

TORRANCE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Responses to Questions from September 23, 2009 Planning Commission Workshop

Question or Comment	Response
<i>Introduction</i>	
1. On pages I-12, 13: how do the new Guiding Principles compare to the old ones?	Guiding Principles are a new addition to the General Plan; they reflect the comments received during the public workshops and the goals and priorities of the updated Strategic Plan. Guiding Principles were not featured in the 1992 General Plan.
<i>Land Use Element</i>	
1. How has Residential-Medium Density worked to date?	Medium Density Residential is implemented by the R-3 zoning designation and currently allows a density range 18 to 28 dwelling units per acre. Properties within these designations have been the location of much of the residential development over the life of the existing General Plan. The types of development occurring in these designations include a mix of detached homes, attached town homes and stacked flats. Past development has included senior housing. The largest concentration of this type of development is found in the Planned Development neighborhoods (mastered planed communities which are governed by strict design and development standards) along Plaza Del Amo between Maple Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard.
2. For the Crenshaw-Amsler focus area, how will the fact that the spa and church share parking affect future redevelopment of the site?	Future development shall comply with the new General Plan Land Use designation and development standards in the Zoning Code. The existing uses and shared parking arrangements will need to be considered in any

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	development proposal.
3. How is mixed use working? There appear to be a lot of vacancies in Old Torrance.	Mixed-use has been a successful component of Downtown Torrance since its inception. Current vacancies are reflective of economic conditions and constraints related to property characteristics.
4. Existing residential development along Redondo Beach Boulevard has wonderful setbacks and character. Any change to land use policy could open up the area to overdevelopment that could adversely affect this character.	The proposed land use designation changes for residential properties in the Redondo Beach corridor reflect existing land use and density patterns. There is limited opportunity for more intense development given the current configuration of properties; any more intense development would require larger parcels of land.
5. The photo on page LU-70 should be replaced so it doesn't show an existing business and imply that it could be displaced by a trail within the SCE easement. Show an abandoned rail right-of-way instead.	A new photo will be taken to replace this photo.
6. In the Hospital/Medical land use category, medical office buildings should be allowed an FAR of up to 1.0.	Development exceeding a FAR 0.6 should be reviewed by the Planning Commission to ensure compatibility with existing land use and to allow analysis of traffic and other impacts of new proposals.
7. The proposed land use changes on Border Avenue will make existing industrial businesses nonconforming. Will businesses be forced out?	Existing non-conforming land uses are subject to the non-conforming provisions of the Zoning Code, which allows established uses to remain as long as they wish. However, they cannot expand. Reuse or redevelopment of non-conforming properties would be subject to provisions of the new General Plan Land Use designation.
8. The figure on page LU-12 shows 12% public and open space uses. Is the City meeting its State obligation to provide open space?	Figure LU-12 simply reports baseline conditions. The State does not obligate cities to provide a certain amount of open space within its jurisdiction. Policy CR.6.1 of the Community Resources Elements recommends that the City provide recreational open space at a ratio of 10 acres per 1,000 residents.

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<p>9. The High Density Residential category has no upper limit on density. Future development in this category could be at densities seen in Manhattan.</p>	<p>The R-5 (High Rise Residential District) in the Zoning Code implements the High Density Residential designation. There are currently three properties in the City that are designated High Density Residential and zoned R-5. These properties are currently developed with affordable senior apartment units, one of which has a density of 155 units per acre. However, Planning staff recommends establishing a density range of 44.1-60 units per acre for the High Density Residential category, and including language in the Plan that allows higher densities in extraordinary circumstances, such as the senior high-rise project that exists today.</p>
<p><i>Circulation and Infrastructure Element</i></p>	
<p>1. Pavement conditions of two specific road segments are not addressed: a) Madison from Lomita to Skypark and b) Skypark from Hawthorne to Madison</p>	<p>Maintenance of roadways is not a component of General Plan. The speaker's concerns have been forwarded to the Public Works Department for maintenance and/or incorporation into the Capital Improvement Program.</p>
<p>2. The Skypark/Hawthorne intersection is terrible. What are the intersection improvement plans?</p>	<p>Improvements are currently underway as follows: creation of a second southbound turn lane and conversion of westbound middle lane to allow left turns.</p>
<p>3. On page CI-19: How much of the rail line is being abandoned, and who will acquire the right-of-way?</p>	<p>It is not known how much rail line has been abandoned. The railroad retains the ownership of the right-of-way until it decides to sell the property. Near Border Avenue, the City has purchased right-of-way that ran down the middle of the street and between private properties. Some areas are being used for additional street purposes or parking. The City is investigating options for other portions it has purchased from the rail companies.</p> <p>In certain locations, railroad spurs have been abandoned and sold to adjacent property owners (largely industrial).</p>
<p>4. What is the status of the Del Amo Boulevard extension</p>	<p>The right-of-way and utility constraints have been</p>

