

# CHAPTER

# I LAND USE ELEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

*“Realizing our vision depends upon...striving to attain a balance among residential, commercial, and industrial interests; [and] strengthening the character and appearance that defines Torrance as a model community...”.*  
*-City of Torrance Strategic Plan, 2008*

The pride Torrance residents feel about their community is unique and very evident. In many cities, the issues of the day center on what should change. In Torrance, the community talks about what should not change. Residents tell you about their safe and well-maintained neighborhoods, with quality housing and a strong sense of community. Families and seniors praise the parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services that are unparalleled in the South Bay. Residents and small business owners describe the beauty and charm of Downtown Torrance, an area that embodies the City’s history and aesthetic character. Larger business owners speak about Torrance’s business-friendly environment and the opportunities to grow. Residents and visitors tell you about the beautiful and little-known ocean views and the pleasures of Torrance Beach. From all, you hear about a community committed to preserving Torrance

as a vibrant place – a balanced city – that past and present generations have worked hard to create and maintain.

The City's history, character, and amenities make Torrance a very desirable place to live. Individuals and families looking for a quality living environment understand that Torrance offers many diverse housing opportunities. People drive from throughout the South Bay to Torrance to visit the City's commercial districts. Many businesses large and small, including significant healthcare providers, appreciate Torrance's advantageous location and access to a varied labor pool. Thus, this Land Use Element reflects and supports the community's long-established goal to remain a balanced community, and to retain the features that create a unique and successful city. Part of that balance includes providing for the City's long-term fiscal stability, accommodating modest residential growth to meet the housing needs of a diverse demographic,<sup>1</sup> improving aging commercial and industrial areas, and implementing infrastructure improvements that support changing needs over time.

When Torrance initiated its General Plan update in 2004, a key concern of residents was that land use policy changes would result in uncontrolled population growth. This Plan does provide for transition in targeted areas of the City but for modest population growth. The anticipated growth will result from natural birth and death rates, people moving to the City, and the expected continuation of multi-generational households due to housing costs and family care needs related to an aging population. With regard to residential neighborhoods, the consequences of not anticipating and planning for this growth can include an increase in substandard housing, overcrowding, illegal garage conversions, and an increase in cars parking on residential streets. Unmanaged growth can also strain the City's existing infrastructure, parks, water resources, and school capacity. The City must be smart and strategic about how it plans to accommodate a growing regional population and how it will provide the services, infrastructure, jobs and development conditions needed to preserve the quality of life in Torrance. Additional and affordable housing units will be needed not only to accommodate the population growth, but to maintain a healthy business climate.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE LAND USE ELEMENT**

State planning law requires that the Land Use Element designate "the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land" for a variety of purposes (Government Code Section 65302[a]). Through maps and

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<sup>1</sup> Compared with the 1992 General Plan land use, over a 20-year period, the General Plan estimates growth that averages about 155 residential units per year. This 0.2% yearly growth is modest in comparison with growth in the region.

text, this Element defines the distribution and intensity of development of residential neighborhoods, commercial and industrial districts, parks and other open spaces, and public or quasi-public uses of property in Torrance. In particular, the Land Use Plan section contains the Land Use Policy Map, which presents a pictorial representation of land use policy. The Land Use Element also identifies study areas throughout the community where specific policies will be implemented to guide the City toward its land use (and related) goals.

The Land Use Policy Map provides a two-dimensional description of land use policy by indicating the location and type of permitted uses. Equally important is the third dimension of character and form: How will new development fit within the established City framework? How can good urban design and landscaping be used to enhance the visual image Torrance conveys to residents and visitors to the City? What form of development will encourage the use of alternatives to the automobile? Objectives and policies in the Element address land use planning issues related to the look and feel of the Torrance community are discussed in the Urban Design section of this Element.

To provide guidance in implementing the Element's goals, this Element also defines the relationship between General Plan land use policy and zoning, as the Torrance Municipal Code provides the primary means for implementing land use goals. In addition, specific land use implementation programs are identified in the General Plan Implementation Program (Appendix A). The Land Use Element, in combination with the updated Land Use Policy Map and the other General Plan Elements, will work toward the City's goal of achieving a high quality of life through a balanced mix of attractive residential neighborhoods, economically prosperous commercial and industrial districts, well-maintained parks, and superior public services.

**GOAL:**

A high quality of life achieved through a balanced mix of attractive residential neighborhoods, high-quality public services, and economically viable and attractive commercial and industrial areas

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Land Use Element provides the framework for all topics addressed in the General Plan, since the manner in which land is used in Torrance affects the City's circulation system, economic development activities, parks and open space resources, and public safety. For example, different land uses generate various trip demands which influence the capacity and service levels of Torrance's street system. The Circulation and Infrastructure Element responds by planning for transportation services and routes that will meet the demands of existing and future development.

The Land Use Element also designates areas to be used as open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities. Goals and policies regarding the preservation and maintenance of these areas are also addressed in the Community Resources Element. Safety and noise abatement issues also relate to land use. To address noise concerns associated with uses such as the airport, land use designations have been established reflective of the noise contour maps in the Noise Element. To mitigate or avoid damage and injury from natural and man-made hazards, hazards maps in the Safety Element must also be consistent with the Land Use Element.

The Land Use Element is the most intricately related to the Housing Element and the Housing Element must be consistent with the Land Use Element. The Land Use Element sets the framework for the City's residential environment by laying out the land designations for residential development and indicating the type and density permitted by the City. Working within this framework, the Housing Element identifies priority goals, objectives and program actions for the next five years that directly address the housing needs of Torrance's residents.

## I. LAND USE PLAN

In response to the community's desire to maintain Torrance's long-established land use patterns, preserve the attractiveness of the City's neighborhoods and districts, maintain a sound economic base, and enhance the pedestrian environment, this Land Use Plan has been crafted to guide the development, maintenance, and improvement of land and properties. The Land Use Policy Map, illustrated in **Figure LU-1** and described below, will allow us to preserve those qualities that define Torrance.

### I.I TERMS USED IN THE THIS ELEMENT

#### I.I.I DENSITY AND INTENSITY

When describing areas of Torrance, we differentiate one area from another by the principal use, such as homes (residential), shops and restaurants (commercial), manufacturing businesses (business park), a park, or a school or college. To describe the intensity of use – how much development exists on a property or could be built (and presumably, what the associated activity level is) – land use planners have developed quantitative measures called density and intensity.

Figure LU-1  
**General Plan**  
**Land Use Policy**

Land Use Designations

- [R-LO] Low Density Residential (0-9 du/ac)
- [R-LM] Low-Medium Density Residential (9.1-18 du/ac)
- [R-MD] Medium Density Residential (18.1-31 du/ac)
- [R-MH] Medium High Density Residential (31.1-44 du/ac)
- [R-HI] High Density Residential (44.1+ du/ac)
- [C-GEN] General Commercial (max 0.6 FAR)\*
- [C-CTR] Commercial Center (max 1.0 FAR)
- [R-OFF] Residential Office (max 0.6 FAR\*; 18.1-31 du/ac)
- [I-LT] Light Industrial (max 0.6 FAR)
- [I-HVY] Heavy Industrial (max 0.6 FAR)
- [I-BP] Business Park (max 0.6 FAR)
- [PUB] Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space
- [HM] Hospital/Medical (max 0.6 FAR)\*\*
- [AIR] Airport

\* A maximum 1.0 FAR will apply to mixed-use projects, solely commercial or office uses have a maximum FAR of 0.6.

\*\* A maximum 2.5 FAR will apply only to full-service hospitals in the HM designation. For non-hospital uses a maximum FAR of 0.6 will apply.

- City Boundary
- Freeway/Highway
- Street
- + Railroad

Source: City of Torrance, GIS 2005.

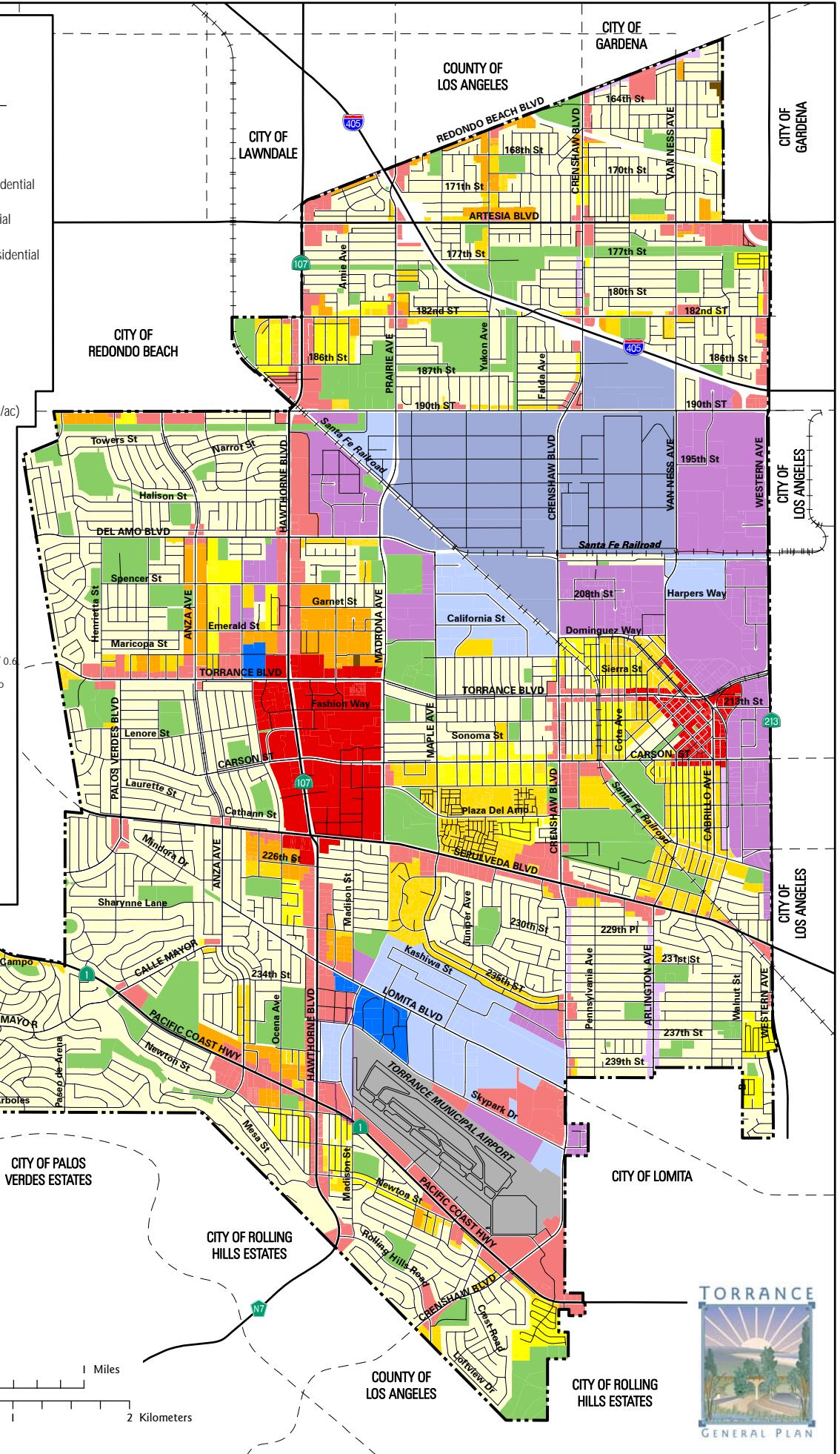
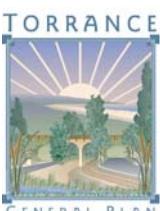


