

LAND USE ALTERNATIVES WORKBOOK



July 2005

PURPOSE

As part of the General Plan program, the Planning Commission (PC) will be asked to consider land use alternatives for seven (7) focus areas. This paper presents the land use classification system for the proposed General Plan, as well as possible alternatives for each focus area. The focus areas are:

1. **Crenshaw/Amsler** (Amsler and Moreton Streets and Dormont Avenue bounded by Crenshaw Boulevard and city limits)
2. **Western Avenue South** (between Plaza Del Amo and 228th Street)
3. **Cabrillo/Border** (bounded by Cabrillo Avenue, Carson Street, Border Avenue, and Plaza Del Amo)
4. **Western Avenue North** (between Artesia Boulevard and 190th Street)
5. **Redondo Beach Boulevard** (entire corridor within the City)
6. **East Victor Precinct** (bounded by Anza Avenue, Del Amo Boulevard, Torrance Boulevard, Hawthorne Specific Plan)
7. **Jefferson/Oak** (bounded by Jefferson Street, Santa Fe RR, Crenshaw Boulevard, & Carson Street)

We will address areas 4, 2, and 6 at the first workshop on July 27th. The remaining areas will be discussed at subsequent Commission workshops. A packet of maps has been provided to accompany this workbook. The map on the first page of the packet identifies the boundaries of each focus area. The focus areas were determined jointly by City staff and the consultant team and represent areas within the City where change may occur throughout the 20-year planning horizon of this General Plan update. Within portions of the City that do not lie within one of the identified focus areas, no major land use changes are anticipated within the General Plan update.

Please review this material and make notes in the spaces provided prior to upcoming Planning Commission meeting on July 27. Please come to the meetings prepared to offer your comments and suggestions regarding the land use classification system and proposed alternatives for each focus area.

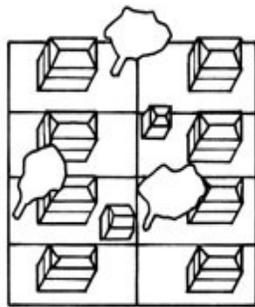
WORKBOOK CONTENT

This workbook provides an overview of the land use classification system and land use alternatives for the Torrance General Plan. The topics addressed in this paper are:

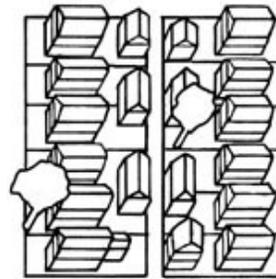
- Land Use Density and Intensity
- Land Use Classification System
- Land Use Alternatives

LAND USE DENSITY AND INTENSITY

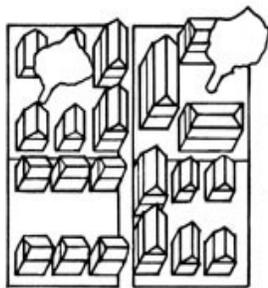
Planners describe the extent to which properties can be or are developed using the terms “density” and “intensity.” **Density** is used for residential uses and refers to the population and development capacity of a given parcel or group of parcels. Density within this paper is described in terms of dwelling units per acre of land (du/ac), exclusive of existing or proposed streets and rights-of-way. Typical residential densities found within the City of Torrance, and described within the current General Plan, are illustrated below.



