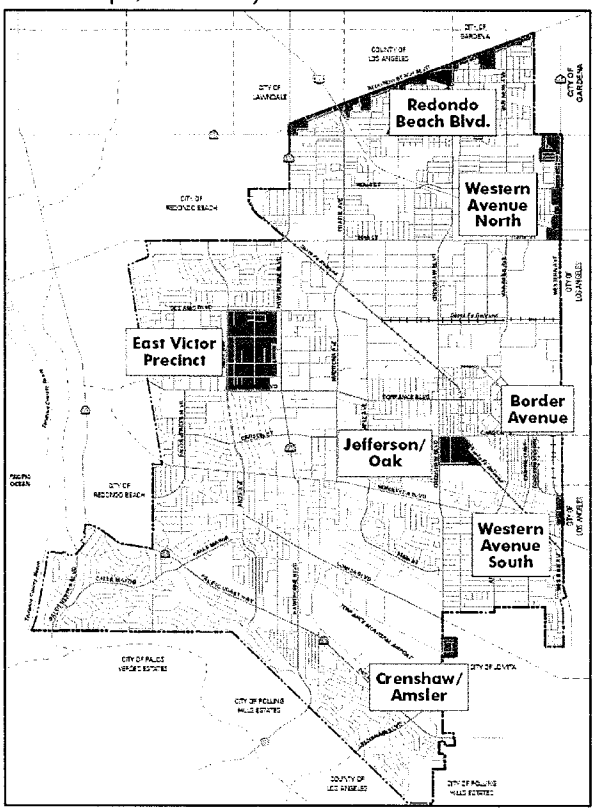
A commonly accepted definition for sustainability, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" calls for cities to become better stewards of the environment to preserve a high quality of life for future generations of Torrance residents.

2.4 LAND USE STUDY AREAS

Maintaining a balanced community requires periodic identification of areas where growth or change will benefit the City. Because vacant land is scarce, opportunities to enact positive changes through land use are limited. During the General Plan process, several areas were identified as transition areas experiencing land use changes, physical blight, or stagnation and where properties are underutilized or undervalued. The study areas were identified based on interviews with the City Council, City department heads, and members of the community; community workshops; and City staff and Planning Commission recommendations. They represent areas where change will be encouraged during the 20-year planning horizon of this General Plan. These areas provide opportunities for:

- More efficient or productive use of land resources;
- Potential for innovative mixed-use projects;
- Orderly expansion of health care facilities;
- Attractive and compatible new housing;
- Enhancing the City's commercial base; and
- Recycling aging industrial uses and obsolete buildings.

While seven study areas were identified, further analysis revealed that only six of these study areas necessitated land use changes. In the East Victor Precinct, land use alternatives were initially proposed, but ultimately withdrawn in acknowledgement that current land uses in this area functioned effectively. Altogether, the land use designation changes in the study areas cover less than one percent of the total area within the



In the study areas land uses may not be functioning to their full potential due to aging buildings or lack of public investment and represent areas within the City where change may occur throughout the 20-year planning horizon of this General Plan update.

Figure LU-5: General Plan Study Areas

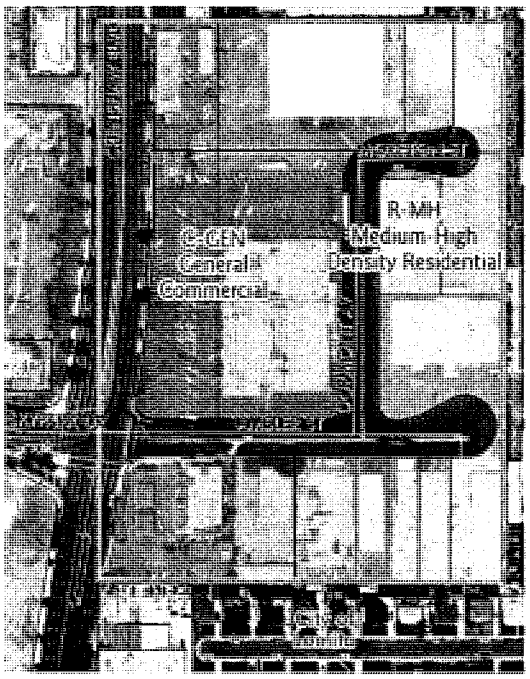
City.[8] The location of the study areas that included land use changes at the periphery of the City is consistent with expressed public desire to retain the qualities and character of distinct residential neighborhoods, and to protect commercial and industrial districts from incursion of incompatible uses. New policies encourage more intense uses along the City's most-traveled corridors and create opportunities for modest housing growth.

Several of the study areas have been in transition since the adoption of the City's 1992 General Plan, and the new land use designations reflect land use changes that have occurred since. This is the case along Redondo Beach Boulevard and Border Avenue, where residential and commercial uses are side by side, and in the Jefferson Oak study area, where residential development has replaced industrial uses that dated almost to the City's founding. Land use changes in the study area aim to improve otherwise underused or poorly maintained areas that have not lived up the potential envisioned in prior General Plans. Along Western Avenue, where small-scale commercial and industrial uses have languished, land use policies promote more intense uses and even mixed-use to attract the private investment that the area deserves.

STUDY AREA 1: CRENSHAW/AMSLER

The Crenshaw/Amsler study area consists of approximately 10 acres located east of Crenshaw Boulevard along Amsler Street, Dormont Avenue, and Moreton Street and is located at the City's eastern edge. The area is underutilized given its prime location along one of the City's major corridors and across the street from Torrance Crossroads, a major shopping center with tenants such as Home Depot and Sam's Club. The area contains a mix of older business park and commercial uses.

