

redevelopment element



#### INTRODUCTION:

Early identification of potential areas of blight and decay within the City enables the community to activate various programs, improvement actions, and police power mechanisms designed to stem the continued expansion of that blight and to rehabilitate and revitalize affected areas. The identification of areas with existing or potential problems is not to be construed as an indication that the area does not warrant continuing investment or that new development should not occur; instead, the designation of areas for investigation and action within the Redevelopment Element is intended to spur both public and private action to correct known problems and create a healthy area warranting continued public and private investment and confidence.

#### PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Redevelopment Element of the General Plan is twofold; first, to designate the areas in which conditions of blight are found, and second, to identify the plans and programs which will lead to the elimination of blighted areas within the City of Montebello. Authorization for preparation of this element is contained in the California Government Code, Section 65303.

#### DEFINITIONS:

Redevelopment is defined under California law (Health and Safety Code Section 33020) as "the planning, development, re-planning, redesign, clearance, reconstruction, or rehabilitation, or any combination of these of all, or part of the survey area, and the provisions of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, or other structures or spaces as may be appropriate or necessary in the interest of the general welfare including recreational and other facilities incidental or pertinent to them." Redevelopment does not exclude the retention of existing buildings or uses where they are deemed essential to the redevelopment or rehabilitation of the area, or where they are deemed to be compatible with the proposed redevelopment of the area.

Blight is defined as conditions of deterioration, debilitation, or disfunction which exists within an area or areas of the city, characterized by substandard conditions, obsolescence, social and economic maladjustment, and other conditions which threaten the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the community, both those residing within the area and those without.

#### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Goals established by the citizens of the community both in 1970<sup>1</sup> and 1973<sup>2</sup> indicate a substantial concern with community maintenance and revitalization. The goals established in 1970 were:

1. Cooperate with private enterprise, community and public agencies and commissions in identifying areas and establishing priorities, objectives, and workable programs for the systematic maintenance and revitalization of residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhoods.
2. Identify pockets of declining or unstable economic land use characteristics and develop methods of a continuing inventory of such areas.
3. All neighborhood revitalization programs shall be coordinated with and complimentary to the goals and objectives established in the land use element of the plan.
4. Examine and outline programs to facilitate the revitalization of neighborhoods. This shall include coordination of all city departmental services, as well as all other private and public agencies.
5. Examine systems for public right-of-way vacations and reductions to effect property consolidations in connection with revitalization programs.
6. The objectives of neighborhood revitalization programs shall be to improve the environmental quality within the neighborhoods and encourage private investments, broaden the tax base, avoid economic waste, increase retail sales, provide employment and improve housing in the manner consistent with other community goals.

<sup>1</sup>Montebello City Planning Commission.

<sup>2</sup>Citizens Advisory Committee, Montebello General Plan Program.

7. Continuously evaluate the needs, problems and condition of housing within the City and endeavor to maintain an adequate supply of good housing through programs of code modification and enforcement and incentives to private developers.
8. Set guidelines for supporting land use maintenance codes and enforcement programs.

A subcommittee of the Citizens Advisory Committee in 1973 developed the following goal:

Identification of declining areas should be made by the City's Department of Community Development.

#### CONSTRAINTS:

The City of Montebello has few instances of marked deterioration, although some factors which characterize blight are found throughout the City. Four areas have been determined to contain sufficient conditions of blight to warrant the designation of these areas for further study and action by the community. These four areas and the factors which contribute to the designation of each of these areas are discussed in the following paragraphs and are designated as improvement areas on the redevelopment element map.

#### South Montebello Industrial Area:

The south portion of the City of Montebello is devoted primarily to industrial activities. Development in the area has been inhibited by such factors as poor utility service, railroad-roadway conflicts, and inadequate streets. The land has been primarily devoted to land demanding uses, particularly trucking facilities and open storage activities. As new development has gradually occurred in this area, problems have become more apparent. This area was designated for further study and potential redevelopment and revitalization for reasons which include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Street design. Streets that exist in the study area are inadequate to provide for reasonably unrestricted movement of vehicles through the South Montebello area. Congestion and conflicts exist as people and vehicles attempt to move into, out of, and through particularly that area south of Sycamore Street and north of the Santa Ana Freeway. Problems are amplified by construction of movements caused by such major physical barriers as the Santa Ana Freeway, the Rio Hondo Channel, and the Santa Fe Railroad.