NORTH



0 0.5 1 Miles

2 Kilometers



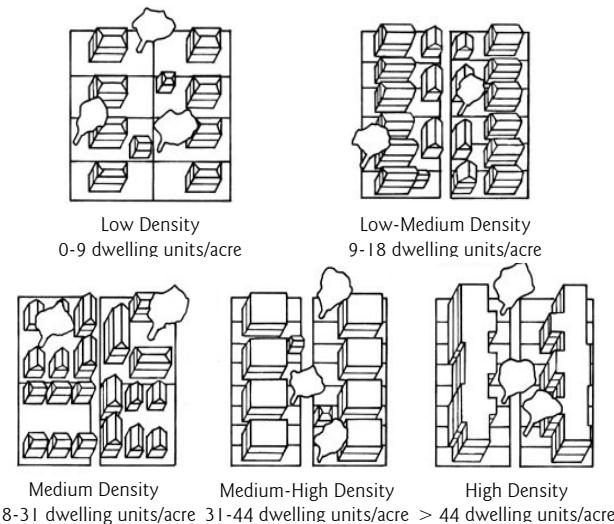
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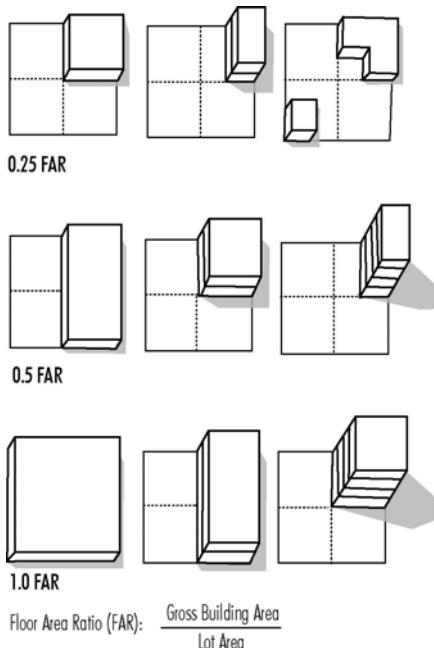
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Density and intensity are commonly used in General Plans as a way to meet legislative requirements to define parameters of development and quantifiable standards of building intensity for each land use designation. State General Plan guidelines require that these standards define the most intensive use that will be allowed under each designation.

The term *density*, as illustrated in Figure LU-2, typically applies to residential uses and refers to the population and development capacity of residential land. Density is described in terms of the dwelling units that can be accommodated on one acre of land (dwelling units per acre or du/ac) and the population associated with that density (population per acre or pop/ac).



**Figure LU-2:**  
**Residential Density Example**



**Figure LU-3:**  
**Floor-Area Ratio (FAR)**  
**Example**

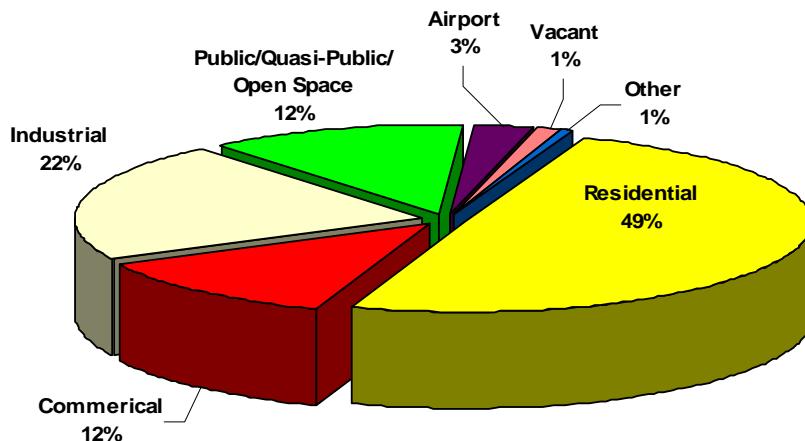
For commercial, industrial, and other nonresidential uses, *intensity* describes the degree to which a property is or can be developed. The measure of intensity Torrance uses is the floor-area ratio. The floor-area ratio, or FAR, describes the relationship between the total square feet of development on a lot and the area of that lot. The FAR is determined by dividing the gross floor area of all buildings on a lot by the land area of that lot. FAR and factors such as building square footage, building height, and the percent of lot coverage are all interrelated. For example, a 20,000-square-foot building on a 40,000-square-foot lot yields an FAR of 0.50. This 0.50 FAR can accommodate a single-story building that covers half the lot or a two-story building with reduced lot coverage. Figure LU-3 illustrates different FAR calculations.

### 1.1.2 SUBJECTIVE TERMS

In the Land Use Element and other Elements of the General Plan, terms such as *attractive* and *high quality* are used to describe the type of development and resources that the City strives to achieve. These terms are highly subjective, and an evaluation of what is attractive or of high quality can change from person to person and from time period to time period. This Element does not establish specific guidelines for development design such as color palettes or architectural styles. Rather, the Element outlines strategies to protect and encourage the characteristics that make Torrance a desirable place to live. For example, instead of indicating how commercial centers should look, the Plan encourages commercial centers that function well financially and physically by being located in visible and accessible areas and providing linkages to neighboring uses and transit areas. City leaders and residents should use the Plan as a foundation when making decisions related to aesthetic value as the goals, objectives, and policies. These policy directives will provide guidance no matter what the design trend or fad may be.

## 1.2 FOUNDATION FOR LAND USE PLANNING

Figure LU-4 identifies the distribution of land uses in Torrance as of July, 2005. The predominantly residential land use pattern, with concentrations of industrial and commercial uses, reflects the City's history as a "company town", where homes were built to house the local work force of industries.



**Source:** P&D Consultants, July, 2005.

**Note:** "Other" category includes areas with no designation such as railroad right-of-way.

**Figure LU-4:  
Land Use Distribution**

In 2005, residential development covered almost half of the City's land area. Industrial uses occupied the second largest land area, at 22 percent. Commercial and Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space uses represented the third-largest land uses in the City (12 percent each). Torrance also had a limited supply of vacant land mostly within commercial and industrial areas. Given the built-out character of the community, only minor land use changes from baseline year 2005 conditions will occur over the long term.

### **I.3 LAND USE POLICY MAP AND DESIGNATIONS**

The Land Use Policy Map (Figure LU-1) graphically represents the planned distribution and intensity of land use citywide. The colors shown on the map correspond to land use designations that describe the types of uses established and planned in Torrance. Table LU-1 lists the General Plan designations and indicates the nature and intensity of development that is permitted. There are fourteen land use designations divided into residential, commercial, industrial, and public categories.

The designations presented in Table LU-1 include the *Residential-Office* and *Hospital/Medical* designations, introduced to recognize increased opportunities for mixed-used development and to accommodate possible expansion plans of major medical facilities in Torrance, respectively.

The Residential-Office designation is being introduced to recognize increased opportunities for mixed-use and to protect established residential neighborhoods from incompatible land uses and development. The Residential-Office designation will be implemented by the L-P Limited Professional Office District and R-P Residential Professional District. This area is intended for mixed-use residential/commercial developments, multiple-family residences, professional office uses, and less intense commercial activities that do not generate noise or generate high volumes of vehicle trips. Neighborhood-serving retail uses that do not generate substantial traffic impacts would also be considered appropriate. Scale, intensity, site access, and proximity of residential uses shall be considered when evaluating new development. The Residential-Office Designation will also serve as transitional area between established residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas and help buffer existing neighborhoods from the noise and traffic of arterial streets. This designation will promote more compatible uses next to residences and abate incompatible uses. Mixed-use residential and commercial developments, live-work and work-live arrangements, and artist lofts are considered appropriate uses.

The prior Local Commercial Designation was intended for neighborhood-serving commercial uses with a maximum floor-area ratio of 0.40. Local Commercial development was supposed to be designed to reduce automobile trips and oriented toward pedestrians. Instead of facilitating neighborhood-compatible development, the restrictive 0.40 FAR encouraged automobile-oriented uses,

such as gas stations and drive-through restaurants, and inhibited mixed-use development. The incorporation of Local Commercial into General Commercial and Residential-Office will provide greater flexibility in use and development of the sites without comprising the quality of life of neighborhood districts.

The *General Commercial* designation encompasses many types of commercial development, from local-serving retail and service establishments to arterial highway-oriented commercial centers. Mixed residential and commercial developments may also be established within areas designated General Commercial, subject to specific standards and conditions set forth in Torrance Municipal Code. The 1.0 maximum FAR for mixed-use projects will encourage the development of residential uses and compatible commercial uses on the same property, allow the site to accommodate amenities, and help facilitate a function design. In Downtown Torrance, FAR for mixed-use developments traditionally range from 1.0 to over 3.0.

### **1.3.1 RESIDENTIAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

Residential uses are located throughout Torrance at varying development densities. The highest residential densities occur along major streets and near major transportation corridors, in older neighborhoods, and in apartment or condominium developments and Planned Development communities around Sepulveda Boulevard and Plaza Del Amo between Hawthorne and Crenshaw Boulevards. The lowest residential densities are largely located in the western and southern portions of the City.

Five residential land use designations allow for a range of housing types and densities. The City also permits accessory units and non-residential uses such as schools, parks, child day care, and religious and charitable organizations in these areas, consistent with State law and the Torrance Municipal Code. Typical population density figures are included as required by State General Plan guidelines. Typical population density is calculated based on the range of dwelling units per acre allowed in the designation and persons per household (dwelling) statistics from the California Department of Finance (2.623 persons per household in 2006).

#### **LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-LO)**

The Low-Density Residential designation provides for the development of single-family residences within a density range of up to 9 dwelling units per acre. Development is characterized generally by detached single-family dwellings on individual lots forming a cohesive neighborhood.

*Unit Density: 0-9 dwelling units per acre*

*Typical Population Density: 3 - 24 persons per acre*



**LOW-MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-LM)**

The Low-Medium Density Residential designation provides for the development of small-lot single-family homes, duplexes, attached multi-unit developments, and mobile home parks within a density range of 9.1 to 18 dwelling units per acre. Mobile homes are included to reflect current uses and as a guide for future development.

*Unit Density: 9.1-18 dwelling units per acre*

*Typical Population Density: 24-47 persons per acre*

**MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-MD)**

The Medium Density Residential designation allows townhouses and low-rise multi-unit buildings within a density range of 18.1 to 31 dwelling units per acre.

*Unit Density: 18.1-31 dwelling units per acre*

*Typical Population Density: 47-81 persons per acre*

**MEDIUM-HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-MH)**

Residential development accommodated in the Medium-High Residential designation includes low- and medium-rise multi-unit attached developments. Residential development may occur within a density range of 31.1 to 44 dwelling units per acre. Areas in the City with an R-MH designation are appropriate for subterranean parking.

*Unit Density: 31.1 -44 dwelling units per acre*

*Typical Population Density: 81-115 persons per acre*

**HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (R-HI)**

The High Density Residential designation accommodates multi-family housing, and specifically housing development of a more intensive form, including medium and high-rise apartment buildings with a minimum density of 44.1 dwelling units per acre. The R-HI designation is appropriate for senior housing.

*Unit Density: 44.1- 60 dwelling units per acre, with special consideration for high-rise senior housing*

*Typical Population Density: up to 115- 120 persons per acre*



**Table LU-1**  
**General Plan Land Use Designations**

Designations		Permitted Density/Intensity
<b>Residential Land Uses</b>		
R-LO	Low Density	0-9 dwelling units per acre
R-LM	Low-Medium Density	9.1-18 dwelling units per acre
R-MD	Medium Density	18.1-31 dwelling units per acre
R-MH	Medium-High Density	31.1-44 dwelling units per acre
R-HI	High Density	44.1+ dwelling units per acre
<b>Commercial Land Uses</b>		
C-GEN	General Commercial	Maximum 0.6 FAR, 1.0 FAR for mixed-use projects
C-CTR	Commercial Center	Maximum 1.0 FAR
R-OF	Residential Office	18.1-31 dwelling units per acre/ Maximum 0.6 FAR, 1.0 FAR for mixed-use projects
<b>Industrial Land Uses</b>		
I-HVY	Heavy Industrial	Maximum 0.6 FAR
I-LT	Light Industrial	Maximum 0.6 FAR
I-BP	Business Park	Maximum 0.6 FAR
<b>Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space Land Uses</b>		
PBLC	Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space	N/A
HM	Hospital/Medical	Maximum 0.6 FAR for non-medical and non-hospital uses, maximum 1.0 FAR for hospital-adjacent medical office uses, maximum FAR may be exceeded for a full service hospital and related uses with approval of the Planning Commission or City Council
ARPT	Airport	N/A

### **1.3.2 COMMERCIAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

Commercial uses provide critical support to the residential neighborhoods and contribute significantly to the City's tax base. There are distinctions between commercial areas that serve surrounding neighborhoods and areas that serve the region. Neighborhood-level commercial areas should be located within easy walking distance of residential neighborhoods and consist of low-scale, stand-alone commercial business and commercial centers. Regional commercial corridors include Pacific Coast Highway, Hawthorne Boulevard, and Sepulveda Boulevard. The largest concentration of commercial development is in the Del Amo Business District, an area along Hawthorne Boulevard bounded by Torrance Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard.

