

**MINUTES OF GENERAL PLAN WORKSHOP #14  
OF THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Torrance General Plan Planning Commission Workshop #14 convened in a regular session at 7:02 p.m. on Wednesday, May 10, 2006, in City Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

**2. FLAG SALUTE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Drevno.

**3. ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Browning, Busch, Drevno, Fauk, Horwich, and Chairperson Uchima.

Absent: Commissioner Gibson.

Also Present: Senior Planning Associate Lodan, Planning Associate Joe, and Environmental Administrator Cessna.

Chairperson Uchima explained that the purpose of this workshop was to review the Guiding Principles that would be used as the foundation for the General Plan update and to discuss goals, objectives, and policies of the Land Use Element and Safety Element of the General Plan.

Senior Planning Associate Lodan introduced Community Development Department staff members and General Plan consultants.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 26, 2006**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Drevno moved for the approval of the April 26, 2006 General Plan Workshop minutes as submitted. Commissioner Horwich seconded the motion; a roll call vote reflected unanimous approval (absent Commissioner Gibson and with Commissioner Busch and Chairperson Uchima abstaining).

**5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES – CITY STAFF**

Senior Planning Associate Lodan noted that the Guiding Principles, presented by staff at the April 26, 2006 workshop, was included in the agenda material. He reported that the Guiding Principles condense major themes expressed during interviews with officials, public workshops, and the City Yard Open House.

## **6. DISCUSSION OF LAND USE ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES**

Diana Gonzalez, Cotton Bridges Associates, explained meeting objectives to continue discussion and review of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Land Use Element and begin addressing Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Safety Element. She provided highlights of the April 26, 2006 Workshop #13 and gave a power point presentation on the structure, review process, and differences between goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs for all General Plan elements. She stated that consultants were working with staff to update implementation programs that the Commission would have an opportunity to review at a later date with the entire draft General Plan.

Commissioner Busch noted that he was absent for Workshop #13; however, he completed his workbook and met with staff to ask questions and receive clarification.

Laura Stetson, Cotton Bridges Associates, thanked Commissioner Busch for completing the workbook and explained the review procedure to him and Chairperson Uchima. She presented the draft update of the Goals, Objectives, and Policies of the Land Use Element and guided Commissioners and public through an exercise to review the remaining goals, objectives, and policies of the Element beginning with Residential Environment: Objective 10.0. She provided an overview of each objective that included Residential Environment, Public/Quasi-Public, and Circulation and Parking. Ms. Gonzalez recorded Commissioners' input, noting which objectives and policies they recommended to be retained, modified, or deleted.

In response to Commissioner Busch's inquiry, Ms. Stetson advised that Section 10, Residential Environment, refers to all types of housing.

Referring to Policy 10.1, Commissioner Horwich expressed concern that there would not always be agreement on what is "compatible." Ms. Stetson agreed that there are terms used in the Element that will be interpreted differently by different bodies over time, noting that implementation programs would address standards and tools the City will use to ensure that it is "compatible", "attractive", or "high quality."

When Commissioner Browning commented that he had a problem with the word "scale," Ms. Stetson stated that in planning terms scale means bulk, size, and massing, not a measurable quality.

When Commissioner Busch inquired if developers are required to pay for part of landscaping and streetscape in Policy 10.5, Senior Planning Associate Lodan advised that there are special conditions that larger residential developments are subject to in paying their costs in terms of infrastructure, and that the Development Impact Fee would require developers to pay their fair share of undergrounding and above ground utilities.

Responding to Commissioner Drevno's inquiry, Senior Planning Associate Lodan stated that he has not received any newer reports from Dr. Stabler from Torrance Unified School District.

Commissioner Busch noted that schools look at average daily attendance to generate revenue, and received clarification from Ms. Stetson that developers pay fees

to the school district. Ms. Stetson explained that Policy 7.X. encourages close coordination between the City and school district.

Ms. Stetson explained that Section 11, Public/Quasi-Public, refers to hospitals, City Hall, fire and police stations, libraries, schools, and parks. She stated that Policy 11.5 was added to support growth needs and expansion of hospital and medical centers. She noted that the proposed policies are not committing the City to build certain things or rezone certain properties, but they will help the Planning Commission and City Council to guide in decision making.

Commissioner Busch stated that he strongly affirmed Policy 11.5, noting that there may be a future need for expansion of the hospital complexes in the City.

Referring to Policy 11.6, Commissioner Fauk questioned if it is the City's responsibility to provide or encourage day care facilities for residents. Ms. Stetson suggested eliminating the word "adequate," and to change the word "encourage" to "accommodate."

In response to Commissioner Horwich's concerns, Ms. Stetson explained that words such as "ensure" are used when the City feels strongly about the application of a policy over time, and that "encourage" and "accommodate" are policies that need softer language.

Commissioner Busch noted that, if the proposition on the June ballot to provide universal day care passes, a significant amount of funding will be created.

Commissioner Drevno noted that day care is not only limited to children but also includes adult day care.

Commissioner Busch stated that he has observed increased condominium development in the Airport area in the last two years.

Ms. Stetson presented section 12 of Land Use Goals, Objectives, and Policies regarding Circulation and Parking.

Commissioner Horwich commented that the City is built out, and that it was not realistic to expect new residential developments to be built parallel to transportation opportunities.

Ms. Stetson cited the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan, noting that transition of uses will be seen over time at appropriate locations.

Commissioner Busch initiated a brief discussion centered on mixed-use developments in Redondo Beach and that have been approved in the City.

Ms. Stetson recommended that Policy 10.X in Circulation and Parking be moved to the Circulation Element.

Responding to Commissioner Fauk's inquiry regarding eminent domain, Ms. Stetson stated that a policy would be added and brought back for review with the draft Land Use Element.