2. Vehicular-railroad conflict. North-south traffic movement in Montebello, particularly in the southern portion of the City, is restricted to a single unseparated grade crossing of the Santa Fe Railroad at Greenwood Avenue. Vehicular movement is restricted and substantial traffic backup occurs along Greenwood Avenue when this crossing is blocked by a train.
3. Properties with inadequate access. Lack of adequate street access to some properties in South Montebello area has inhibited their development. As a result, these properties are underutilized and represent stagnant, non-productive lands which could otherwise be useful and valuable to the economic well being of the City.
4. Mixed land use. Residential uses are inter-mixed with industrial uses in the area; the basic standard of building and site improvement and maintenance found in these residential uses is poor. This situation represents an undesirable social condition as well as a deterrent to investment in the area.
5. Drainage. Drainage is poor in some areas of South Montebello. In particular, this condition exists in the vicinity of Greenwood Avenue and Maple Street and at the intersection of Gage Road and Union Avenue.

#### Whittier and Beverly Boulevard Development

The land which lies along the two major east-west streets of Montebello, Whittier Boulevard and Beverly Boulevard, could potentially offer sites for commercial services facilities as well as contribute to the economic welfare of the community through the generation of sales and property taxes. The full potential of these streets, though, is not realized at the present time because they are developed in the strip-zoned street pattern typical of many urban areas. Activities which occur side by side are often unrelated and in some cases incompatible. Specific factors which have lead to the designation of these two boulevards for further study include, but are not limited to:

1. Land use. Unused and under-utilized land and buildings represent an unproductive condition of the land. Commercially zoned lands along Whittier Boulevard are substantially developed; however, there are approximately 15 acres of commercially zoned land on Beverly Boulevard

not occupied by commercial use. Both major streets are characterized by vacancy in their existing commercial structures. In early 1973 Beverly Boulevard was found by the City of Montebello Planning Department to contain 42,757 square feet of commercial use, of which 5 percent was vacant. Whittier Boulevard contained 104,940 square feet, of which 12 percent was vacant. These vacancy factors, however, do not fully illustrate the vacancy problem which exists on these two main streets, as indicated by high turnover rates in some structures and apparently marginal operations in others.

2. Congestion and conflict. As is experienced in other areas of strip commercial development, conflicts exist between local auto traffic seeking to attain access to or egress from commercial establishments and other activities located on the major streets in competition with traffic utilizing the streets for crosstown travel. In the areas of the more intensive commercial development, pedestrian crossing of the streets further amplifies the problems of auto movement and circulation.
3. Inadequate lot size and insufficient off-street parking. Many of the commercial properties which front on Beverly Boulevard and Whittier Boulevard are of inadequate size or inappropriate shape for efficient commercial use. The lots are generally too narrow and shallow to allow for adequate off-street parking. Creation of parking districts, which has begun downtown, is one method of providing adequate parking; other arrangements must be made in areas where this method is not feasible.
4. Incompatible or undesirable arrangement of land uses. While there is sufficient market support to permit commercial development of many of the properties along these main boulevards, some parcels have remained undeveloped or have been devoted to uses incompatible with other uses already existing along the streets. Residential uses, for example, have been mixed with commercial uses; the resulting condition is not beneficial. In some cases the inability to establish a productive and revenue producing use of these lots along the main streets has left the land stagnant and unproductive; it could be redeveloped to contribute to the welfare of both the property owners and the City.