Three commercial land use designations are designed to support business activity and provide tools to help businesses and districts maximize their economic potential.

## **GENERAL COMMERCIAL (C-GEN)**

The General Commercial designation is intended to permit a wide range of commercial uses which serve both the local and regional community. Permitted uses include shopping centers, professional and medical offices, food and beverage establishments, entertainment facilities, financial institutions, and automotive sales. Mixed-use development consisting of commercial and residential uses is permitted pursuant to the detailed land use regulations and development standards set forth in the Torrance Municipal Code. Solely commercial uses are limited to a maximum FAR of 0.6. For mixed commercial and residential projects, a maximum FAR of 1.0 is permitted.



*Maximum Floor-Area Ratio:*      0.6 for solely commercial projects  
    1.0 for mixed-use projects

## **COMMERCIAL CENTER (C-CTR)**

The Commercial Center designation applies to areas with a concentration of diverse or intense commercial uses. The Del Amo Fashion Center and Downtown Torrance are prime examples of Commercial Center uses. Mixed-use commercial and residential uses are also permitted. Maximum FAR of 1.0 can be exceeded for mixed-use projects with the approval of a conditional use permit.

*Maximum Floor-Area Ratio:*      1.0  
    Maximum FAR  
    can be exceeded  
    for mixed-use  
    projects with  
    approval of a conditional use permit



## **RESIDENTIAL OFFICE (R-OF)**

The Residential Office designation permits the location of less-intense office uses and commercial uses adjacent to or in combination with residential uses. The designation is intended to accommodate neighborhoods where businesses 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 or commercial uses on a single site will require approval of a conditional use permit.

*Maximum Floor-Area Ratio:* 0.6 for solely commercial or residential projects  
1.0 for mixed-use projects

*Unit Density:* 18.1-31.0 dwelling units per acre

*Typical Population Density:* 47-81 persons per acre

### 1.3.3 INDUSTRIAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Torrance originally incorporated as a “Modern Industrial City”, and much of Torrance’s industrial land remains a strong part of the City’s identity. Large industrial areas include the Central Manufacturing District, located on the eastern side of the City between Western Avenue and Hawthorne Boulevard, from the San Diego Freeway to Del Amo Boulevard, and a second industrial district located in the southern portion of the City, just north of the airport from Skypark Drive to Kashiwa Street. A small concentration of industrial uses can also be found in the East Victor Precinct, southwest of the corner of Hawthorne and Del Amo Boulevards. The following three land use designations provide areas for industrial and business park development.

#### **HEAVY INDUSTRIAL (I-HVY)**

Heavy Industrial uses are characterized by manufacturing industries which process raw or extracted substances, or which use hazardous materials. Heavy Industrial uses should be segregated from other uses to mitigate safety hazards and minimize noise, pollution, odors, vibrations, and other effects on non-industrial properties. The oil refinery is the main use in this designation.



*Maximum Floor-Area Ratio:* 0.6

#### **LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (I-LT)**

Uses in the Light Industrial designation include a wide range of industrial uses where manufacturing or assembly is primarily limited to enclosed buildings, professional and medical office, research and development, warehouse, and wholesale uses.



*Maximum Floor-Area Ratio:* 0.6

#### **BUSINESS PARK (I-BP)**

Business Park uses include a mixture of business, professional and medical office, research and development, and light industrial uses. Ancillary retail uses are allowed to support these uses. Development standards are more stringent than for other industrial designations to maximize compatibility with neighboring uses.



*Maximum Floor-Area Ratio:* 0.6

### **I.3.4 PUBLIC AND MEDICAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

Three land use designations provide for regulation and protection of publicly owned properties, medical and medical-related facilities, and properties restricted to airport uses.

#### **PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC/OPEN SPACE (PUB)**

This designation provides for open space, land owned by public agencies and jurisdictions, and land owned by private entities for uses which serve the community, such as utilities.

*Floor-Area Ratio: Not Applicable*



#### **HOSPITAL/MEDICAL (HM)**

The Hospital/Medical designation is intended to encourage the concentration of established and proposed healthcare facilities and their related uses in a manner that will provide for orderly growth of healthcare facilities. Appropriate uses include hospitals, professional offices offering medical, dental, or related services, and accessory buildings and facilities. For non-hospital uses in this designation such as medical-related offices, general office, and other non-medical uses, a maximum FAR of 0.6 will apply. A maximum FAR of 1.0 will apply to hospital-adjacent medical office uses. A maximum 2.5 FAR will apply only for full-service hospital uses. This higher FAR for hospitals will allow greater flexibility for City leaders to accept exceptional developments that mitigate circulation and land use impacts. The expected FAR for hospital development is closer to 1.0 FAR.



*Maximum Floor-Area Ratio:*

*0.6 FAR for non-hospital uses*

*1.0 FAR for hospital-adjacent medical office uses*

*Maximum FAR may be exceeded for a full service hospital and related uses with approval of the Planning Commission and City Council.*

#### **AIRPORT (AIR)**

The Airport designation applies to Torrance Municipal Airport and surrounding City-owned properties.

*Floor-Area Ratio: Not Applicable*

### **I.3.5 IMPLICATIONS OF LAND USE POLICY**

Over time, as properties transition from one use to another or property owners choose to rebuild, land uses and intensities will gradually shift to align with the

intent of this Land Use Element. Given the almost built-out character of Torrance, significant development activities may not occur over the life of this General Plan and certainly, not all properties will be developed to the maximum permitted intensities and densities. Table LU-2 summarizes the land use distribution, expected level of development anticipated within each designation, and the resulting residential and nonresidential outcomes that can be expected through approximately 2025.

Implementation of the General Plan Land Use Plan to 75 percent of the maximum potential is expected to result in 3,100 additional dwelling units, 7,800 new residents, and 1.3 million additional square feet of non-residential development compared with expected build-out conditions under the 1992 General Plan land use. Over a 20-year period, this averages about 155 units per year and 66,000 square-feet of non-residential development per year.

## **DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS**

### *Density/Intensity*

To define a realistic build-out scenario, assumptions about expected density and intensity levels were made. Factors used to establish expected future conditions include City policies in the Land Use Element, established land use patterns, and past land use development trends. For the Low Density Residential designation, a density of 6.8 dwelling units per acre is expected based on existing conditions and on the limited likelihood that densities in these neighborhoods will increase over the life of the General Plan. Expected densities (du/ac) for all other residential land use categories are based on 75 percent of maximum allowable density, as units built within the past 20 to 30 years are not expected to be replaced, and physical conditions and provision of on-site amenities will limit the ability of some redeveloped properties to achieve the maximum densities. Similarly, for non-residential uses the maximum permitted FARs will not be achieved citywide given relatively new commercial uses surrounding the airport and constraints (for example, easements, topography, access, parking, landscape, and buffering requirements) on individual properties.

### *Projected Dwelling Units*

Projected dwelling units in Table LU-2 have been calculated for each land use designation that permits residential uses. Projected dwelling units are calculated by multiplying the acres of residential land by the expected density for that designation. Potential expected dwelling units included in the *Commercial Center* and *General Commercial* designations are based on housing units created through development of various mixed-use projects that were constructed during the period from the adoption of the previous General Plan update in 1992 to 2006. The calculation assumes that a proportionate number of units will be created in the next 20 years. This is a conservative estimate, as development along the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan is largely contingent upon the market demand for mixed-use residential/commercial projects.

**Table LU-2**  
**Development and Population Projections Pursuant to Land Use Plan**

Land Use	Expected Density/ Intensity	Acres	Estimated Dwelling Units Pursuant to Land Use Plan	Estimated Non- Residential Square Feet (in thousands)	Estimated Population
R-LO Low Density <sup>1</sup>	6.8 du/ac	4,002	27,210	-	69,559
R-LM Low-Medium Density	13.5 du/ac	420	5,666	-	14,484
R-MD Medium Density	23.25 du/ac	606	14,085	-	36,006
R-MH Medium-High Density	33 du/ac	274	9,039	-	23,106
R-HI High Density	45 du/ac	5	207	-	529
C-GEN General Commercial <sup>2,3</sup>	0.35 FAR	825	42	12,584	107
C-CTR Commercial Center <sup>2</sup>	0.4 FAR	402	816	7,001	2,086
R-OF Residential Office	0.5 FAR/ 23.25 du/ac	41	471	441	1,204
I-HVY Heavy Industrial	0.1 FAR	859	-	3,740	-
I-LT Light Industrial	0.45 FAR	527	-	10,338	-
I-BP Business Park	0.45 FAR	881	-	17,271	-
PUB Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space	0.15 FAR	1,218	-	7,960	-
HM Hospital/Medical <sup>4</sup>	1.0 FAR	62	-	2,692	-
AIR Airport	0.01 FAR	313	-	136	-
Other (right of way)	NA	73	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10,506</b>	<b>57,536</b>	<b>62,164</b>	<b>147,082</b>
Build-out scenario under the 1992 General Plan			<b>54,476</b>	<b>60,892</b>	<b>139,262</b>
Difference			<b>3,060</b>	<b>1,272</b>	<b>7,820</b>

**Assumptions:**

- a. Persons Per Household figure of 2.623 is from California Department of Finance data, 2006
- b. Residential Occupancy Rate of 97.46% is from California Department of Finance data, 2006
- c. FAR for Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space and Airport land uses is not considered an appropriate measure of the intensity of impacts. Expected intensity (FAR) is for analysis purposes only
- d. Density (du/ac) for the residential land use designations is based on 75% of maximum allowed density. As Torrance is mostly built out and development has not, and is not expected to, reach the maximum allowed intensity over the life of the Plan, the 75% figure is used to estimate future conditions.
- e. Expected FAR figures are based on established development patterns for newer uses.
- f. Residential Office assumes 50% residential, 50% office.

**Notes:**

1. For the Low Density Residential designation, a density of 6.8 dwelling units per acre is expected based on existing conditions and on the limited likelihood that densities in these neighborhoods will increase over the life of the General Plan. All other residential land use designations are based on 75% of maximum allowed density.
2. Dwelling units in the Commercial Center and General Commercial designations are based on housing units created within the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan Corridor between the 10-year period from the specific plan's inception in 1996 to 2006. The calculation assumes that the same number of units created in that time period will be created in the next two 10-year periods (20 years). (Figure = current units + units created in the next 20 years).
3. Solely commercial uses in the General Commercial designation are limited to a maximum FAR of 0.6. To enable development of mixed commercial and residential projects within this designation a maximum FAR of 1.0 will apply to mixed-use projects only.
4. For non-hospital uses in this designation such as general office and other non-medical uses, a maximum FAR of 0.6 will apply. A maximum FAR of 1.0 will apply to hospital-adjacent medical office uses. The maximum FAR may be exceeded for a full service hospital and related uses with the approval of the Planning Commission or City Council.

Dwelling units are also calculated for the *Residential Office* designation. Acres within the *Residential Office* designation are divided into residential and office uses, as indicated by the residential/office assumption of 50 percent residential and 50 percent office.