To encourage recycling of older uses on the parcels closest Crenshaw Boulevard and accommodate a modest amount of condominiums/townhouses or low- to mid-rise apartments at the City's eastern edge, the General Plan designates the westerly parcels between Crenshaw Boulevard and Dormont Avenue as General Commercial and the remaining properties Medium-High Residential. General Plan policies for residential uses in this area and citywide emphasize buffering commercial uses



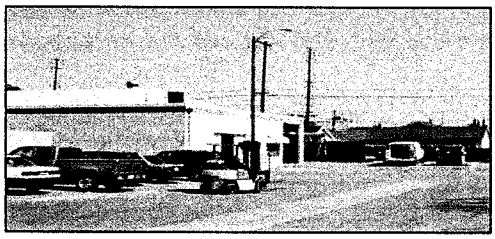
The location of the Crenshaw/Amsler study area at the City's periphery, along a major road, and across the Street from the Crossroads Shopping Center, is ideal for creating a modest amount of new commercial and residential activity.

Figure LU-6: Crenshaw/Amsler

[8] The City of Torrance covers approximately 10,505.8 acres. Land use designation changes in the study areas cover 95.1 acres which does not include the change to *Hospital/Medical (HM)* for the Little Company of Mary Hospital.

from residential areas to mitigate the effects of noise and traffic. The City should consider the possibility of vacating all or portions Moreton Street, Dormont Avenue, and/or Amsler Street should a cohesive project be proposed or Planned Development be established for this area.

The Medium-High Density Residential uses will be consistent with existing pattern of residential development located to the north, east, and south of the study area in the City of Lomita.

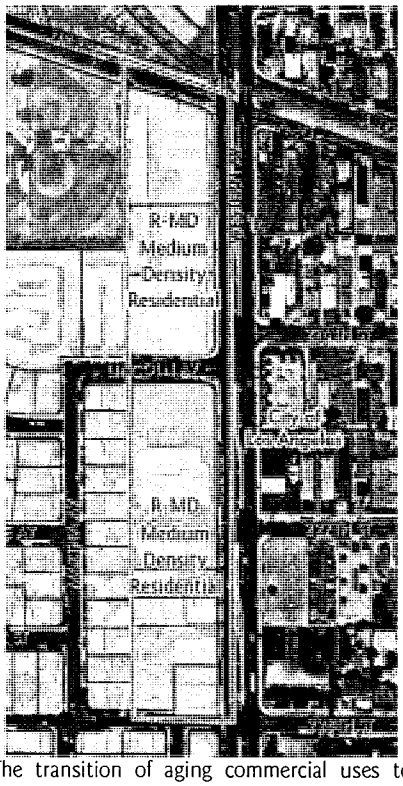


Crenshaw/Amsler: Aging commercial and light industrial uses.

STUDY AREA 2: WESTERN AVENUE SOUTH

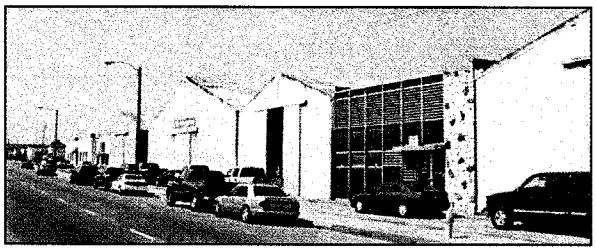
Western Avenue forms the City's eastern boundary between Artesia Boulevard and 238th Street, and the study area extends along Western Avenue between Plaza Del Amo and 228th Street, just north of Sepulveda Boulevard. Older offices and industrial and business uses are the most predominant land uses along this portion of the Western Avenue corridor. The study area is surrounded on the west, south, and east by residential neighborhoods.

To encourage the transition of outdated industrial and office uses to residential uses such as townhouses or low-rise apartments, the Land Use Policy Map designates all properties in the study area as *Medium Density Residential* (18.1-31 du/ac). This transition will match the residential character and density to the east, buffer single-family residences to the west, and create an edge boundary to Torrance while accommodating a modest number of new dwelling units at the City's periphery.



The transition of aging commercial uses to residential development will allow for new housing opportunities consistent with surrounding land uses.

Figure LU-7: Western Avenue South

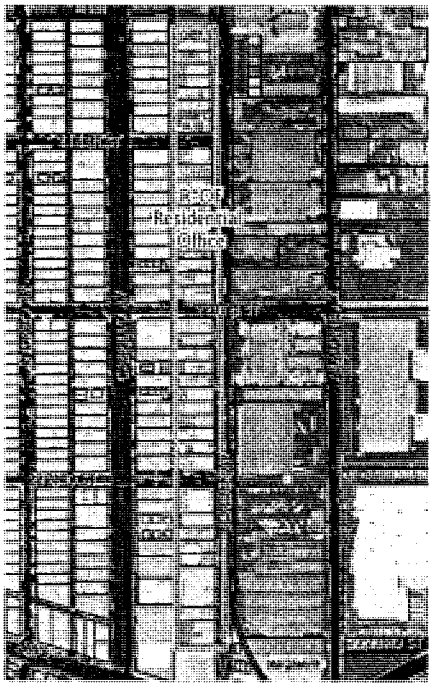


Western Avenue South: Industrial Uses

STUDY AREA 3: BORDER AVENUE

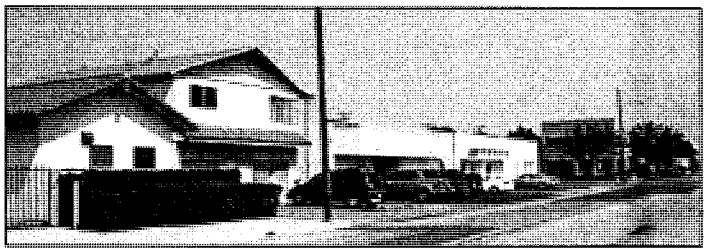
The Border Avenue study area encompasses the properties on the west side of Border Avenue just south of Carson Street and north of Lincoln Avenue. Historically, Border Avenue has supported office and light industrial uses, with several homes on small lots interspersed among those uses. Due to the small lot sizes, the plan to create a business park environment has never been realized. The existence of residential uses has further hindered this effort. The area is located adjacent to a successful industrial district to the east and a residential neighborhood to the west. Transitioning of uses in this area will create a better buffer between a major industrial district and residential neighborhoods.