### North Montebello Hill Area

The hill area, between the Pomona Freeway and Lincoln Boulevard, is the major remaining undeveloped property in the City. This property has for many years been devoted to oil recovery operations and is only now beginning to be converted to urban uses. Although development has begun in the lower and flatter portions of the hills, conditions in the remaining hill area present problems to its urbanization in a manner consistent with City objectives. Primary concern of the community must be with the proper utilization of this last remaining undeveloped area to assure that it will contribute positively to the health, safety, and welfare of the City. In particular, the Land Use Element of the General Plan for the City calls for this area to be devoted to residential and commercial activities. The development of this property in the most desirable manner may be impaired by:

1. Topography. The topography of the hill area is such that in many cases extensive grading would be required to locate housing or commercial activity on the land. The need to grade, though, conflicts with the substantial community interest in protecting and preserving the natural quality of the hill area and in conserving some of the more scenic and unusual areas to be utilized for park and open space purposes by the entire community.
2. Utilities and Streets. At the present time the area is characterized by an inadequacy in the streets and utilities systems. Provision of an adequate street system for both through and local traffic is essential to the proper use of this land. Similarly, adequate utility service must be available to assure that the development of the hill area does not burden the community with the creation of new public facilities and services to serve that new department.
3. Natural Resource Utilization. The hill area is now primarily devoted to oil recovery operations, with a portion of the area also used for underground storage of natural gas. It is anticipated that oil operations will continue for some time but then gradually be phased out; gas storage is expected to continue indefinitely. While these operations will not necessarily prevent development of the hills, they may have an inhibiting effect unless the interface between the utilization of these natural resources and the development of urban activities is carefully controlled.

4. Utility Easements and Rights-of-Way. The northeast area of the hills is crossed by several major electric transmission lines, located there when urbanization of the hills was not anticipated, and no projection of the types and arrangement of uses which might locate on there had been made. The configuration and alignment of these lines make proper utilization of a significant portion of the hills as envisioned by the General Plan difficult. Realignment of these easements and rights-of-way and possible consolidation of rights-of-way is necessary to assure a proper development of the portions of the hill area affected by them.
5. Adjacent Land Uses. The land fill operation which abuts the City of Montebello exists as a major influence on the hills. Although the cover and fill operation is ultimately designated for a recreational open space use, its present character and height impair the proper utilization of lands immediately adjacent to it, cause other problems such as blowing dust and debris not contained on the site, and contribute to the continuing deterioration of the environment in the immediate area.

#### POLICIES:

Major policies of the City with regard to elimination of blighted conditions which may exist within the community are as follows:

1. To undertake programs and actions which will reduce or eliminate the conditions of blight found to exist within any area of the City.
2. To maintain standards of improvement which will avoid the creation of conditions of blight.
3. To continue to enforce health, building and safety laws as a means of encouraging the maintenance and improvement of property within the City and discouraging deterioration and obsolescence.