*Estimated Square Footage*

Estimated square footage accounts for all building area of non-residential buildings, meaning commercial, business park, and institutional uses. The projection for non-residential development is calculated by multiplying the land use acres for each land use designation by the expected FAR. The result is then converted from acres to square feet.<sup>2</sup> This yields the estimated square feet. The numbers used in Table LU-2 are presented as a thousand square feet for ease of reading.

*Estimated Population*

Estimated population is calculated by multiplying the projected dwelling units by two factors: number of persons per household (2.623) and the occupancy rate (97.46%). The number of persons per household and the occupancy rate will change year to year, but for projection purposes, the City has used year 2006 estimates from the California Department of Finance, Demographic Unit for the City of Torrance.

## 1.4 LAND USE AND ZONING CONSISTENCY

The Planning and Land Use Code (commonly referred to as the Zoning Code) within the Torrance Municipal Code serves as the primary implementation tool for the General Plan. Whereas the General Plan is a policy document and sets forth direction for development decisions, the Torrance Municipal Code is a regulatory document that establishes specific standards for the use and development of all properties in the City. The Code regulates development intensity using a variety of methods, such as setting limits on building setbacks, yard landscaping standards, and building heights. The Code also indicates which land uses are permitted in the various zones.

The City of Torrance is a charter city and is governed on the basis of a charter that establishes its powers and authorities, as contrasted with a general law city, which enjoys only those powers specifically granted to it by the State. While general law cities are required by Section 65860 of the California Government Code to have zoning ordinances that are consistent with the General Plan, zoning ordinances in charter cities like Torrance are not required to be consistent with the General Plan. Nonetheless, the City of Torrance strives to have a zoning ordinance that is consistent with the objectives, policies, general land uses, and programs in the General Plan. Table LU-3 identifies the correlation between Torrance's zone districts and the General Plan land use designations.

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<sup>2</sup> One acre equals 43,560 square feet.

**Table LU-3**  
**General Plan and Zoning Ordinance Consistency**

General Plan Land Use Designations		Corresponding Zone Districts
<i>R-LO</i>	Low Density Residential	R-I Single Family Residential District A-I Light Agricultural District PD <sup>3</sup> Planned Development District
<i>R-LM</i>	Low-Medium Density Residential	R-2 Two Family Residence District RTH Residential Townhouse District PD Planned Development District
<i>R-MD</i>	Medium Density Residential	R-3 Limited Multiple Family Residence District R-R-3 Restricted Multiple Family Residence District R-P Residential Professional District R-3-3 Three Unit Multiple Family Residential District PD Planned Development District HBCSP Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan Zone
<i>R-MH</i>	Medium-High Density Residential	R-4 Unlimited Multiple Family Residence District PD Planned Development District HBCSP Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan
<i>R-HI</i>	High Density Residential	R-5 High-rise Residential District PD Planned Development District HBCSP Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan
<i>R-OF</i>	Residential Office	L-P Limited Professional Office District R-P Residential Professional District C-R Restricted Commercial District
<i>C-GEN</i>	General Commercial	C-I Retail Commercial District C-2 General Commercial District C-3 Solely Commercial C-5 Conditional Commercial District C-R Restricted Commercial District PD Planned Development District
<i>C-CTR</i>	Commercial Center	C-4 Shopping Center District HBCSP Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan PD Planned Development District
<i>I-HVY</i>	Heavy Industrial	M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District PD Planned Development District
<i>I-LT</i>	Light Industrial	M-1 Light Manufacturing District M-L Limited Manufacturing District PD Planned Development District
<i>I-BP</i>	Business Park	PD Planned Development District
<i>PUB</i>	Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space	P-I Open Area-Planting-Parking P-U Public Use District
<i>HM</i>	Hospital/Medical	HMD Hospital-Medical-Dental District
<i>AIR</i>	Airport	M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District

<sup>3</sup> The PD designation may be implemented for residential, commercial, industrial or mixed-use projects that are at least five acres in area and consistent with the corresponding General Plan land use designation for the property. Development and design standards specifically catered for the project are set forth in a Planned Development Permit or Redevelopment Plan approved by the City.

The City will work to ensure General Plan and zoning consistency by prohibiting zoning of an isolated parcel in a manner which is inconsistent or incompatible with surrounding zoning or land uses, and reviewing development proposals for consistency with all applicable land use regulations.

The new Hospital/Medical land use designation will be implemented by the H-M-D Hospital-Medical-Dental District. Hospital facilities are an important resource that the City will work to protect and whose future expansion needs will be important given the region's growing and aging population. *Hospital/Medical* uses are discussed in more detail in Sections 7.1 of this Element. The policies in this section also address the need to create a zone district to implement the General Plan Business Park designation.

#### **I.4.1 LAND USE AND ZONING COMPATIBILITY OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

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**OBJECTIVE LU.I:** **Consistency between the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance**

- Policy LU.I.1:** Resolve inconsistencies between the General Plan and the Torrance Municipal Code, and require that new land use development be consistent with the General Plan.
- Policy LU.I.2:** Prohibit spot zoning within residential blocks.
- Policy LU.I.3:** Establish a new zone to implement the General Plan Business Park designation.
- Policy LU.I.4:** Implement the new Hospital/Medical land use designation through the Hospital-Medical-Dental zone, and amend the zone district regulations as may be appropriate to implement General Plan policy.
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## 2. MAINTAINING A BALANCED COMMUNITY

The Oxford Dictionary defines balance as “a condition in which different elements are equal or in the correct proportions.” The idea of Torrance as a balanced City dates back to its founding days. Even though Torrance was founded as an industrial area, City founders anticipated a need to balance the major types of land uses. This belief was represented in the City motto: “A Balanced City, Industrial, Residential, Commercial.” Balance is important to Torrance because it provides opportunities for housing, commerce, and employment. Balance creates places for people to live and a mechanism for the City to pay for the services that residents and the business community need, such as safety services and infrastructure. A good measurement of balance is the jobs-to-housing ratio, which identifies potential imbalances between housing and employment opportunities. The ratio of jobs to housing is estimated by dividing the number of total number of projected jobs (total employment) by the total number of dwelling units. In 2003, Torrance had a jobs-to-housing ratio of 2.02:1, or slightly more than two jobs for each dwelling unit.<sup>4</sup> This ratio is significantly higher than the County of Los Angeles as a whole. In 2003 the County of Los Angeles had a jobs-to-housing ratio of 1.22:1, or slightly more than one job for each dwelling unit.<sup>5</sup> In Torrance, the ratio of two jobs per dwelling unit means that our community has more jobs than houses and it imports workers. The City is proud of its large employment base and the financial and public service benefits it provides to the community.

Balance also means ensuring that new development does not overwhelm the City’s infrastructure and transportation systems. Balance can mean enacting land use changes in appropriate locations to encourage improvements in areas that do not function well due to age or lack of private investment. It also means balancing the community’s desire to manage growth and protect the City’s character with the rights of private property owners to develop their property.



**Torrance City Seal:**  
The City seal  
promotes a balance  
in land uses to create  
a place for people to  
live, work, and play.

<sup>4</sup> 2003 total employment: City of Torrance: 114,259 (source: Stanley R. Hoffman Associates, “City of Torrance Existing Economic Conditions and Trends”, February 23, 2005, Page21). 2003 estimated dwelling units: City of Torrance: 56,536 (source: *City/County Population and Housing Estimates*. California Department of Finance, 2003)

<sup>5</sup> 2003 total employment: County of Los Angeles: 4,023,569 (source: Stanley R. Hoffman Associates, “City of Torrance Existing Economic Conditions and Trends”, February 23, 2005, Page21). 2003 estimated dwelling units: County of Los Angeles: 3,308,901 (source: *City/County Population and Housing Estimates*. California Department of Finance, 2003)

## 2.1 A COMPATIBLE LAND USE PATTERN

A major issue in cities considered as highly desirable places to live, such as Torrance, is the desire to protect the character of established neighborhoods and districts from new development. The fear is that new construction will result in developments that conflict with and even devalue established uses, such as a new residential unit of a size, scale, or design that negatively impacts surrounding uses. In Torrance, the General Plan and the Torrance Municipal Code establish building and development standards for every property in the City. If a property owner is compliant with these standards, they have an inherent right to develop. The General Plan sets the City's vision and provides City staff with the necessary tools to work with property owners to communicate the specific vision for a neighborhood at the outset of the development process. One recurring theme in this Element and in the General Plan that can be communicated is the desire to encourage uses that are compatible physically and functionally with their surroundings. This includes not only the size or look of a building, but also impacts on existing neighborhoods or districts such as traffic, parking, noise, and school enrollment. Policies in this Element encourage the transition of undesirable or ineffective land uses, the establishment of compatible land uses, and the consideration of development impacts on existing neighborhoods and districts.

## 2.2 BALANCING NEW DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

The City's circulation system, which includes all modes of travel, has a significant role in maintaining balance in Torrance. The City's circulation system must be able to support the type and intensity of land uses promulgated by this Land Use Element. One of the most noticeable impacts from new development is the increased demand on the City's circulation and parking infrastructure. The City's Municipal Code warns that "failure to enhance the ability of the City's transportation system to accommodate increased traffic by improving traffic flow will make it more difficult for residents, employers, and employees to access residences and places of employment and could cause unacceptable harm to the quality of life in the City."<sup>6</sup>

The City recognizes and will promote strategies that mitigate traffic generated by future development. To balance development demands on the City's circulation infrastructure, the City has enacted several impact fees. These fees are assessed on new development to ensure that new development funds its fair share of the cost to accommodate an increased demand on infrastructure and services necessitated by that development. New development does not pay for infrastructure and service gaps created by growth in general, only the

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<sup>6</sup> Torrance Municipal Code, Division 2, Chapter 9, Article 1, Section 29.1.1.B

growth attributed to that specific development.<sup>7</sup> New developments are required to upgrade utilities, sewers, storm drain systems, and water lines to offset the increased demand and pay school and park and recreation fees. The City has implemented a Development Impact Fee Program to help finance transportation enhancements, underground utilities, sewer and storm drain improvements, and Police and Fire Department programs. The Development Impact Fees are based on the type of development and the number of units or floor area created. In addition, a major goal and theme of the Torrance General Plan is to promote and facilitate travel by alternative modes of transportation such as public transit, walking and bicycling.

## 2.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Land Use Element will serve as a tool to plan for the future development of the City of Torrance and to set priorities and goals for development types, locations, and character. Inherent in the City's long-range view of development is the concept of sustainability. Planning for tomorrow's Torrance includes understanding that natural resources are limited and that these natural resources must not be consumed faster than they can be replenished. But sustainability does not preclude development, growth, and advancement. Sustainability can promote positive economic growth and can stimulate technological innovation, advance competitiveness, and improve our quality of life.

A sustainable future for Torrance, under this General Plan, will utilize various strategies to conserve and enhance local resources and safeguard the environment. The concept of sustainability is used throughout this General Plan and expressed in greater detail in the Community Resources Element. The Land Use Element addresses sustainability and environmental conservation through policies and programs that promote site and building design elements in new developments that reduce or better distribute travel demand, development design and amenities that support transit and other alternative forms of transportation, including bicycling and walking, and mixed-use developments that encourage location of employment and commercial offerings near residential units. The Community Resources Element includes policies and programs that promote community sustainability and effective management of renewable and non-renewable natural resources through energy and water conservation, solid waste management, urban runoff reduction, recycling, and sustainable, or green, building practices, including low impact development practices which mimic a site's pre-development hydrology by using design practices and techniques that effectively capture, filter, store, evaporate, detain and infiltrate runoff close to its source.