To accommodate the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses, the Land Use Policy Map designates all properties in the study area as Residential-Office (R-OF; Max. 0.6 FAR for solely commercial or residential projects, 1.0 FAR for mixed-use and 18.1-31 du/ac). Residential uses will be characterized by smaller lot, low- to medium-rise apartments or townhomes, live-work units, lofts, and artist lofts. This transition will expand opportunities for small office-type businesses while maintaining a scale and character compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods. Due to its location just south of the City's Downtown district, care will be paid to ensure that development is consistent with the character of Old Torrance.



The introduction of the Residential-Office land use designation will encourage small-scale office development that will complement the exiting residential uses and serve as a buffer between industrial uses on the east and residential uses on the west.

Figure LU-8: Border Avenue



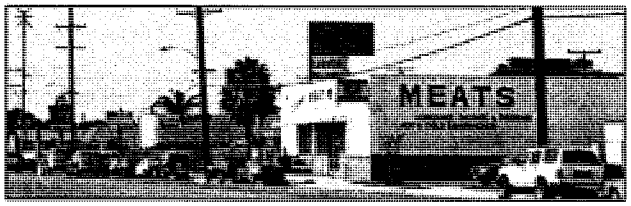
Border Avenue: Due to the lot sizes and location of the focus area, plans to create a business park environment have never been realized.

STUDY AREA 4: WESTERN AVENUE NORTH

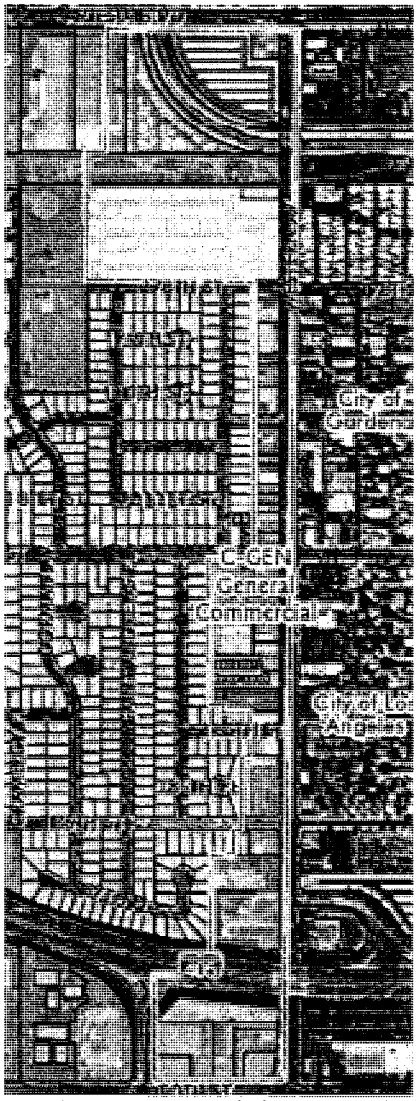
The Western Avenue North study area spans Western Avenue between Artesia Boulevard and 190th Street. Historic land uses include neighborhood commercial businesses from 178th Street to 186th Street, with larger, general commercial uses at major intersections such as Artesia Boulevard and 186th Street. A large mobile home park is located just south of the Southern California Edison utility easement. South of 178th Street, the study area is adjacent to single-family neighborhoods.

Issues in this area include the presence of outdated industrial and commercial properties, an influx of newer commercial and residential uses, and a need to develop a clear vision of how the corridor should develop over the next 20 years.

A transition to more intense commercial use will encourage the recycling of aging, poorly maintained industrial uses and create tax generation opportunities. All properties are designated *General Commercial* (C-GEN; Max. 0.6/1.0 FAR).



Western Avenue North: A mix of older and newer commercial uses lends to a lack of identity along this major corridor.



More intense commercial designation along this major road and near the 405 freeway can create tax revenue opportunities for the City.

Figure LU-9:
Western Avenue North

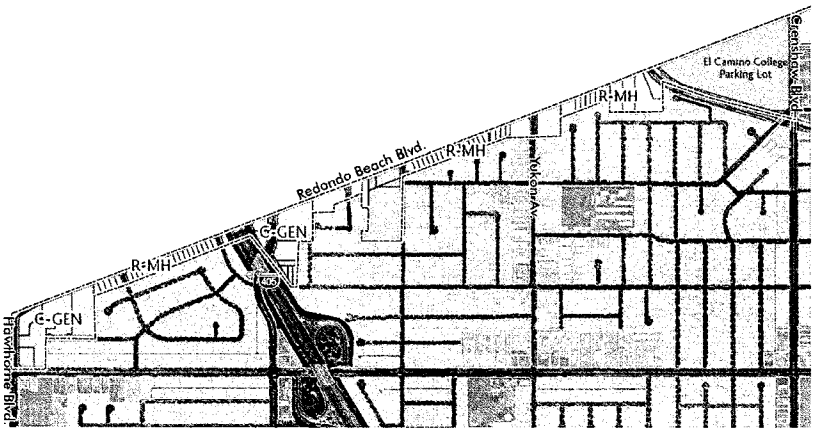
STUDY AREA 5: REDONDO BEACH BOULEVARD

Redondo Beach Boulevard runs in an east-west direction along the City's northern boundary. Properties on the south side of the Boulevard are within the Torrance City limits, and properties on the north side fall within the cities of Lawndale and Gardena and unincorporated areas of the County. The I-405 freeway intersects the corridor near Prairie Avenue. Issues in the study area include lack of gateways to signify entry into Torrance, shallow parcels, and the presence of underutilized commercial properties.