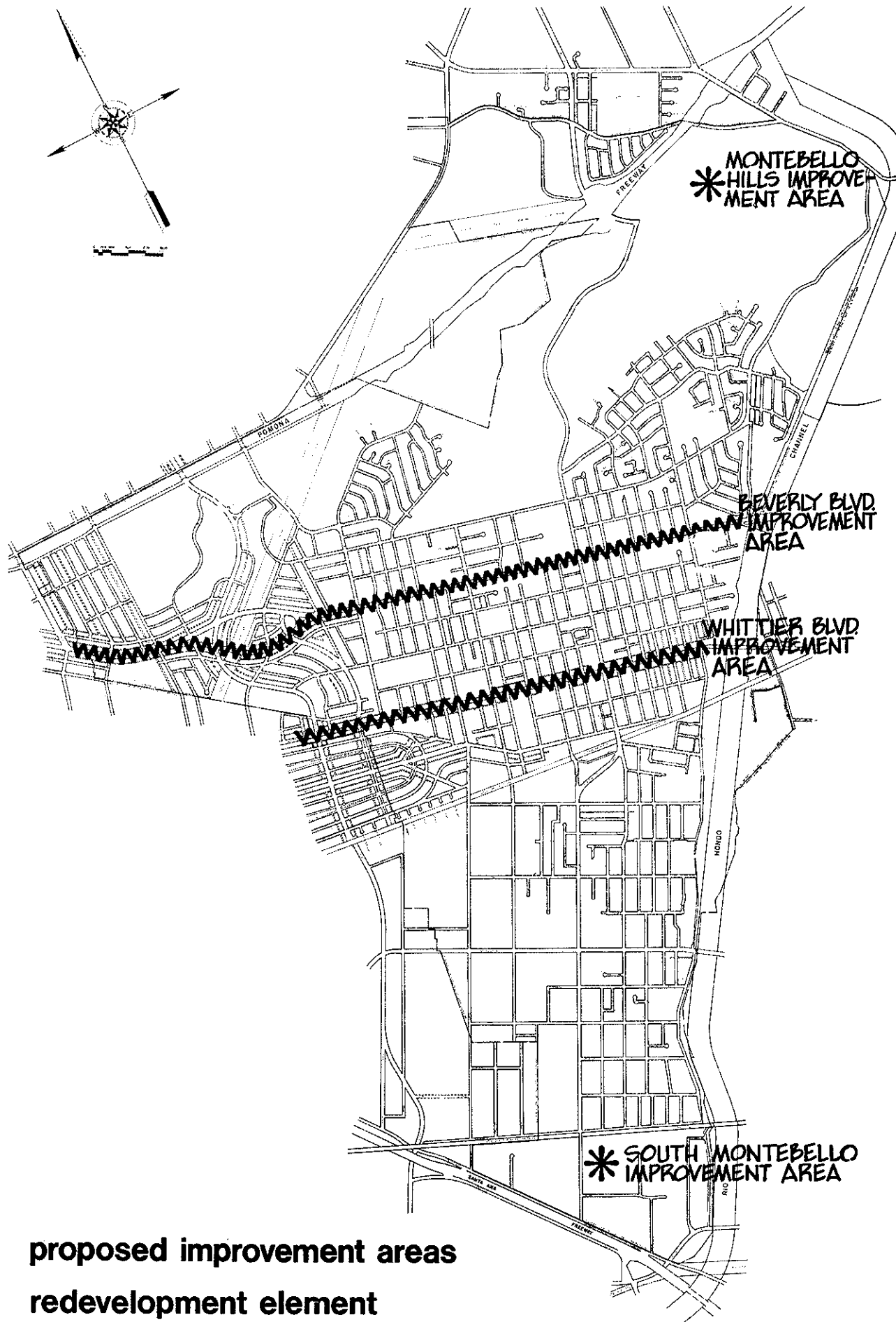


#### ACTION PROGRAM:

The City of Montebello should continue programs and activities which will lead to the elimination of blight and deteriorated conditions inimical to the community interest. The City has established a Community Redevelopment Agency and, with the powers granted to this agency, is undertaking the identification of specific areas for study purposes. These survey areas may ultimately yield a designation of redevelopment project areas. Plans and programs for each project area designated should be developed in cooperation with the community, through an advisory committee and/or by owner participation, and presented to the legislative body for action.

A continuing program of analysis of conditions and remedial methods will enable the Department of Community Development and other city departments to identify and deal with problems of blight, deterioration, and obsolescence in the community. This recommended program may include, in addition to the redevelopment processes permitted under California law, strengthening of codes and ordinances which affect physical development in the community and establishment of public information program to acquaint its citizens with those codes and ordinances and to assist them in undertaking activities which will reduce undesirable conditions.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the plan, nothing contained herein shall be deemed or construed to in any manner, indicate or evidence any intention on the part of the City of Montebello to at any time in the future, acquire by purchase, eminent domain or any other means, any real property and/or appurtenances for purposes of implementing any provision of this plan.



**proposed improvement areas**

**redevelopment element**

**MONTEBELLO, CALIFORNIA GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM**

KOEBIG & KOEBIG, INC.