**Sustainability policies are discussed in detail in the Community Resources Element and address topics such as recycling and green building.**

<sup>7</sup> "The amount of transportation impact fees collected pursuant to this chapter shall be limited to the cost of transportation impact mitigation attributable to new development. The amount of transportation impact fees collected shall not include the cost of transportation impact mitigation measures made necessary by existing development." Torrance Municipal Code. Division 2, Chapter 9, Article 1, Section 29.1.1.E

A commonly accepted definition for sustainability, "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" calls for cities to become better stewards of the environment to preserve a high quality of life for future generations of Torrance residents.

## 2.4 LAND USE STUDY AREAS

Maintaining a balanced community requires periodic identification of areas where growth or change will benefit the City. Because vacant land is scarce, opportunities to enact positive changes through land use are limited. During the General Plan process, several areas were identified as transition areas experiencing land use changes, physical blight, or stagnation and where properties are underutilized or undervalued. The study areas were identified based on interviews with the City Council, City department heads, and members of the community; community workshops; and City staff and Planning Commission recommendations. They represent areas where change will be encouraged during the 20-year planning horizon of this General Plan. These areas provide opportunities for:

- 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 base; and
- Recycling aging industrial uses and obsolete buildings.

While seven study areas were identified during the General Plan update process, further analysis revealed that only four of these study areas necessitated land use changes, and two were targeted for revitalization efforts. In the East Victor Precinct, land use alternatives were initially proposed, but ultimately withdrawn in acknowledgement that land uses in this area functioned effectively. Altogether, the land use designation changes in the study areas cover less



In the study areas land uses may not be functioning to their full potential due to aging buildings or lack of public investment and represent areas within the City where change may occur throughout the 20-year planning horizon of this General Plan update.

**Figure LU-5:  
General Plan Study Areas**

than one percent of the total area within the City.<sup>8</sup> The location of the study areas that included land use changes at the periphery of the City is consistent with expressed public desire to retain the qualities and character of distinct residential neighborhoods, and to protect commercial and industrial districts from intrusion from incompatible uses. New policies encourage more intense uses along the City's most-traveled corridors and create opportunities for modest housing growth.

Several of the study areas have been in transition since the adoption of the City's 1992 General Plan, and the new land use designations reflect land use changes that have occurred since. This is the case along Redondo Beach Boulevard and Border Avenue, where residential and commercial uses are side by side, and in the Jefferson Oak study area, where residential development has replaced industrial uses that dated almost to the City's founding. Land use changes in the study area aim to improve otherwise underused or poorly maintained areas that have not lived up the potential envisioned in prior General Plans. Along Western Avenue, where small-scale commercial and industrial uses have languished, land use policies promote more intense uses and even mixed-use to attract the private investment that the area deserves.

### **STUDY AREA I: CRENSHAW/AMSLER**

The Crenshaw/Amsler study area consists of approximately 10 acres located east of Crenshaw Boulevard along Amsler Street, Dormont Avenue, and Moreton Street and is located at the City's

eastern edge. The area is underutilized given its prime location along one of the City's major corridors and across the street from Torrance Crossroads, a major shopping center with tenants such as Home Depot and Sam's Club. The area contains a mix of older business park and commercial uses.

To encourage revitalization of these properties, the Land Use Policy Map designates the entire study area as *Business Park*. The lower parking ratios required of light industrial uses (compared to commercial uses) will allow property owners to build additional leasable space. The City



The location of the Crenshaw/Amsler study area at the City's periphery, along a major road, and across the Street from the Crossroads Shopping Center, is ideal for creating a modest amount of new commercial and residential activity.

**Figure LU-6:  
Crenshaw/Amsler**

<sup>8</sup> The City of Torrance covers approximately 12,312 acres. Land use designation changes in the study areas cover 95.1 acres which does not include the change to Hospital/Medical (HM) for the Little Company of Mary Hospital.

will consider vacating all or portions Moreton Street, Dormont Avenue, and/or Amsler Street to facilitate a cohesive modern business development. Also, any redevelopment activity could include placing overhead utility lines underground to improve overall area aesthetics.



Crenshaw/Amsler: Aging commercial and light industrial uses, with overhead utility lines

## STUDY AREA 2: WESTERN AVENUE SOUTH

Western Avenue forms the City's eastern boundary between Artesia Boulevard and 238th Street, and the study area extends along Western Avenue between Plaza Del Amo and 228th Street, just north of Sepulveda Boulevard. Older offices and industrial and business uses are the most predominant land uses along this portion of the Western Avenue corridor. The study area is surrounded on the west, south, and east by residential neighborhoods.

To encourage the transition of aging and obsolete industrial buildings to modern facilities and uses more compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood, the Land Use Policy Map designates all properties within the study area as *Business Park*. As with the Crenshaw/Amsler area, the City envisions that the incentive of increased intensity and a broader range of allowed uses will encourage new private investment and redevelopment.



The transition of aging industrial uses to residential development will allow for new housing opportunities consistent with surrounding land uses.



Western Avenue South: Industrial Uses

**Figure LU-7:  
Western Avenue South**

### STUDY AREA 3: BORDER AVENUE

The Border Avenue study area encompasses the properties on the west side of Border Avenue just south of Carson Street and north of Plaza del Amo. Historically, Border Avenue has supported office and light industrial uses, with several homes on small lots interspersed among those uses. Due to the small lot sizes, the plan to create a business park environment has never been realized. The existence of residential uses has further hindered this effort. The area is located adjacent to a successful industrial district to the east and a residential neighborhood to the west. Transitioning of uses in this area will create a better buffer between a major industrial district and residential neighborhoods.

To accommodate the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses, the Land Use Policy Map designates all properties in the study area as Residential-Office (R-OF; Max. 0.6 FAR for solely commercial or residential projects, 1.0 FAR for mixed-use and 18.1-31 du/ac). Residential uses will be characterized by smaller lot, low- to medium-rise apartments or townhomes, live-work units, lofts, and artist lofts. This transition will expand opportunities for small office-type businesses while maintaining a scale and character compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods. Due to its location just south of the City's Downtown district, care will be paid to ensure that development is consistent with the character of Old Torrance.



The introduction of the Residential-Office land use designation will encourage small-scale office development that will complement the existing residential uses and serve as a buffer between industrial uses on the east and residential uses on the west.

**Figure LU-8:  
Border Avenue**



**Border Avenue:** Due to the lot sizes and location of the focus area, plans to create a business park have never been realized.

**STUDY AREA 4: WESTERN AVENUE NORTH**

The Western Avenue North study area spans Western Avenue between Artesia Boulevard and 190th Street. Historic land uses include neighborhood commercial businesses from 178th Street to 186th Street, with larger, general commercial uses at major intersections such as Artesia Boulevard and 186th Street. A large mobile home park is located just south of the Southern California Edison utility easement. South of 178th Street, the study area is adjacent to single-family neighborhoods.

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.

A transition to more intense commercial use will encourage the recycling of aging, poorly maintained industrial uses and create tax generation opportunities. All properties are designated *General Commercial* (C-GEN; Max. 0.6/1.0 FAR).



Western Avenue North: A mix of older and newer commercial uses lends to a lack of identity along this major corridor.

**STUDY AREA 5: REDONDO BEACH BOULEVARD**

Redondo Beach Boulevard runs in an east-west direction along the City's northern boundary. Properties on the south side of the Boulevard are within the Torrance city limits, and properties on the north side fall within the cities of Lawndale and Gardena and unincorporated areas of the County. The I-405 freeway intersects the corridor near Prairie Avenue. Issues in the study area include lack of gateways to signify entry into Torrance, shallow parcels, and the presence of underutilized commercial properties.



More intense commercial designation along this major road and near I-405 can create tax revenue opportunities for the City.

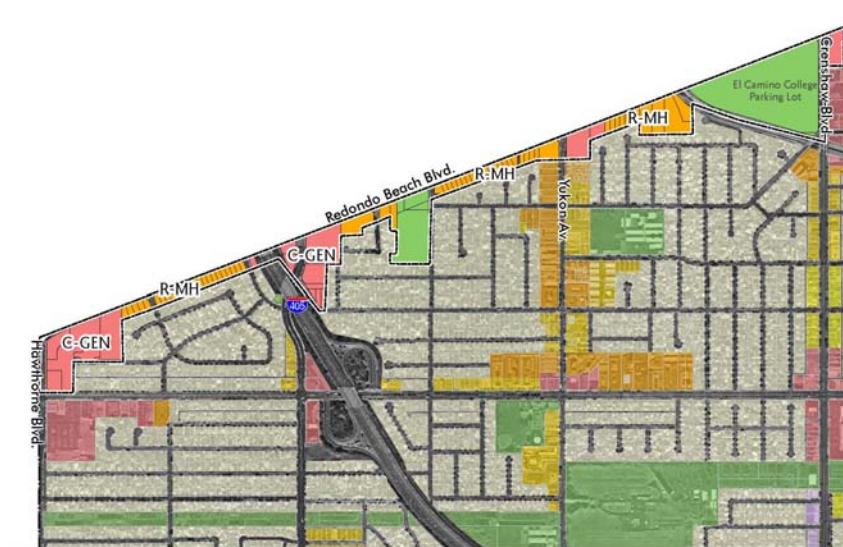
**Figure LU-9:  
Western Avenue North**

The study area includes a variety of land uses. Commercial uses consist mainly of local-serving businesses. Larger commercial clusters are located at the major intersections (Hawthorne Boulevard, Prairie Avenue, and Crenshaw Boulevard). Several single-family residential properties are located on commercially designated land located east of Crenshaw Boulevard. Institutional facilities include a large parking lot for El Camino College at the southwest corner at Crenshaw Boulevard and a private elementary school at Ainsworth Avenue.



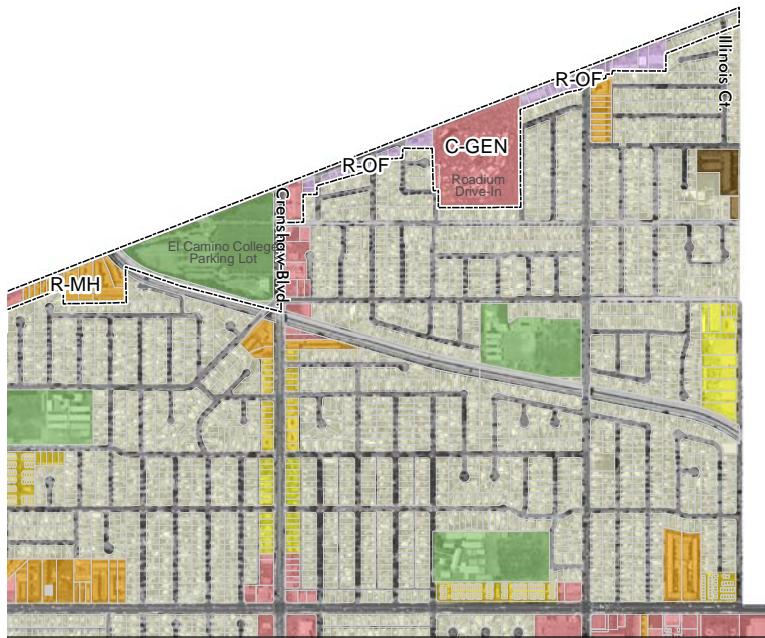
From the western edge of the City (at the intersection with Hawthorne Boulevard) to Crenshaw Boulevard, residential land use designations have been applied to reflect as-built densities of most of the properties, which is *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18.1-31 du/ac) to *Medium-High Density* (R-MH; 31.1-44 du/ac).

To provide opportunities for more intense commercial development and to encourage commercial/residential mixed-use development, commercial properties are designated *General Commercial*. Traditional commercial uses will be limited to a maximum FAR of 0.6, whereas mixed-use developments may be built up to a 1.0 FAR, consistent with zoning regulations.



Land use changes in this portion of the study area will reflect actual existing densities and provide opportunities for more intense commercial development.

**Figure LU-10:**  
**Redondo Boulevard (West of Crenshaw Boulevard)**



The transition to an R-OF designation will accommodate neighborhoods along the corridor where office, business, and residential uses are gradually being combined.