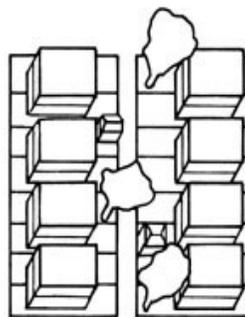
Low Density
1-9 units/acre



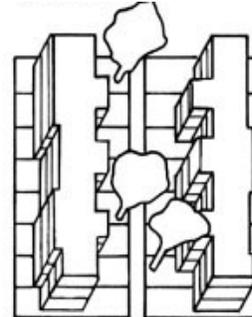
Low-Medium Density
9-18 units/acre



Medium Density
18-28 units/acre



Medium-High Density
28-44 units/acre



High Density
> 44 units/acre

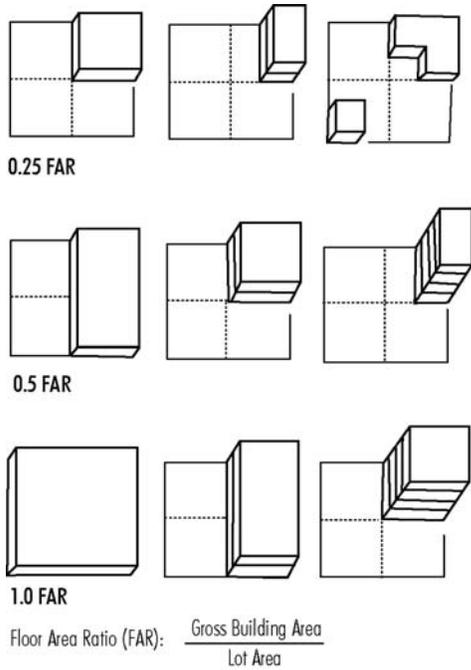
Development **intensity** refers to the extent of development on a parcel of land or lot (that is, the total building square footage, building height, the floor-area ratio, and/or the percent of lot coverage). While intensity is often used to describe non-residential development levels, in a broader sense, intensity also can describe overall levels of mixed residential and non-residential development. Throughout this paper, floor-area ratio (FAR) and building floor area square footage are used as measures of non-residential development intensity.

Floor-area ratio (FAR) expresses the intensity of use on a lot. FAR represents the ratio between the total gross floor area of all buildings on a lot and the total land area of that lot. For example, a

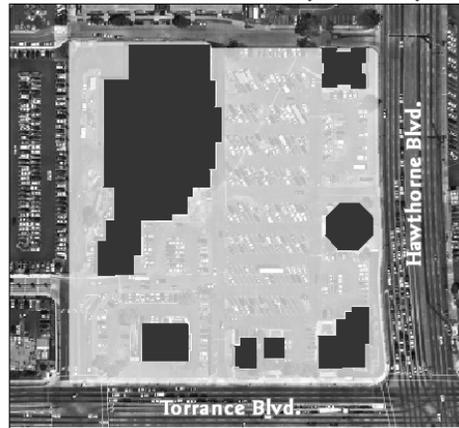
20,000-square-foot building on a 40,000-square-foot lot yields an FAR of 0.50. A 0.50 FAR describes a single-story building that covers half of the lot, a two-story building covering approximately one-quarter of the lot, or a four-story building covering one-eighth of the lot.

EXAMPLES OF FAR IN TORRANCE

For purposes of illustration, the diagrams below provide examples of FAR for commercial retail, industrial, and office sites drawn from throughout the City.

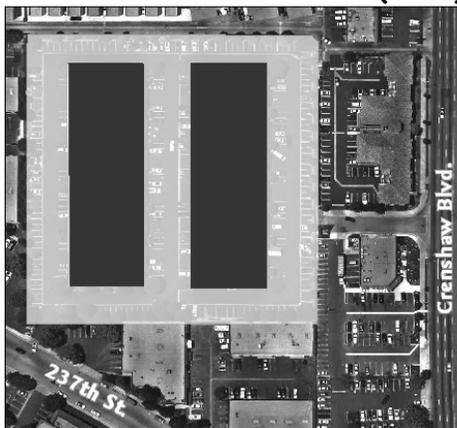


Commercial Center (C-CTR)



FAR: 0.27 Building Floor Area: 98,382 sq. ft.
Parcel/Lot Area: 368,997 sq. ft.

Industrial-Business Park (I-BP)



FAR: 0.40 Building Floor Area: 77,688 sq. ft.
Parcel/Lot Area: 192,709 sq. ft.

Industrial-Light (I-LT)



FAR: 0.59 Building Floor Area: 89,964 sq. ft.
Parcel/Lot Area: 153,418 sq. ft.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

The existing General Plan Land Use Element provides for 13 land use categories. Five categories are established for residential development, ranging from single-family residential development to multiple-family development. Three commercial categories, three categories for industrial development, a public activities/open space category, and an airport category are also established.

The land use designations from the current General Plan (1992) are listed below along with maximum permitted densities/intensities.

- **Low Density Residential** (1-9 units per acre)
- **Low Medium Density Residential** (9-18 units per acre)
- **Medium Density Residential** (18-28 units per acre)
- **Medium High Density Residential** (28-44 units per acre)
- **High Density Residential** (44+ units per acre)
- **Local Commercial** (Maximum 0.4 FAR)
- **General Commercial** (Maximum 0.6 FAR)
- **Commercial Center** (Maximum 1.0 FAR)
- **Heavy Industrial** (FAR does not apply)
- **Light Industrial** (Maximum 0.6 FAR)
- **Business Park** (Maximum 0.6 FAR)
- **Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space** (FAR does not apply)
- **Airport** (FAR does not apply)

PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN

As part of the General Plan update effort, City staff and the General Plan consultant team examined these land use categories to determine whether changes were needed to reflect development trends affecting Torrance's near and long-term futures. The proposed land use classification system presented in Table 1 contains two new land use designations (*Residential-Office and Hospital/Medical*), and eliminates one land use designation (*Local Commercial*). The City is also considering allowing mixed use commercial and residential developments with a maximum FAR of 1.0 under the Residential Office and General Commercial designations.