## **7. DISCUSSION OF SAFETY ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES**

Ms. Stetson led Commissioners through the interactive exercise with the Safety Element Goals, Objectives, and Policies that include Natural Hazards, Human Activity Hazards, and Emergency Preparedness and Public Safety Services.

In response to Commissioner Busch's inquiry regarding Policy X.X, Environmental Administrator Cessna explained that seismic regulations and retrofits are an on-going process but that unreinforced masonry issues have been addressed. She stated that as properties make changes, owners are required to bring them up to current seismic codes.

Ms. Stetson suggested that the words "unreinforced masonry buildings" be replaced with "buildings that do not meet current seismic codes."

Commissioner Busch recommended including a policy regarding emergency preparedness planning in the event of a tsunami.

When Commissioner Busch stated that the City's noise abatement program should continue to be encouraged and funded, Ms. Stetson agreed that it would be a good implementation program.

Chairperson Uchima suggested adding a policy regarding potential hazards related to security and terrorist activities.

Ms. Stetson provided clarification regarding the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Following completion of review of the Safety Element, the Commission recessed at 8:15 p.m.

## **8. COMMUNITY INPUT**

At 8:33 p.m., Chairperson Uchima welcomed comments from the audience.

Gabriela Juarez, Cabrillo Avenue, suggested adding stronger language in the Land Use Element that supports and encourages affordable housing for seniors as well as for moderate-income, young professionals.

Joseph Arciuch, Kathryn Avenue, stated that the City has a good noise abatement ordinance and safety plans; however, the rules need to be implemented and enforced. He expressed concern that airplanes make turns in unsafe areas and that helicopter pilots are not trained to stay away from major streets and facilities. He stressed the need for an Airport manager and noise abatement officers.

Commissioner Browning discussed the "handshake" agreement with Robinson Helicopter and the new noise abatement program that will be on line in next 30 to 60 days.

In response to Commissioner Busch's inquiry, Environmental Administrator Cessna advised that the FAA has ultimate control over flight patterns.

Yvonne Tressel, Cathann Street, stressed the importance of keeping the section relating to the Airport that promotes resistance to Federal or State takeover of Airport operations.

Arthur Plourde, West 169<sup>th</sup> Place, commented that the materials provided to the audience did not follow the presentation. He suggested that an analysis be conducted for any new development to determine the impact to the entire surrounding environment as well as a ground study in respect to toxins and hazardous materials.

John Mirassou, Susana Avenue, suggested including a policy that would require elected officials and Commissioners to be notified of pending State legislation. He discussed proposed legislation that would automatically allow every R1 lot in California to add an additional unit. He noted that development fees increase the price of a unit.

Commissioner Busch requested that staff research the proposed legislation.

Commissioner Horwich added that the State was also considering relaxing parking restrictions to create more affordable housing.

Mr. Mirassou commented that some types of jets are becoming more popular and affordable, and questioned if there were any mitigation measures against jet noise.

Environmental Administrator Cessna advised that jets have to meet the same criteria as any other aircraft, adding that there was a prohibition of jet fuel at the Airport.

Planning Associate Joe noted that the City was proactive on all pending legislation.

Janet Payne, Engracia Avenue, expressed concern that issues regarding historical preservation and Old Torrance were delegated to the Environmental Quality and Energy Conservation instead of the Planning Commission. She stated that Policies 3.X, 4.0, 4.1 and 4.3 were all planning policies and design guidelines that should recognize Old Torrance. She stressed the importance of historic preservation to the entire City.

Environmental Administrator Cessna agreed that there are certain areas of the land use plan that is applicable across the board, including Old Torrance. She noted that the actual historic preservation concept was moved into the Conservation Element.

In response to Commission Fauk's inquiry, she explained that historic preservation is specifically identified in the Conservation Element, leaving what deals with all neighborhoods across the board in the Land Use Element.

Ms. Payne stated that she did not see historical preservation going anywhere if it is only under the Conservation Element, and that she and other proponents of historic preservation feel that they have been "disciplined."

Ms. Stetson advised that under the law each element of the General Plan has equal weight and should be implemented equally. She offered to make sure that the General Plan includes adequate cross-references to show where specific types of issues are addressed.

Commissioner Horwich admired Ms. Payne's enthusiasm and persistence, and offered to recommend the inclusion of the words "such as historic Old Torrance" in Policy 4.3.

Howard Sachar, Catalina Avenue, Redondo Beach, received clarification from staff that Safety Element Policies 3.1 and 3.2 refer to implementation when change to property is initiated.

Jack Mitchell, Redbeam Avenue, stated that Land Use Policy 10.5 needed to clarify who is responsible for encouraging pleasing street trees. Planning Associate Lodan explained that as projects are approved and developed, it is the developer's responsible for landscaping and street trees; otherwise, there are programs where street trees are replaced as needed by the City.

Debbie Hayes stated that the assembly bill referred to by Mr. Mirassou was AB1876, noting that Torrance may have more clout in Sacramento because it is a charter city.

**9. SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS**

Senior Planning Associate Lodan encouraged audience members to submit any written comments to staff, who will then forward them to the General Plan consultants.

He advised that the previously scheduled workshop on May 24, 2006 is no longer needed and that the draft elements would be prepared and available for review this fall. He stated that there would be a series of public workshops and meetings to review the draft document at which time public comments would be welcomed.

Responding to Commissioner Faulk's inquiry, Planning Associate Joe stated that all participants on workshop sign-in sheets as well as property owners within the focus areas would be notified of future workshops.

Chairperson Uchima thanked staff, consultants, and audience members for their participation.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

At 9:46 p.m., Chairperson Uchima adjourned the meeting to May 17, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

Approved as Submitted June 7, 2006 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
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