

T O R R A N C E

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Contact: Jeffery W. Gibson
Community Development Director
(310) 618-5990
JGibson@TorranceCA.Gov
www.TorranceCA.Gov

The City Torrance Provides Examples of Successful Redevelopment Initiatives, Expresses Concern Over State Decision to Eliminate Redevelopment Programs

Torrance, Calif., June 21, 2011 – Today, the City of Torrance expressed its concern regarding the California state legislature’s decision to eliminate redevelopment agencies (RDA) as part of budget balancing efforts. The elimination of redevelopment statewide is tied to a new plan that would force agencies to give monies to schools and other local programs to continue to exist.

In Torrance, with prudent use, RDA has fueled economic vitality and shaped the community. Consequently, to the City of Torrance, the decision to eliminate the RDA program seems to rely solely on stories of agencies that have not abided with the program’s original intent, ignoring major information on its value for long term economic development. Torrance’s successful redevelopment projects provide evidence of its viability and significance to the continued growth of local communities.

Unbeknownst to many, the work of the City of Torrance Redevelopment Agency resulted in the creation of viable Torrance business parks such as the Meadow Park, Skypark, retail, commercial office and research and development business centers such as Torrance Center I and II, and buildings of major businesses including the North American Honda Corporation headquarters, Miyako Hybrid Hotel and Sunrider’s International Headquarters. Redevelopment also assisted in the creation of five affordable housing developments and in developing an innovative program for first time homeowners.

Through redevelopment, Torrance transformed a once truly blighted area called “winter Walteria Lake” into a viable area and industrial park; the Meadow Park has since provided jobs to the South Bay area and enhanced property tax base.

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**3031 TORRANCE BLVD. TORRANCE, CA 90503
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Torrance Expresses Concern Over Redevelopment Elimination, page 2 of 2

This project area is now complete and has paid all project-related debt. The property tax revenue distribution has been returned to a non-redevelopment distribution, further contributing to the local economy.

The arrival of American Honda's headquarters and Torrance Centers I and II can also be attributed to redevelopment. The closure of heavy industrial business such as US Steel, ARMCO, Pasminco and Rome Cable left abandoned buildings and brought job losses. With redevelopment, however, the city recovered loss of jobs and land values as the City itself loaned substantial funds to the Redevelopment Agency and developers to reinvent what is now known as the Industrial Redevelopment Project Area. Its transformation for different use resulted in the location of American Honda and some of Torrance's business partners, contributing to its fiscal strength and its character as a business hub.

In recent years, Torrance has initiated new projects within the existing Downtown Redevelopment Project Area. This boot strap effort in Torrance's downtown area is making great strides to revitalize what had become a struggling business community. The effort has resulted in new and rehabilitated housing, a substantially improved streetscape, new commercial activity and a reinvigorated spirit, which even today keeps pushing for further efforts and continued redevelopment.

Torrance's redevelopment projects provide evidence of the program's viability in assisting cities in their effort toward long-term economic development and enriching community life. With the lack of an alternative strategy from the State legislature, the decision to eliminate redevelopment agencies reflects a lack of information and careful consideration of its positive impacts on cities and the residents they serve.

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