The *Residential-Office* (R-OF) designation permits the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses. The designation is intended to accommodate neighborhoods where office/ business and residential uses are gradually being combined. Smaller professional offices are the most desirable office use in this designation. Housing can include low- to medium-rise apartments or townhouses and condominiums on smaller lots. Developments that integrate residential and office uses within one structure will require a conditional use permit. Development would be allowed at a maximum FAR of 1.0 with residential densities ranging from 18 to 28 du/ac. The maximum FAR of 1.0 is intended to enable mixed use commercial and residential

development projects. The higher density in this designation is consistent with existing conditions in the areas where the designation is applied (R-MD; 18-28 du/ac).

The *Hospital/Medical* (HM) designation is intended to encourage the concentration of existing and proposed healthcare facilities and their related uses in a manner that will establish and maintain orderly growth of health care facilities. Appropriate uses include hospitals, professional offices offering medical, dental, or related services, and accessory buildings and facilities. The current General Plan designates hospital and medical uses as *General Commercial* or *Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space*. The HM designation will allow a maximum FAR of 1.0.

Table I presents descriptions of each proposed General Plan land use designation and the corresponding range of density or intensity of development permitted for each. The maximum allowable development on any individual parcel is governed by these measures of density or intensity, with the actual yield influenced by the physical characteristics of a parcel, access and infrastructure issues, and compatibility considerations, among other factors. These and other General Plan land use policies are implemented largely through the City’s Planning and Land Use Code.

Table I Proposed Land Use Classification System (2005)			
Land Use Designation		Density or Intensity Range	Description
Residential Designations			
R-LO	Low Density Residential	1-9 DU/Acre	Conventional single-residential residential development.
R-LM	Low Medium Density Residential	9-18 DU/Acre	Includes small lot single-family, two-family, townhouse developments and mobile home parks. Mobile homes are included to reflect current uses and as a guide for future development.
R-MD	Medium Density Residential	18-28 DU/Acre	Includes townhouses and low rise apartment buildings.
R-MH	Medium High Density Residential	28-44 DU/Acre	Includes low and medium rise apartments. These areas are appropriate for subterranean parking.
R-HI	High Density Residential	44+ DU/Acre	Includes medium and high rise apartment buildings and is appropriate for senior housing.
Commercial Designations			
C-GEN	General Commercial	Max. 1.0 FAR	Intended to permit a wide range of commercial uses. Permitted uses include shopping centers, professional and medical offices, food and beverage establishments, entertainment facilities, financial institutions and automotive sales. Maximum FAR has been increased to 1.0 to enable development of mixed-use commercial and residential projects within this designation.
C-CTR	Commercial Center	Max. 1.0 FAR	Used for areas where there is a concentration of intense commercial uses. (Currently used in the Del Amo Business Center and in Old Torrance.) Mixed-use commercial and residential uses are also permitted.
R-OF	Residential Office	Max. 1.0 FAR/18-28 DU/Acre	Permits the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses. Maximum FAR of 1.0 to enable development of mixed use commercial and residential projects within this designation.

Industrial Designations			
I-LT	Light Industrial	Max. 0.6 FAR	Characterized by a wide range of industrial uses where manufacture or assembly are primarily limited to enclosed buildings.
I-HVY	Heavy Industrial	NA	Characterized by older manufacturing industries which process raw or extracted substances and new industries which use hazardous materials. I-HVY uses should be segregated from other uses. The various oil refineries are the main uses in this designation. There is no proposed maximum FAR.
I-BP	Business Park	Max. 0.6 FAR	Characterized by a mixture of business and industrial uses. Ancillary retail uses are allowed but shopping centers are not appropriate. Development standards are more stringent than for other industrial designations to maximize compatibility with neighboring uses.
Public and Medical Uses			
PUB	Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space	NA	Provides for open space, land owned by public agencies and jurisdictions, and land owned by private entities for uses which serve the community.
HM	Hospital/Medical	Max. 1.0 FAR	Provides for existing and proposed healthcare facilities and their related uses in a manner that will establish and maintain orderly growth of health care facilities
AIR	Airport	NA	Torrance Municipal Airport and surrounding City-owned properties..