**Figure LU-11:**  
**Redondo Boulevard**  
**(East of Crenshaw Boulevard)**

The Radium Drive-in site (see Figure LU-11) is designated *General Commercial*, reflective of the long-time prior use of the property as a drive-theater and later as an outdoor swap meet. Given the limited permanent improvements on the property, over time the site could transition to a commercial center with uses that serve the neighborhood. Alternatively, this large site is well suited for a mixed-use development.

Properties east of Atkinson Avenue are designated *Residential Office* (R-OF; Max. 0.6 FAR for solely commercial projects, 1.0 FAR for mixed-use projects and 18.1-31 du/ac). The transition to a *Residential Office* designation will accommodate neighborhoods along the corridor where compatible office, business, and residential uses can exist. The *Residential Office* designation will permit the location of small, less-intense office uses adjacent to residential uses. Citywide General Plan policies applicable to the residential uses on the Radium property emphasize protecting established residential neighborhoods from new development impacts related to parking and traffic. The location of this site at the City's northern edge allows for easy access from a major roadway and, pursuant to the policies in the Plan, the City may limit access to the site via Redondo Beach Boulevard to reduce cut-through traffic into adjacent single-family neighborhoods.

## STUDY AREA 6: JEFFERSON/OAK

The Jefferson/Oak study area is located at the southeast corner of Carson Street and Crenshaw Boulevard, and is bounded by Jefferson Street to the south and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad to the east. The northern property east of the railroad and west of Plaza Del Amo is also included. The study area is bisected by Oak Street. Historically, the area was developed with business park and heavy industrial uses.

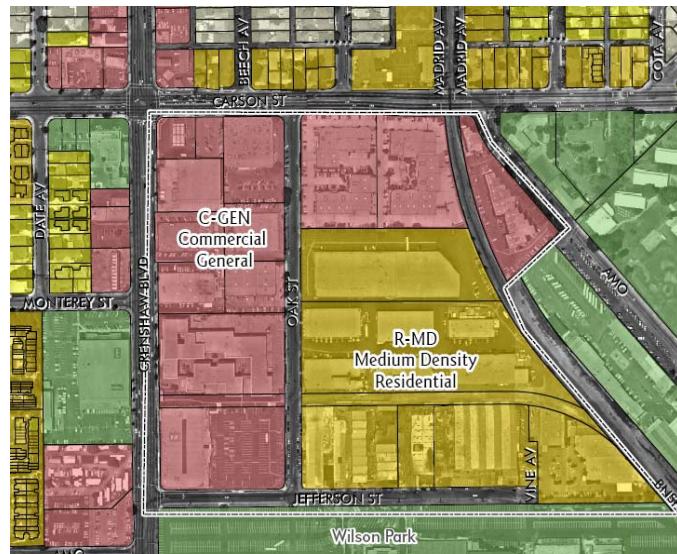
Land use changes in this area will promote more intense uses along one of the City's most traveled corridors – Crenshaw Boulevard – and allow residential development to replace aging industrial buildings. The Land Use Policy Map also designates properties between Crenshaw Boulevard and Oak Street and properties facing Carson Street as *General Commercial* (C-GEN; Max. 0.6/1.0 FAR), with the remainder of the area not already designated for residential use as *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18.1-31 du/ac). In 2003 and 2005, the

Business Park designated properties along the east side of Oak Street and the north side of Jefferson Street were amended to Medium Density Residential as part of a series of entitlements to allow the construction of



**Jefferson/Oak: Industrial buildings along Jefferson Street located across from Wilson Park.**

231 townhome, 86 condominium, and 59 senior condominium units. The project removed heavy industrial uses that were incompatible with Wilson Park located to the south and facilitated the clean-up of contaminated industrial properties. The business park property at the easterly end of Jefferson Street was also amended to Medium Density Residential, but was not part of the residential project.



Land use changes in this study area will promote more intense uses along one of the City's most traveled corridors and accommodated residential developments that have been approved or are being constructed.

**Figure LU-12: Jefferson Oak**

The *General Commercial* designation will serve as a transition area between the residential uses and Crenshaw Boulevard and Carson Street travel corridors and encourage commercial/residential mixed-use development by offering an FAR of 1.0. Solely residential and commercial projects will be limited to a FAR of 0.6.

### **STUDY AREA 7: EAST VICTOR PRECINCT**

The East Victor Precinct is bounded by Anza Avenue, Del Amo Boulevard, Torrance Boulevard, and the Hawthorne Boulevard Specific Plan. The General Plan allows for a variety of uses in this area including *Business Park* (max. 0.6 FAR), *General Commercial* (max. 0.6 FAR), and a variety of residential uses with densities ranging from *Low Medium* (9-18 du/ac) to *Medium High* (28-44 du/ac). Land use alternatives for this area were initially proposed, but ultimately withdrawn in acknowledgement that current land uses in this area functioned effectively.

Initial analysis revealed that the study area had experienced a transition from business park and industrial uses to commercial or residential use. While proposals to encourage a transition away from older business park uses were presented, The City, recognizing the employment and tax revenue generation value of business park uses in this study area, opted to preserve the land uses in the area today. In addition to the transition of business park uses, an important issue in the area is the potential expansion of existing medical facilities. The study area includes several acres of medical uses located along Torrance Boulevard such as Little Company of Mary Hospital and the Earlwood Convalescent hospital. The only land use change in this study area is for the Little Company of Mary Hospital site where the land use designation is changed from Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space to the new *Hospital/Medical* (HM) designation to match the existing use. In addition to creating a new *Hospital/Medical* (HM) land use designation, policies in Section 7.1 of the Land Use Element will encourage the concentration of existing and proposed healthcare facilities and their related uses, and support future expansion of



Land use alternatives for this area were initially proposed, but ultimately withdrawn in acknowledgement that current land uses in this area functioned effectively.

**Figure LU-13:  
East Victor Precinct**

medical facilities in a manner that will establish and maintain orderly growth of health care facilities in Torrance. In that regard, an additional study area with similar issues was examined: the area of Lomita occupied by Torrance Memorial Hospital. Like the Victor Precinct area, Lomita will be impacted in an as yet unforeseeable manner by the expansion needs of the hospital. As the hospitals are an important part of the community, a concept will be introduced for these two areas that will look at the "sphere of influence" of the hospitals, and allow for changes in General Plan and zoning designations within that sphere. This will allow for maximum flexibility both for the hospitals and for the City to analyze and make use of the properties within the hospitals spheres of influence in the most beneficial manner without having to make specific designations on what may be a changing environment.

## 2.5 FLOOD MANAGEMENT

Consistent with AB162 (2007), the Land Use Element of the General Plan must identify areas identified by flood plain mapping by either the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the Department of Water Resources. To prepare and mitigate hazards from flooding, the City of Torrance participates in the National Flood Insurance Program. Flood Insurance Rate Maps, which are prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, maps potential flood zones. The General Plan Safety Element presents flood hazard areas in Figure S-3.

## 2.6 BALANCED COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Maintaining a balanced community remains a priority for Torrance. The objectives and policies in the General plan will help the City balance continued development pressures with the community's desire to protect the charm and character that has made Torrance a desirable place to live. The objectives and policies address the need for new development that is functionally compatible with the City's existing neighborhoods and districts, proposes modest land use changes to improve older areas at the City's periphery, and ensures that new development does not overwhelm the City's infrastructure.

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### **OBJECTIVE LU.2:** A compatible land use pattern

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- Policy LU.2.1:** Require that new development be visually and functionally compatible with existing residential neighborhoods and industrial and commercial areas.
- Policy LU.2.2:** Encourage the transition of incompatible, ineffective, and/or undesirable land uses to land uses that are compatible and consistent with the character of existing neighborhoods.
- Policy LU.2.3:** Consider both the impact of a proposed development on surrounding property and the impact of existing uses on new development.
-

<b>Policy LU.2.4:</b>	Phase out primary oil recovery facilities located in unsuitable locations, such as residential neighborhoods.
<b>Policy LU.2.5:</b>	Establish landscape or hardscape buffers between residential and non-residential uses, where appropriate, to minimize adverse effects.
<b>Policy LU.2.6:</b>	To the extent possible, preserve the balance between jobs and housing in Torrance through land use decisions.
<b>Policy LU.2.7:</b>	Protect natural resources by promoting superior sustainable development.

<b>OBJECTIVE LU.3:</b>	Planning decisions that recognize the unique characteristics, opportunities, and constraints of the City's diverse neighborhoods and districts while respecting private property rights
<b>Policy LU.3.1:</b>	Require new development to be consistent in scale, mass, and character with structures in the surrounding area. For distinct neighborhoods and districts, consider developing design guidelines that suit their unique characteristics. Create guidelines that offer a wide spectrum of choices and that respect the right to develop within the context of existing regulations.

<b>Policy LU.3.2:</b>	Encourage development that identifies you are in Torrance, creates entry gateways, and edge boundaries. Encourage new development at the City's periphery where recycling of land uses can improve districts and neighborhoods and enhance property values. Allow intensification of uses in these areas, where appropriate.
<b>Policy LU.3.3:</b>	Encourage revitalization of underutilized properties along major corridors such as Crenshaw Boulevard, Western Avenue, and Redondo Beach Boulevard. Ensure that new development along these corridors is of high quality and attractively designed, given their location along the City's prime corridors.

<b>Policy LU.3.4:</b>	Continue to encourage the maintenance and upgrading of existing development.
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<b>OBJECTIVE LU.4:</b>	Land use development that complements the circulation and infrastructure network, meets the circulation demand of residents and businesses, and provides opportunities for non-automobile circulation
<b>Policy LU.4.1:</b>	Encourage site and building design elements in new developments that reduce or better distribute travel demand by promoting and educating residents and developers about transportation demand management strategies.

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<b>Policy LU.4.2:</b>	Encourage the use of development design and amenities that support transit and other alternative forms of transportation, including bicycling and walking.
<b>Policy LU.4.3:</b>	Require that new development projects provide their full fair share of the improvements necessary to mitigate project-generated impacts on the circulation and infrastructure systems.
<b>Policy LU.4.4:</b>	Maintain parking requirements that adequately meet the needs of commercial and industrial land uses, and protect adjacent residential neighborhoods from overflow parking encroachment.
<b>Policy LU.4.5:</b>	Ensure that residential parking requirements are adequate to relieve parking deficiencies in residential neighborhoods.
<b>Policy LU.4.6:</b>	Minimize individual lot access directly from arterial or major roadways and encourage reciprocal access between properties when feasible.

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### 3. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

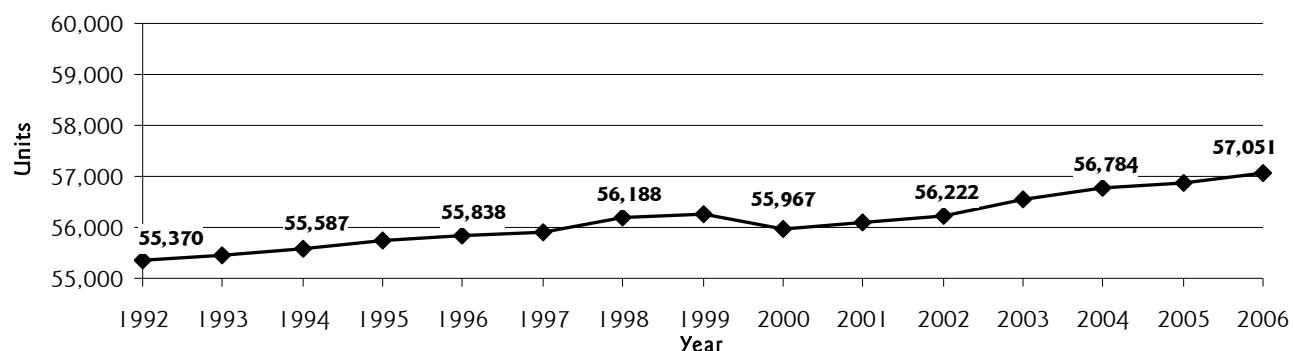
Residential neighborhoods comprise the largest land use category in the City. In 2005, approximately 49 percent of land in the City was occupied by residential development. Based on 2005 data, 38 percent of residential uses could be categorized as Low Density, 11 percent Low-Medium to Medium-High Density, and only 0.1 percent of units were considered High Density. Residential unit growth in Torrance has remained very stable over time, showing only slight growth since the adoption of the 1992 General Plan. Figure LU-14 shows that a three percent growth in housing units occurred between 1992 and 2006, lower than the five percent housing unit growth in Los Angeles County as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

The quality and character of the residential environment is one of the City's assets. Homes in Torrance are generally well maintained and in good condition. Because they are proud to call Torrance home, residents expressed a desire to maintain the quality and character of residential neighborhoods.