Redondo Beach Boulevard: The corridor includes a mix of smaller-scale commercial uses alongside residential uses.

The study area includes a variety of land uses. Commercial uses consist mainly of local-serving businesses. Larger commercial clusters are located at the major intersections (Hawthorne Boulevard, Prairie Avenue, and Crenshaw Boulevard). Several single-family residential properties are located on commercially designated land located east of Crenshaw Boulevard. Institutional facilities include a large parking lot for El Camino College at the southwest corner at Crenshaw Boulevard and a private elementary school at Ainsworth Avenue.

From the western edge of the City (at the intersection with Hawthorne Boulevard) to Crenshaw Boulevard, residential land use designations have been applied to reflect as-built densities of most of the properties, which is *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18.1-31 du/ac) properties to *Medium-High Density* (R-MH; 31.1-44 du/ac).

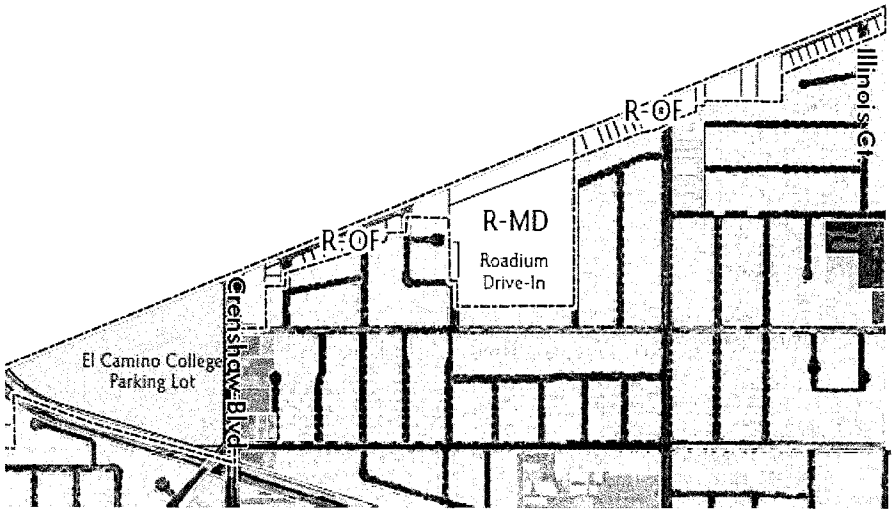


Land use changes in this portion of the study area will reflect actual existing densities and provide opportunities for more intense commercial development.

Figure LU-10:
Redondo Boulevard (West of Crenshaw Boulevard)

To provide opportunities for more intense commercial development and to encourage commercial/residential mixed-use development, commercial properties are designated *General Commercial*. Traditional commercial uses will be limited to a maximum FAR of 0.6, whereas mixed-use developments may be built up to a 1.0 FAR, consistent with zoning regulations.

The Roadium Drive-in site is designated *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD, 18.1-31 du/ac), and commercial properties from Atkinson Avenue east are designated *Residential Office* (R-OF; Max. 0.6 FAR for solely commercial projects, 1.0 FAR for mixed-use projects and 18.1-31 du/ac). The transition to a *Residential Office* designation will accommodate neighborhoods along the corridor where compatible office, business, and residential uses can exist. The *Residential Office* designation will permit the location of small, less- intense office uses adjacent to residential uses. Citywide General Plan policies applicable to the residential uses on the Roadium property emphasize protecting established residential neighborhoods from new development impacts related to parking and traffic. The location of this site at the City's northern edge allows for easy access from a major roadway and, pursuant to the policies in the Plan, the City may limit access to the site via Redondo Beach Boulevard to reduce drive through traffic into adjacent single-family neighborhoods.

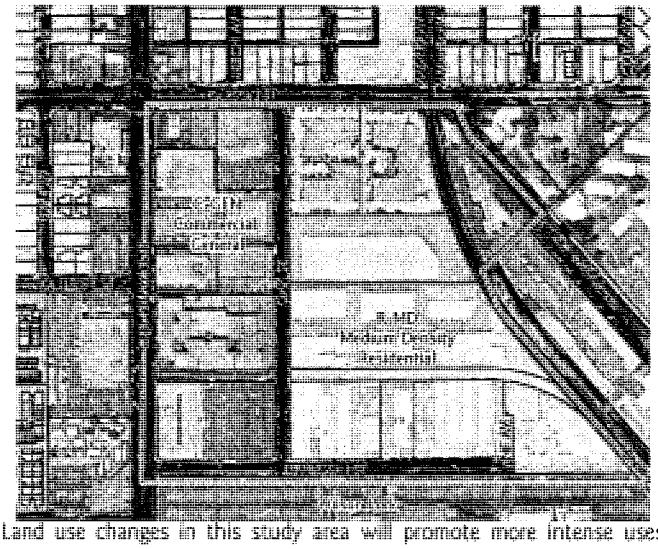


The transition to an R-OF designation will accommodate neighborhoods along the corridor where office, business, and residential uses are gradually being combined.