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and Crenshaw Boulevard improvements referenced in Table CI-3?	addressed. Utility relocation construction will tentatively start 2010. Bridge construction (Phase 2) tentatively scheduled to start in the summer of 2010.
5. Portions of Crenshaw Boulevard already operate at level of service D. New development will only make traffic worse. How will traffic be mitigated?	Improvements along Crenshaw Boulevard, as with other arterials, have been identified in the City-wide Traffic Study. The study has identified near-term and long-range improvement needs to be programmed into the Capital Budget to achieve service level objectives.
6. Crenshaw Boulevard is in ill repair.	Maintenance of roadways is not a component of the General Plan. Two phases of Crenshaw Boulevard improvement are scheduled to start January 2010 between Sepulveda Boulevard and Maricopa Street, with the next phase to follow immediately after for the area between 190 th and 182 nd .
<i>Community Resources Element</i>	
1. On page CR-43, please clarify the phrase "farther inland" with regard to air quality conditions.	Due to prevailing off-shore winds, Torrance experiences better air quality compared to inland areas of the South Coast Air Basin that are farther away from the coast.
2. Will Sur La Brea ever have handicapped access? (see page CR-6)	Policy CR.7.6 of the Community Resources Element to make Torrance's parks, recreation, and community facilities compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act standards for accessibility has been included.
3. On page CR-55, Objective 15, add the following additional policy: "Survey and study the City's open spaces and parklands to identify additional areas of existing or restorable wildlife habitat. At selected sites, develop restoration and enrichment programs to provide enjoyment and education to residents nearby in their local neighborhoods."	Comment noted for the record. This issues is addressed in Implementation Program 3-17: Wildlife Protection C. <i>Identify, inventory, and map wildlife habitat, and establish methods for preservation and restoration.</i>

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4. The historic preservation section is weak. Look back at comments made on the prior draft and make sure they are appropriately included.	Initial concerns included the placement of Historic Preservation in the Community Resources Element rather than Land Use, however, further discussion seemed to ameliorate that concern, as it was stated that all elements are, by law, to be looked on as equal in importance and that both sections were relevant to the entire City. In response, however, an addition to the Land Use Element, found on LU-42, discusses Old Torrance specifically, including many of the concerns such as Historic Preservation Overlay. At the most recent discussion of the draft Resource Conservation Element, there was no mention made of additional concerns regarding Historic Preservation.
5. The speaker appreciates that wildlife habitat discussion has been added on p. CR-33 but would like it included under objectives and policies as well on p. CR-26.	The issue is addressed in Implementation Program 3-17: Wildlife Protection C. <i>Identify, inventory, and map wildlife habitat, and establish methods for preservation and restoration.</i>
Safety Element	
1. The element mentions that the City has only 1-1/2 days of emergency water supply. Can the City improve this situation?	Policies S.7.5 and S.7.6 address the provision of adequate water supplies to meet emergency needs. This may include expanding storage capabilities.
2. Address the threats of terrorism.	The General Plan Safety Element recognizes the potential for terrorist threats in Section 3.3.1 Crime and Terrorism on page S-37. The goals, policies, and implementation programs in this Element apply to terrorism readiness and response.
Noise Element	
No comments were made on the Noise Element.	
Housing Element	
1. Table H-40: Has additional progress been made toward	There have been an additional 16 units constructed since

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the RHNA goals (i.e., additional units constructed)?	June 2008; Table H-40 was last updated in August 2009. These units would count towards the moderate-income and above moderate income categories.
2. Table h-36: Have impact fees changed?	Building fees are indexed yearly. School and park and recreation fees are periodically updated.
3. Table H-17: The age of the housing stock indicated means that infrastructure is aging as well.	Infrastructure issues are addressed beginning on page CI-44 of the Circulation and Infrastructure Element. The discussion acknowledges the age of infrastructure systems and describes programs the City has initiated to monitor and upgrade weaknesses in the systems. Development Impact Fees are collected to fund, in part, such programs.
4. The Housing Element does not contain any information regarding sober living homes or Level 14 housing (for court-placed students).	Sober living homes and homes for wards of the court generally qualify as group homes, which have six or fewer residents, or as foster homes (in the case of minors). As State law does not allow the City to regulate group homes or foster homes (they are considered the same as any other residence), the Housing Element does not address either directly.
5. If the default density for lower-income housing is 30 units per acre, why does the R-MD category go up to 31 units per acre?	The density of 31 units per acre provides a bit more flexibility for meeting the affordable housing minimum default density. Because current standards for the R-3 and R-3-3 zones allow a maximum density of 27 units per acre, the City will need to amend the Zoning Code to reflect this density.
General Comments	
1. Make sure that the Zoning Code and General Plan are consistent with one another.	Policy LU.1.1 of the Land Use Element addresses resolving inconsistencies between the General Plan and the Municipal Code.
2. Make sure that the Capital Improvement Plan is consistent with the General Plan. Describe how the CIP will need to change upon General Plan adoption.	The General Plan provides a vision for infrastructure improvements. The current CIP takes into consideration some of these improvements. Subsequent updates of the

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	CIP will reflect General Plan objectives and policies, with programming of the Capital Budget annually reviewed and approved by the City Council based on needs and availability of resources to pursue CIP projects.
3. Are the goals measurable? They should be.	As part of the annual General Plan progress report required by state law, the City will assess and report progress toward each goal.
4. Describe how the Strategic Plan is reflected in the General Plan.	Beginning with the inclusion of the Strategic Plan Vision in the Introduction section of the General Plan and continuing with use of Strategic Plan quotations at the beginning of many of the elements, the Strategic Plan, both from 1999 and as the 2008 update was completed is an integral part of the General Plan. The General Plan is intended to reinforce the priorities, goals and visions found within the Strategic Plan.
5. Were owners of properties in the Study Areas notified of potential changes to the Land Use Designations?	In September 2005, the property owners within the seven original Study Areas were notified of the consideration of changes in the Land Use Designations as part of the General Plan Update and upcoming Planning Commission General Plan Update public workshops. In September 2009, the owners of properties throughout the City that are being considered for changes in Land Use Designations (located within the Study Areas or designated Local Commercial or Hospital-Medical-Dental HMD) were notified of the proposed changes and recent Planning Commission meetings.