The demand for new, affordable homes throughout the Los Angeles region has placed growth pressures on Torrance, and residents question how future development patterns will affect their neighborhoods. The City recognizes the diversity and quality of Torrance's residential neighborhoods and is committed to preserving established single-family neighborhoods by regulating development and encouraging both property maintenance and rehabilitation.

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<sup>9</sup> E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, California Department of Finance.



Source: E-5 City/County Population and Housing Estimates, California Department of Finance.

**Figure LU-14:**  
**Housing Unit Growth in Torrance 1992-2006**

Long-time residents and newcomers to the community value the range of housing choices available. Census figures indicate that as of 2005, the median age of housing units in Torrance was 44 years<sup>10</sup>. As the City's housing stock ages, the replacement of units is expected to increase over the life of this plan. The scarcity of vacant properties and the high cost of land will also prompt recycling of residential properties and a desire for more intensive residential uses that takes maximum advantage of property size. As an example, this function of vacancy and land costs has prompted an increased demand for condominiums and townhouses that resemble single-family homes at a lower housing cost.

### 3.1 RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

To acknowledge the diversity and character of Torrance residential areas, a closer look at the major residential areas is included below. Factors such as the type of housing, density, age, and demographic composition have played an important role in the development of these neighborhoods. The objectives and policies in this section are aimed to address the future development and maintenance issues in these areas.

However, several issues resonate within all neighborhoods. Neighborhood residents place a high value on parks, trees, green space, and safety and security. Residents value the relatively low-scale nature of most neighborhoods and have expressed concern about a trend toward more intense development approaches both within their own neighborhoods and on properties that historically have supported non-residential uses. Residents have expressed that a key community value is to maintain the predominantly single-family character of residential neighborhoods.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2005 American Community Survey. Table B25035.

**RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICTS IN TORRANCE**

To best reflect in this General Plan the ideas and values of Torrance residents, City staff met with the Coalition of Homeowners groups in 2007-2008 to identify and describe the City's residential districts. During these meetings, residents contributed their thoughts and concerns about their neighborhoods, as well as their vision. The following six residential neighborhood district profiles respond to and reflect this community outreach effort. Figure LU-15 shows the location of the neighborhood areas.

**Neighborhood District: North Torrance**

*Location: From 190<sup>th</sup> Street to northern City boundary*

The north end of Torrance is notable for its proximity to the Mobil Oil Refinery and I-405 freeway. The mix of residential types includes single-family homes, multi-family apartments, and condominiums. Residents in North Torrance indicate that they are less impacted by traffic issues than are other areas of the City due to ease of access to the I-405 and the well-defined street grid in their neighborhoods.



Availability of parkland and freeway access are the most favored characteristics in the area. While housing affordability in this area is seen as a benefit, residents worry about housing maintenance issues.

Key issues that North Torrance residents would like to have addressed in their neighborhoods include undergrounding of utilities, improved streetscape, housing maintenance, and enhanced greenery. Traffic concerns focus on improving mass transit opportunities and easing traffic congestion at major intersections.

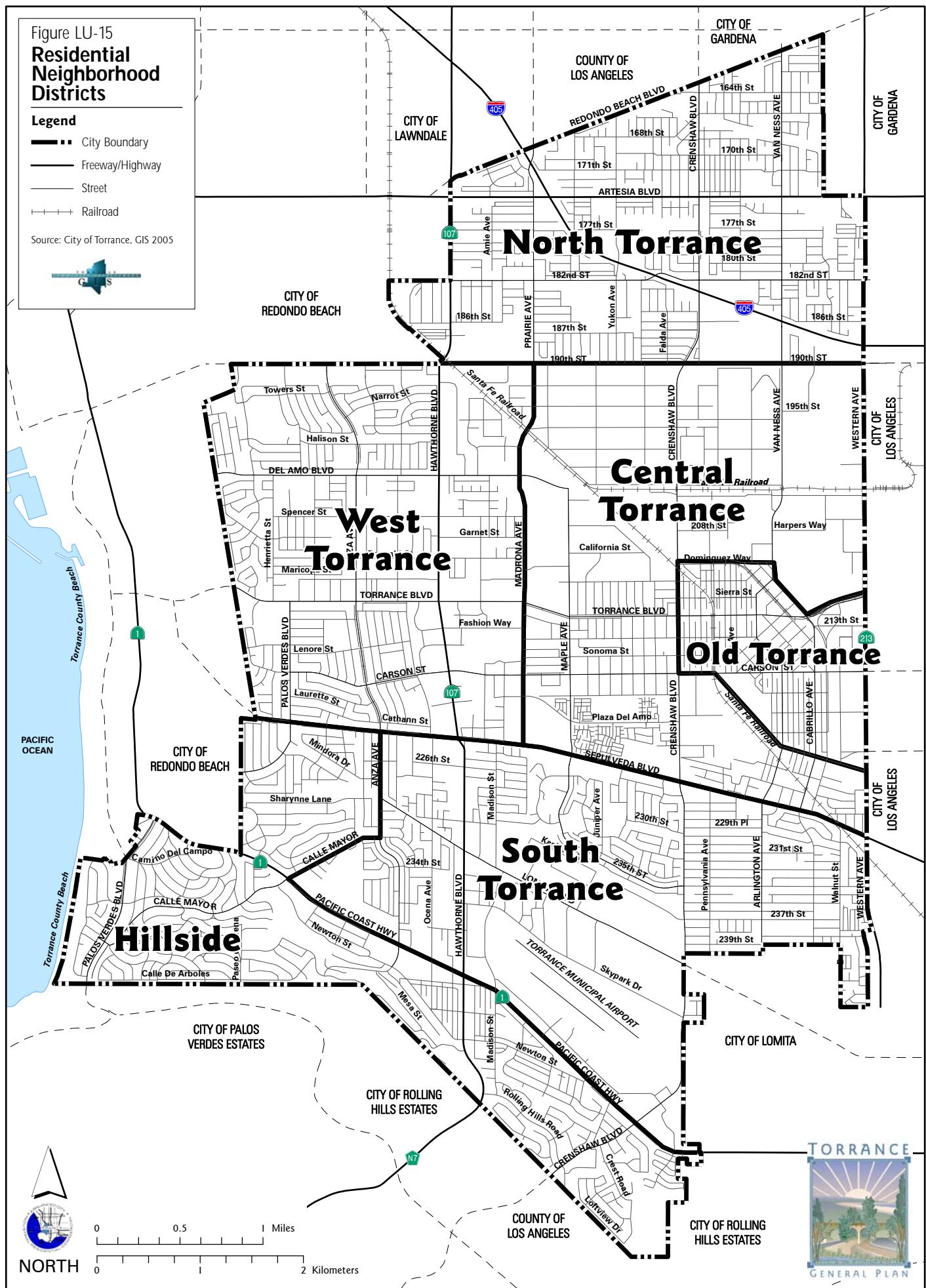
Figure LU-15

## Residential Neighborhood Districts

### Legend

- City Boundary
- Freeway/Highway
- Street
- Railroad

Source: City of Torrance, GIS 2005



### **Neighborhood District: Old Torrance**

*Location: Bounded by Dominguez Street, Van Ness Avenue, and Torrance Boulevard on the north, Western Avenue on the east, Plaza Del Amo on the south, and Crenshaw Boulevard on the west*

The Old Torrance neighborhood is notable for its historic structures, narrower streets, small and narrow lots, and pedestrian-friendly character. Old Torrance includes the original Torrance Tract and the Downtown redevelopment project area.



Residents prize the historic homes, abundant and stately trees, and walkability of the community. Of concern is the new face of development in the area, seen as overly dense and not respectful of the existing historic ambience. Many residents would like to see historic preservation pursued more vigorously through a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone or ordinances that would recognize and protect Torrance's physical history, as expressed through buildings and public realm enhancements.

### **Neighborhood District: Central Torrance**

*Location: South of 190<sup>th</sup> Street, North of Sepulveda Boulevard, East of Prairie Avenue, and West of Western Avenue*

The central areas of Torrance contains a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses such as the Mobil Refinery, the Industrial Redevelopment Project Area, the Honda and Toyota Headquarters, the Torrance Civic Center, and the Madrona Marsh Nature Center. Central Torrance also includes the Pueblo neighborhood located along Del Amo, several 1980s- and 1990s-era planned

## CHAPTER I: Land Use Element

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unit developments along Plaza Del Amo, and the single-family residential areas west of Crenshaw Boulevard and north of Sepulveda Boulevard.



The Pueblo neighborhood, located on Del Amo Boulevard between Crenshaw and Van Ness, is notable both for its age and direct proximity to the Mobil Oil refinery. This area has many long-term and even multi-generational residents, and has changed dramatically from an area in the early 1970s that had no street paving into an area divided by a four-lane street that is used by cross-town traffic. Homes in the Pueblo neighborhood have seen change as well, with a mix of new homes side-by-side with original dwellings. Residents in this neighborhood expressed concerns regarding potential contamination that may result from proximity to the refinery.

Torrance Gardens is the subdivision adjacent to the Civic Center, and is notable for its low-scale, single-family character. Homes are generally well kept, traditional 1950s and 1960s residences, with some remodels to accommodate changing family needs. Given the neighborhood's proximity to the Del Amo Fashion Center, residents have expressed concern about new development at the Center and the associated impacts on the neighborhood. Similar concerns arose subsequent to development of a sizeable gated community to the north, with density compatibility and traffic generated by that development identified as the top two concerns.

**Neighborhood District: West Torrance**

*Location: South of 190<sup>th</sup>Street, West of Prairie Avenue, North of Sepulveda Boulevard to the western City boundary*

The West Torrance neighborhoods encompass the Del Amo Fashion Center and financial center, and the Hawthorne Boulevard commercial corridor. The district includes pockets of multi-family developments located primarily between Torrance Boulevard and Spencer Street and along Anza Avenue from Torrance Boulevard to Del Amo Boulevard. However, the predominate type of residential development consists of detached homes.



Residents appreciate and respect the separation between commercial and residential uses. They have worked hard and wish to maintain attractive, well-kept neighborhoods and community spirit. Residents worry about the economic health of the commercial sector, and want to ensure that viable businesses remain and that all commercial buildings maintain a neat and professional appearance. Similar to residents in other neighborhoods, West Torrance residents are concerned with traffic and with preserving what they see as a highly desirable life-style.

**Neighborhood District: South Torrance**

*Location: South of Sepulveda Boulevard, North of Pacific Coast Highway, bounded on the west by Calle Mayor and Anza Avenue and extending to the eastern City boundary.*

The focal point of the South Torrance district is Torrance Airport, which is bounded by light industrial businesses and the Torrance Memorial Hospital. The Hawthorne Boulevard commercial corridor traverses the area, with concentrations of commercial uses along Sepulveda Boulevard and Pacific Coast Highway.



The majority of residential neighborhoods in South Torrance are of single-family character, with pockets of multi-family developments west of Crenshaw Boulevard, along Pacific Coast Highway. Area residents mention the parks and open space, the pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, and the single family character of the area as defining and desirable qualities. Airport noise is a significant concern due to airport proximity. Residents are also concerned about traffic and high-density development.