Figure LU-11:
Redondo Boulevard (East of Crenshaw Boulevard)

STUDY AREA 6: JEFFERSON/OAK

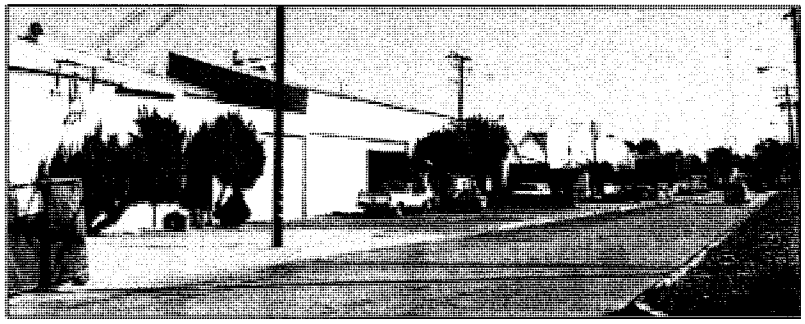
The Jefferson/Oak study area is located at the southeast corner of Carson Street and Crenshaw Boulevard, and is bounded by Jefferson Street to the south and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad to the east. The northern property east of the railroad and west of Plaza Del Amo is also included. The study area is bisected by Oak Street. Historically, the area was developed with business park and heavy industrial uses.



Land use changes in this study area will promote more intense uses along one of the City's most traveled corridors and accommodated residential developments that have been approved or are being constructed.

Figure LU-12: Jefferson Oak

Land use changes in this area will promote more intense uses along one of the City's most traveled corridors – Crenshaw Boulevard – and allow residential development to replace aging industrial buildings. The Land Use Policy Map also designates properties between Crenshaw Boulevard and Oak Street and properties facing Carson Street as *General Commercial* (C-GEN; Max. 0.6/1.0 FAR), with the remainder of the area not already designated for residential use as *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18.1-31 du/ac). In 2003 and 2005, the Business Park designated properties along the east side of Oak Street and the north side of Jefferson Street were amended to Medium Density Residential as part of a series of entitlements to allow the construction of 231 townhome, 86 condominium, and 59 senior condominium units. The project removed heavy industrial uses that were incompatible with Wilson Park located to the south and facilitated the clean-up of contaminated industrial properties. The existing business park property at the easterly end of Jefferson Street was also amended to Medium Density Residential, but was not part of the residential project.

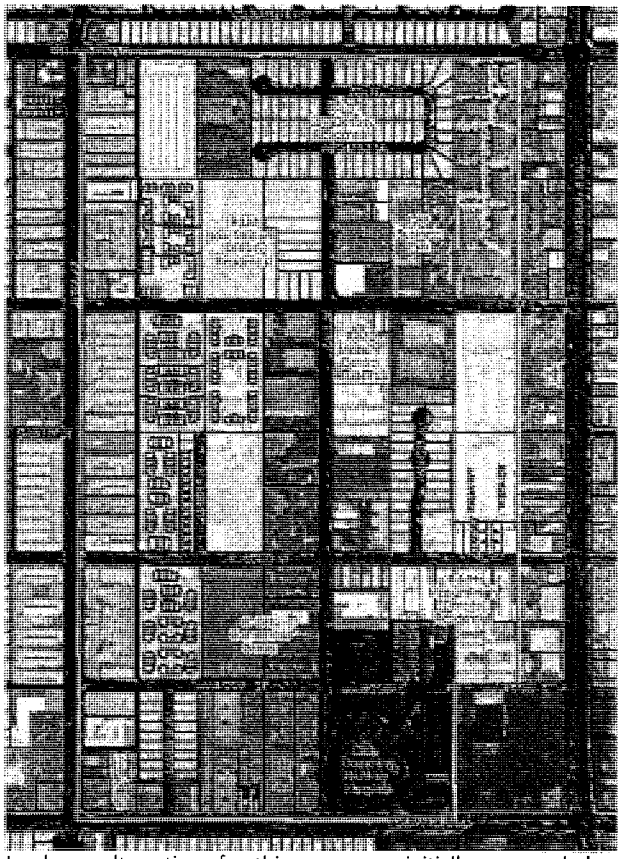


Jefferson/Oak: Industrial buildings along Jefferson Street located across from Wilson Park.

The *General Commercial* designation will serve as a transition area between the residential uses and Crenshaw Boulevard and Carson Street travel corridors and encourage commercial/residential mixed-use development by offering an FAR of 1.0. Solely residential and commercial projects will be limited to a FAR of 0.6.

STUDY AREA 7: EAST VICTOR PRECINCT

The East Victor Precinct is bounded by Anza Avenue, Del Amo Boulevard, Torrance Boulevard, and the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan. The General Plan allows for a variety of uses in this area including *Business Park* (max. 0.6 FAR), *General Commercial* (max. 0.6 FAR),and a variety of residential uses with densities ranging from *Low Medium* (9-18 du/ac) to *Medium High* (28-44 du/ac). Land use alternatives for this area were initially proposed, but ultimately withdrawn in acknowledgement that current land uses in this area functioned effectively.



Land use alternatives for this area were initially proposed, but ultimately withdrawn in acknowledgement that current land uses in this area functioned effectively.