COMMUNITY INPUT

Through workshops conducted for the General Plan update, the community has expressed that land use decisions in Torrance should take into account the following:

- Impacts on traffic and circulation
- Impacts on the school district
- Impacts on existing and future infrastructure
- Need to preserve employment-generating land uses
- Continued trend of using industrial land for residential uses
- Historic preservation
- Need for senior housing
- Expansion needs of existing medical facilities

CHOOSING FOCUS AREAS

Understanding that land uses within most areas within the City are well-established and many are viable for the long term, most locations within the City will not change as a result of the General Plan update. City staff and the General Plan consultant team initially considered numerous focus areas throughout the City. After lengthy discussion, seven (7) focus areas were selected for further examination. These seven sites are opportunities to provide:

- 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 areas; and

- Recycling outdated industrial uses.

While the remaining areas were found not to need land use changes, the General Plan will include a discussion of many of these areas and present goals and policies to deal with specific issues raised by the community within those areas.

LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

As part of the General Plan program, the Planning Commission will be asked to consider land use alternatives for seven (7) focus areas identified by City staff and the consultant team. This section of the workbook presents possible alternatives for three of the focus areas, drawn from discussion of land use and economic development goals for each area. For each area, as few as one or as many as three land use alternatives are being considered, depending on the range of viable possibilities at each location. In addition, existing General Plan land use designations remain possible options within each area and will be referred to as the Existing General Plan Alternative.

This workbook does not discuss in detail the relative benefits/disadvantages of each alternative; that conversation will occur with the Planning Commission during the course of meetings to be held in July, August and September of 2005. The objective of those meetings is to consider and discuss the options that have been developed to date, evaluate the effectiveness of the current General Plan designations, suggest modifications to the options under consideration, and recommend a preferred land use plan for each area that best matches the City's long-range goals.

AREA #4: WESTERN AVENUE NORTH

PLANNING CONTEXT

Western Avenue is the City's eastern boundary between Artesia Boulevard on the north and 238th Street on the south and is adjacent to portions of the Cities of Gardena and Los Angeles. This focus area encompasses Western Avenue between Artesia Boulevard and 190th Street. Western Avenue is slowly developing into one of the City's prime employment corridors, as newer office and commercial uses are appearing in areas previously designated for business park uses. 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.

EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land uses generally reflect the current General Plan designations with the exception of several vacant parcels and residential uses on commercially designated parcels.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

Various General Plan designations are found in this focus area. *Local Commercial* (max. 0.4 FAR) uses are present from 178th Street to 186th Street. *General Commercial* (max. 0.6 FAR) uses are located at major intersections such as Artesia Boulevard and 186th Street. A large mobile home

EXISTING LAND USE

Several Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space uses are located in this focus area. Several medical uses are located along Torrance Boulevard. The South Bay Junior Academy, a private school, is located along Del Amo Street, as is Torrance Fire Department Station #5. The Little Company of Mary Hospital and the Earlwood Convalescent hospital occupy several acres within the focus area. Most parcels designated by the General Plan for *Business Park* uses have transitioned to either commercial or residential use.

Single-family homes are located along several small streets: Konya and Michelle Drives and Mansell Avenue. *Low Medium* (9-18 du/ac) residential uses are located behind the *Medium High* (28-44 du/ac) density properties on Anza Street and just west of the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan Boundary. *Medium High* (28-44 du/ac) residential uses are located all along Anza Street and on Emerald Street, east of Earl Street. Two mobile home parks are located in the area: Southwood Mobile Estates (Earl Street) and Del Amo Gardens Mobile Homes (Emerald Street).

Several large commercial parcels are located on Earl Street. Commercial uses include several public storage facilities, and the West End Racquet and Health Club, located along Spencer Street.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan allows for a variety of uses in this area. Several large parcels are designated for *Business Park* (max. 0.6 FAR) uses on Spencer and Earl Streets. *General Commercial* (max. 0.6 FAR) properties are located on Earl Street south of Emerald Street. A variety of residential densities are allowed in this area ranging from *Low Medium* (9-18 du/ac) to *Medium High* (28-44 du/ac).

ALTERNATIVE 1

- Designate the commercial properties on the west side of Earl Street between Emerald Street and Torrance Boulevard as *Hospital/Medical* (HM).
- Designate the currently *Medium High Density Residential* properties on the south side of Emerald Street east of Earl Street as *Hospital/Medical* (HM).
- Designate the currently *Business Park*-designated properties along Earl Street between Spencer and Emerald Streets as *Hospital/Medical* (HM).
- Designate the currently *Business Park*-designated properties north of Spencer Street as *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18-28 du/ac).

This alternative will allow for future expansion of existing medical facilities and encourage the transition from older business park uses to medium density residential uses.

ALTERNATIVE 2

- Designate the commercial properties on the west side of Earl Street between Emerald Street and Torrance Boulevard as *Hospital/Medical* (HM).