Figure LU-13: East Victor Precinct

Initial analysis revealed that the study area had experienced a transition from business park and industrial uses to commercial or residential use. While proposals to encourage a transition away from older business park uses were presented, The City, recognizing the employment and tax revenue generation value of business park uses in this study area, opted to preserve the land uses in the area today. In addition to the transition of business park uses, an important issue in the area is the potential expansion of existing medical facilities. The study area includes several acres of medical uses located along Torrance Boulevard such as Little Company of Mary Hospital and the Earlwood Convalescent hospital. The only land use change in this study area is for the Little Company of Mary Hospital site where the land use designation is changed from Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space to the new *Hospital/Medical* (HM) designation to match the existing use. In addition to creating a new The *Hospital/Medical* (HM) land use designation, policies in Section 7.1 of the Land Use Element will encourage the concentration of existing and proposed healthcare facilities and their related uses, and support future expansion of

medical facilities in a manner that will establish and maintain orderly growth of health care facilities in Torrance. In that regard, an additional study area with similar issues was examined: the area of Lomita occupied by Torrance Memorial Hospital. Like the Victor Precinct area, Lomita will be impacted in an as yet unforeseeable manner by the expansion needs of the hospital. As the hospitals are an important part of the community, a concept will be introduced for these two areas that will look at the "sphere of influence" of the hospitals, and allow for changes in General Plan and zoning designations within that sphere. This will allow for maximum flexibility both for the hospitals and for the City to analyze and make use of the properties within the hospitals spheres of influence in the most beneficial manner without having to make specific designations on what may be a changing environment.

2.5 FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Consistent with AB162 (2007), the Land Use Element of the General Plan must identify areas identified by flood plain mapping by either the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the Department of Water Resources (DWR). To prepare and mitigate hazards from flooding, the City of Torrance participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), which are prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), maps potential flood zones. The General Plan Safety Element, presents flood hazard areas in Figure S-3.

2.6 BALANCED COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Maintaining a balanced community remains a priority for Torrance. The objectives and policies in the General plan will help the City balance continued development pressures with the community's desire to protect the charm and character that has made Torrance a desirable place to live. The objectives and policies address the need for new development that is functionally compatible with the City's existing neighborhoods and districts, proposes modest land use changes to improve older areas at the City's periphery, and ensures that new development does not overwhelm the City's infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE LU.2:	**A compatible land use pattern**
Policy LU.2.1:	Require that new development be visually and functionally compatible with existing residential neighborhoods and industrial and commercial areas.
Policy LU.2.2:	Encourage the transition of incompatible, ineffective, and/or undesirable land uses to land uses that are compatible and consistent with the character of existing neighborhoods.
Policy LU.2.3:	Consider both the impact of a proposed development on surrounding property and the impact of existing uses on new development.

ATTACHMENT C

Local Commercial vs. General Commercial & Residential-Office Comparison
Excerpt from Draft Land Use Element

The Local Commercial Designation was intended for neighborhood serving commercial uses with a maximum floor area ratio of 0.40. Local Commercial development was supposed to be designed to reduce automobile trips and oriented toward pedestrians. Instead of facilitating neighborhood compatible development, the restrictive 0.40 floor area ratio encouraged automobile oriented uses, such as gas stations and drive-through restaurants, and inhibited mixed-use development. The incorporation of Local Commercial into General Commercial and Residential-Office will provide greater flexibility in use and development of the sites without comprising the quality of life of neighborhood districts.

The *General Commercial* designation encompasses many types of commercial development, from local-serving retail and service establishments to arterial highway-oriented commercial centers. Mixed residential and commercial developments may also be established within areas designated General Commercial, subject to specific standards and conditions set forth in Torrance Municipal Code. The 1.0 maximum floor area ratio for mixed-use projects will encourage the development of residential uses and compatible commercial uses on the same property, allow the site to accommodate amenities, and help facilitate a function design. In Downtown Torrance, floor area ratios for mixed use developments traditionally range from 1.0 to over 3.0.

The Residential-Office designation is being introduced to recognize increased opportunities for mixed-use and to protect established residential neighborhoods from incompatible land uses and development. The Residential-Office designation will be implemented by the L-P Limited Professional Office District and R-P Residential Professional District. This area is intended for mixed-use residential/commercial developments, multiple-family residences, professional office uses, and less intense commercial activities that do not generate noise or generate high volumes of vehicle trips. Neighborhood serving retail uses that do not generate substantial traffic impacts would also be considered appropriate. Scale, intensity, site access, and proximity of residential uses shall be considered when evaluating new development. The Residential-Office Designation will also serve as transitional area between established residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas and help buffer existing neighborhoods from the noise and traffic of arterial streets. This designation will promote more compatible uses next residences and abate incompatible uses. Mixed-use residential and commercial developments, livework and work-live arrangements, and artist lofts are considered appropriate uses.

Attachment D

Palos Verdes Bowl

24600 Crenshaw Blvd., Torrance, CA 90505
Ph. 310.326.5120 Fax 310.539.8021

November 11, 2009

Mr. Jeffery Gibson
Community Development Director
3031 Torrance Blvd.
Torrance, CA 90503

DEC 0 8 2009

Dear Mr. Gibson:

We were in attendance at the November 10th Community Development workshop. We represent a major portion of the property located in Focus Area #1 Crenshaw/Amsler. There was considerable discussion about having a portion of this area designated as medium/high density residential. Although we believe this would make a good transition into General Commercial fronting Crenshaw Blvd., a designation of General Commercial for the entire Crenshaw/Amsler property would probably be a good alternative and encourage a better utilization of this property in the future.

We currently have a bowling center, health spa, church, recording studio, fast food restaurant and gas station, retail telephone sales, and retail flooring outlet on the property. The minimal industrial use includes a granite fabricator, machine shop, and a mechanical stress testing lab. Realistically, the church is probably not going to leave in the foreseeable future which makes a decent looking residential development rather difficult, if not impossible.

If you truly want to see this area change then the General Plan and zoning needs to change first, which will encourage development as the economy improves. These changes will make the development process easier and less costly. A General Commercial designation would give us the greatest development flexibility, including a housing component, if we can do it asthetically.

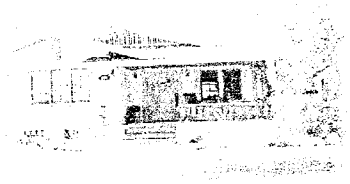
We thank you for the time and effort that you and your staff have put into this project. Although we are relatively close to the end there is still a considerable ways to go. If we can provide you with any further information please contact us at any time.

Sincerely,

George Brandt

GGB:jw

Cc: Greg Lodan



SAVE HISTORIC OLD TORRANCE

Olmsted Districts Preservation Association

The Zamperini House, 2028 Gramercy Ave, Torrance, CA 90501

310 320 0269 Website: www.SaveHistoricOldTorrance.com

Mayor Scotto
City Council Members
City Manager
City Attorney
cddgeneralplan@torranceca.gov

Dear Leaders of the City of Torrance:

Hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving! There's something we've wanted to talk with you about, but haven't had a chance to meet face to face, so we decided to send you an email. Now that our city's new strategic plan clearly spells out our city's focus on historic preservation and because Save Historic Old Torrance, aka Olmsted Districts Preservation Association, has spent the last six years bringing awareness of the need for historic preservation within our city both to the general public and to the elected officials, and because we have been instrumental in assuring that new building within the original city boundaries blends into this important historic area, we would like to ask that you add Save Historic Old Torrance aka Olmsted Districts Preservation Association to the wording in the General Plan that pertains to historic preservation; include Save Historic Old Torrance AKA Olmsted Districts Preservation Association in *all* matters pertaining to historic preservation, and if that necessitates it; make us a quasi part of the city in order to be included.

We consider ourselves partners with the city, and especially now that the strategic plan makes it official that the city has made historic preservation part of its goals, and the general plan most likely will follow suit, we feel that Save Historic Old Torrance aka Olmsted Districts Preservation Association has and will continue to make significant strides with the city toward this goal.

Save Historic Old Torrance (SHOT) AKA Olmsted Districts Preservation Association (ODPA) was founded in 2003, and became a 501 c3 with the state of California in 2004. It is our mission to educate and advocate regarding historic preservation within the guidelines of a 501 c3. It seems that commissioners and council members have been advised by the City Attorney and members of that office that being associated with Save Historic Old Torrance aka Olmsted Districts Preservation Association could possibly be a conflict with the Brown Act, and therefore membership discouraged. We are a 501 c3, just like all other nonprofits in the city. Commissioners and Council members continue to be affiliated with other nonprofits within the city without such discouragement from the City Attorney's office, even those organizations such as The Torrance Historical Society and Old Torrance Neighborhood Association, who in the last year or so have joined in saying that they support historic preservation. Just as commissioners

and council members serve on the board of other nonprofits within our city, and our not advised against such service, they should not be advised against participation in SHOT/ODPA.

It is SHOT who brought the Mills Act and an Historic Preservation Overlay Zone, the California Historic Building Code, Main Street Funding, and becoming a Certified Local Government to the public and elected officials awareness. It is SHOT/ODPA who brought Yolanda Gonzales, from the LA County Assessor's Office, to explain how the Mills Act works to the Community Development and Beautification Committee meetings; it is SHOT/ODPA who brought members of Los Angeles Conservancy to speak both before the planning Commission and the City Council; It is SHOT/ODPA who has worked with numerous home owners and developers to create a workable design both remodels and new construction that would compliment the charming historic area of Old Torrance, rather that standout as an anomaly, and it is SHOT/ODPA who produces the *Old Torrance Telegram*, a preservation publication, to inform the community.

We offer to the city, and its citizens, a tireless group of individuals who continually strive to educate ourselves and our community on the importance of historic preservation, and who work, and will continue to work, with the city to bring the goals for which we have advocated and which have now become the city's goals for historic preservation. We would very much like to partner and collaborate with the city in its efforts toward historic preservation. Specifically, we would like to partner with the city in the creation of the historic preservation ordinance, California Historic Building Code, Mills Act, historic preservation overlay zone (s), and all things that pertain to historic preservation.

We were quite disappointed when the city declined to include our participation in the creation of a design guide book for Old Torrance, and the planning of the signage for our Old Torrance, but we thought it was the decision of the former Mayor Walker, who blatantly stated from the dais that there was nothing in our city worth preserving, except maybe a couple of homes on Post Avenue.

We were very confused and disappointed, when our organization offered to provide the city with $10,000, and architectural historian, Cynthia Ward, who would give the city her discounted rate of $30,000 to do the survey of our historic resources, volunteers to help with that survey, and our willingness to work *with* the Torrance Historical Society, since at the final budget meeting before the City Council, their name appeared in the proposal for the city's budget proposal, even though it hadn't been in the budget proposal the week prior. We were quite surprised that instead of accepting our generous offer, the city council accepted the proposal as it was written, and *only* the Torrance Historical Society was given the task *and* $25,000 deposit of city funds to accomplish it. Even though we made this generous offer at a budget meeting, when Mayor Scotto asked why SHOT was not included, the City Manager, LeRoy Jackson, stated that it was not necessary to include us because the Torrance Historical Society is a part of the city. We didn't realize that we were going to continue to be excluded from collaboration with the city on matters of historic preservation unless the city makes us a quasi part of the city.

Even though elected officials repeatedly state from the dais that they welcome and encourage participation from the public, and praise the volunteers of nonprofit organizations within the city,

it appears that we have intentionally omitted from matters regarding historic preservation in which the city has thus far participated, much to our amazement and disappointment. Even though we continue to provide a valuable service to both the city and its residents, and continue to participate at Planning Commission and City Council meeting, we are once again being it seems being discriminated against and barred from participation with the city in matters regarding historic preservation. This intentional omission has forced us to explain ourselves in contrast to the Torrance Historical Society because this time we are being omitted from the wording in the General Plan, a twenty year plan for the city. Specifically, we are intentionally omitted from those sections regarding our community resources and historic preservation, (Community Resource Element 3.3.1 Historic Preservation, OBJECTIVE CR.12, Policy CR.12.2, and Appendix A, and yet, once again, the Torrance Historic Society *is* included as the organization with which the city will pursue its endeavors for historic preservation. It is here that Save Historic Old Torrance aka Olmsted District Preservation should be included both in word and in deed. We have been under the impression from elected officials that they and city employees welcome our collaboration, expertise and resources, but apparently we will not be included in matters regarding historic preservation unless made a part of the city.

After many residents, and members of SHOT/ODPA wrote letters and spoke at the Planning Commission's meeting requesting that SHOT/ODPA be specifically included in those sections of the General Plan which involve our community resources (for which SHOT/ODPA has advocated), we continue to be intentionally omitted. At the final "Updating of the General Plan Meeting," the Planning Commissions' meeting of October 28, 2009, several Commissioners: Browning, Busch, Skoll, and Chair Weideman acknowledged SHOT's importance, involvement and service to the community. Commissioners Browning, Busch, and Skoll stated that they believe that SHOT/ODPA *should be included* in the wording for the General Plan. Chairperson Weideman asked staff to give the reason that had been explained to them why SHOT/ODPA is not included. City Staff explained that the Torrance Historical Society *is* included because it is a quasi part of the city [a nonprofit free to act of its own volition and yet considered a part of the city, but without a mission statement of historic preservation], and SHOT/ODPA is *not* a quasi part of the city, and there is no guarantee that SHOT/ODPA will exist twenty years from now. Staff also stated that other nonprofit organizations are not included such as OTNA (Old Torrance Neighborhood Association).

As we are now aware of the reasons City Staff have been given and commissioners are given in order to exclude the only solely designated preservation organization in its city, we respectfully submit our request to be included in the wording in the General Plan, in all matters pertaining to historic preservation, and made a quasi part of the city, as the Torrance Historical Society was some twenty plus years ago. Save Historic Old Torrance aka Olmsted Districts Preservation Association serves our city and its residents in the area of historic preservation *only*. We are not a neighborhood organization, like the neighborhood and homeowners associations that exist throughout our city; we are an historic preservation organization. We intend to continue to serve our community and this city for many years to come, and we would like to do that as partners and a quasi part of the city of Torrance.

We do realize that the Torrance Historical Society was once a 501 c3 <u>unaffiliated</u> with the city, but serving an important role within the city as a repository of important artifacts of our city's

cultural heritage and promoting the remembrances of our city's history, just as SHOT/ODPA has been for the last six years serving our city as a 501 c3 unaffiliated with the city and serving an important function of promoting public awareness of the architectural treasures held within the city and the need to promote and protect them for future generations. We serve our community well, as acknowledged by the public and the Planning Commissioners. Even though we are the *only* organization within the city whose 501 c3 mission statement clearly states our purpose is to educate and advocate for historic preservation for the city of Torrance, we have been excluded from the wording in the draft of the General Plan, and repeatedly excluded from matters that pertain to historic preservation within our city. Instead, only the Torrance Historical Society, a very worthwhile organization and 501 c3 whose incorporation and mission statement has not and does not include historic preservation, and who was made a quasi part of the city some twenty plus years ago*, is solely* included in the General Plan wording. We acknowledge that in times past, the Torrance Historical Society has done things that aid historic preservation such as the survey of historic resources some twenty plus years ago, the plaque program and have aided in getting few buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, and it is *not* our intention to in any way belittle those significant accomplishments, but to clearly state Save Historic Old Torrance AKA Olmsted District Preservation Association's intention to work with the Torrance Historical Society, and any other organization willing to work to promote the preservation of our historic structures, landmarks and streetscape. We are truly delighted that both the Torrance Historical Society, and now, the Old Torrance Neighborhood Association, have publicly stated that they favor historic preservation.

Most cities which have incorporated historic preservation into their city's goals have done so with the assistance and collaboration of preservation organizations and historical societies. Since SHOT/ODPA became involved in the process of updating the general plan, we have spent the last six years raising public awareness of the need for historic preservation in our city. Save Historic Old Torrance aka Olmsted Districts Preservation Association's mission *is* historic preservation. There is no denying that the presence and efforts of SHOT/ODPA volunteers have made a favorable impact upon our city in regards to historic preservation. Therefore, we ask that you consider including Save Historic Old Torrance AKA Olmsted District Preservation Association in the wording of the General Plan, in all matters that pertain to historic preservation, and as a quasi city member and adding this topic to the agenda this topic if necessary, so we can better work together to continue to make Torrance the best community.

Best Wishes,

Bonnie Mae Barnard, Vice President

Olmsted Districts Preservation Association

Working to "Save Historic Old Torrance" for the kids of tomorrow