#### **Neighborhood District: The Hillside**

*Location: South of Pacific Coast Highway, west of Calle Mayor and Anza Avenue, South of Sepulveda Boulevard and bounded by the City borders to the West*

This area of the City is notable for its less urban feel, with narrower, tree-lined winding streets, hillsides, and views. The district is comprised almost exclusively of single-family homes, with the exception of a few areas adjacent to Pacific Coast Highway and Palos Verdes Boulevard. Residents mention the scenic qualities and larger residential lots as the neighborhoods' key character-defining qualities. The Seaside Ranchos area is renowned for its Christmas light display, while the Riviera neighborhood is well known for its dramatic ocean and city vistas and distinctive architecture. Walteria, one of the City's earliest neighborhoods, contains a collection of noteworthy homes constructed prior to the post-World War II housing boom. Residents feel a strong sense of community.



The character of development is highly influenced by the Hillside Overlay Zone, which is intended to protect views, light, air, and privacy. Residents are concerned with overly large “McMansion” development in the hillside neighborhoods, as well as the traffic and congestion impacts of home-based businesses. Although concerns are constant regarding trees and viewshed protection on individual lots, generally residents would like to see more street trees. Residents look to preserve neighborhood character by ensuring that new homes are built to scale with the rest of the neighborhood. Although the hillside district has not been affected by local building trends that favor more dense development, residents are nonetheless concerned that such trends will impact their neighborhoods.

### **3.2 RESIDENTIAL OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

The objectives and policies presented in this section and throughout the Land Use Element will ensure that new development is respectful of existing neighborhoods and contributes positively to the aesthetic quality of Torrance’s neighborhoods. The main objective with respect to the residential environment is to assure development that will most benefit the community while acknowledging the interests of private property owners.

**OBJECTIVE LU.5:** High-quality, attractive, residential neighborhoods**Policy LU.5.1:**

Require that new residential development be visually and functionally consistent in scale, mass, and character with structures in the surrounding neighborhood. Encourage residential development that enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of the City's neighborhoods and districts.

**Policy LU.5.2:**

Require the provision of adequate private and common open space for residential units.

**Policy LU.5.3:**

Maintain and encourage visually attractive residential neighborhoods by preserving and adding street trees and other types of streetscape and hardscape, and by encouraging the use of attractive and appropriate private landscaping.

**Policy LU.5.4:**

Ensure that alleys in residential neighborhoods are well maintained and do not create any public safety concern. Encourage vehicle access off of alleys to preserve pedestrian-oriented streetscapes.

**Policy LU.5.5:**

Require that developers of housing consider and quantify the effects of new residential developments on local schools prior to development approval.

**Policy LU.5.6:**

Strictly enforce City codes, including building and safety, zoning and land use regulations, and property maintenance codes, to maintain safe, high-quality residential neighborhoods.

**Policy LU.5.7:**

Ensure that the provision of housing is consistent with the goals and policies contained in the Housing Element.

## 4. COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Quality of life depends on a healthy local economy. Businesses in Torrance's commercial districts provide important services to residents and create a strong tax revenue base for the City. Revenue from commercial businesses supports the maintenance of infrastructure, fire and police services, community services, and public facilities. In 2002, retail sales in the City made up approximately 80 percent of total taxable sales.<sup>11</sup> Given that the City is largely built out and few significant commercial development



**Commercial Corridors:** The City's highly traveled corridors contribute to a strong retail base. Addressing issues such as maintenance, intensification, and traffic mitigation can help make these areas competitive in the South Bay retail market.

<sup>11</sup> Stanley R. Hoffman Associates, "City of Torrance Existing Economic Conditions and Trends", February 23, 2005, page 28.

opportunities remain, Torrance's long-term fiscal stability is closely tied to the continued stable financial performance of its existing commercial districts. While some retail sectors function better than others, overall Torrance has a stable tax base. A 2005 study indicated that between 1992 and 2000, the total taxable sales transactions remained relatively constant from \$3.1 billion in 1992 to \$3.5 billion in 2002 (using constant 2004 dollars).<sup>12</sup> The largest retail growth (83 percent growth between 1992 and 2002) was for the auto dealers and supplies category, while taxable retail sales for apparel, food stores, and home furnishings declined between 1992 and 2002.<sup>13</sup> Locally and regionally, Torrance's retail market is one of the strongest. Taxable retail sales per capita in Torrance were the second highest among the South Bay cities, at \$19,935. El Segundo had the highest per capita taxable retail sales among these cities at \$22,320. In comparison, the County of Los Angeles had per capita taxable retail sales of \$8,048.<sup>14</sup>

Commercial districts in Torrance vary in character and intensity based on location. Commercial districts serving a more local market are dispersed throughout the City in proximity to residential neighborhoods and at key intersections. Regional commercial districts along Hawthorne Boulevard, Crenshaw Boulevard, and Pacific Coast Highway cater to a broader population base. Torrance's pattern of concentrating regional and local serving commercial development along key commercial corridors is one the City will maintain. In addition, the location of regional centers in areas with adequate transportation access and public transit availability is important. Larger retail attractors in regional centers play an important role, as they generate a spill-over effect benefiting smaller, adjacent businesses. This pattern also provides the opportunity for a greater use of transit, bicycling, and walking.

Similar to residential areas, the scarcity and high cost of land will, in addition to a more competitive regional commercial market, contribute to the desire to intensify existing commercial areas to take full advantage of a property's economic potential. Advanced planning for commercial uses in Torrance must balance land use recycling and private redevelopment, which will allow the intensification of existing commercial uses and contribute to higher retail tax revenue for the City, with the ability to mitigate the implications of more intense developments such as traffic and parking.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., page 28.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., page 29.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., page 30.

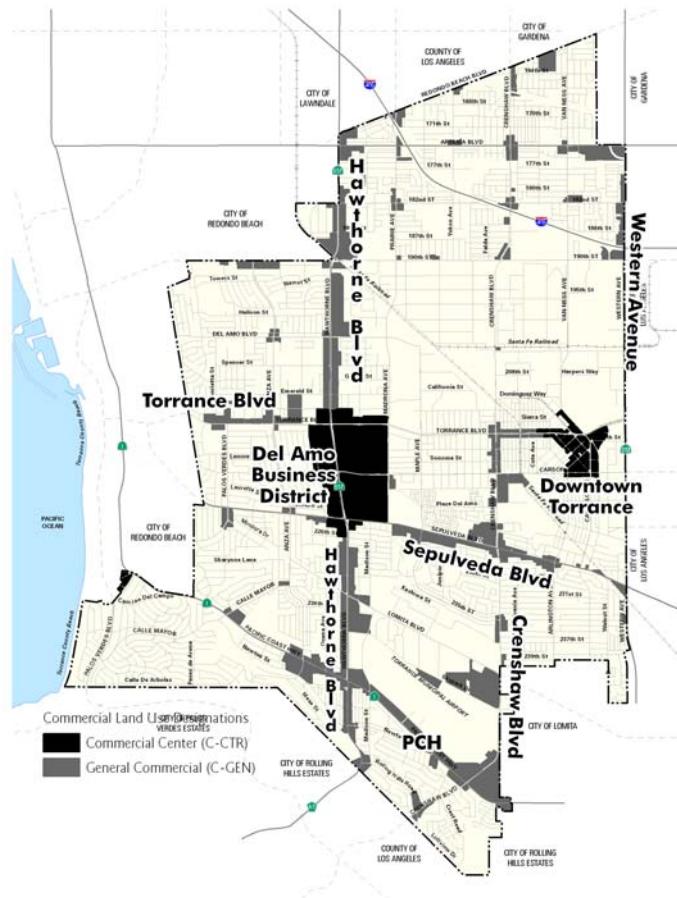
## 4.1 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS IN TORRANCE

As of 2005, commercial uses accounted for approximately 12 percent of all land uses in the City. Commercial districts include retail and service uses, professional and medical offices, restaurants, entertainment facilities, banks, and automotive sale uses. Commercial development in Torrance is located as shown in Figure LU-16, along Hawthorne Boulevard, Torrance Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Pacific Coast Highway; in Old Torrance; and the Del Amo Business District. Over the life of the General Plan, each of Torrance's commercial districts will encounter issues related to continued financial success as markets change and the need to upgrade aging structures.

### 4.1.1 HAWTHORNE BOULEVARD

Hawthorne Boulevard serves as the City's main commercial corridor. Spanning six miles from the northern to southern City limits, the corridor supports several large shopping centers located at key intersections. Large shopping centers along Hawthorne Boulevard are located at Carson Street and Sepulveda (Del Amo Fashion Center), Artesia Boulevard (South Bay Galleria-in the City of Redondo Beach), and Del Amo Boulevard (Promenade). Commercial development located outside the Del Amo business district generally is characterized by older "strip" developments common in many Southern California cities. Because of increased demand for commercial services, many property owners have undertaken full or partial redevelopment, and continued improvements are expected over the life of this Plan.

To provide a comprehensive and integrated plan for this important commercial corridor, the City adopted the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan (HBCSP) in July of 1996. The HBCSP includes provisions for new and more intense commercial development, including increased housing opportunities,



Commercial districts in Torrance vary in character and intensity based on location.

**Figure LU-16:**  
**Commercial Districts in Torrance**

while protecting existing and future residential neighborhoods from potentially intrusive impacts.

Maintaining a competitive retail environment and addressing traffic concerns while providing for future growth and intensification along Hawthorne Boulevard will be a key challenge for the City. The success of the corridor is tied to allowing for a broad range of commercial uses reflective of market demand, easily accommodating regional traffic and consumers, providing better transit access, and integrating uses such as higher-density housing at key locations. General Plan policies that encourage pedestrian- and transit-friendly site design and require mitigation of traffic impacts necessitated by new or intensified developments will guide this success.

#### **4.1.2 DEL AMO BUSINESS DISTRICT**

The largest and most intense concentration of commercial development in the City is at the Del Amo Business District, generally bounded by Ocean and Madrona Avenues and Torrance and Sepulveda Boulevards. The Del Amo Fashion Center, Del Amo Financial Center, and many other retail and office uses are located in this area. The Del Amo Fashion Center is a super-regional shopping center that includes approximately three million square feet of retail space.<sup>15</sup> Once considered a premier shopping center, the original Del Amo Mall experienced a downturn in the 1990s due to lack of investment and outdated site design and retail offerings. An extensive renovation of the north wing was completed in 2006 to create a two-level outdoor promenade with retail, dining, and entertainment establishments. Access will be improved with the extension of Del Amo Boulevard between Crenshaw Boulevard and Maple Avenue, and the widening a segment of Del Amo Boulevard between Maple Avenue and Prairie Avenue.

Policies that encourage maintenance and upkeep of properties will be important for assuring that the district remains a retail driving force and can adjust to the changing demands of the retail market. The fiscal health will also be tied to the success of neighboring areas, particularly Hawthorne Boulevard, as it will provide opportunities to attract new customers and visitors to the area.



**Del Amo Fashion Park:** The Del Amo Fashion Center is a super-regional shopping center that serves as a major retail focal point in the South Bay.

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<sup>15</sup> Stanley R. Hoffman Associates, "City of Torrance Existing Economic Conditions and Trends", February 23, 2005, page 32.

### 4.1.3 OLD TORRANCE

Old Torrance contains the City's original commercial core, dating to the early 1900s, and the City's oldest residential neighborhoods are found in Old Torrance. The district offers a central location for retail, commercial, and service activities (see Community Resources Element section 3.1 for detailed map of Old Torrance). The downtown shopping district is bordered by Torrance Boulevard to the north, Cabrillo Avenue to the east, Carson Street to the south, and Arlington Avenue on the west. Uses include locally-owned businesses, as well as medical, dental, law, and real estate offices. Old Torrance is also the location of the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area (discussed in detail in Section 9.2 of this Element).

Preservation and enhancement in Old Torrance remain important City objectives. While the layout and architectural character of commercial uses in Old Torrance provide an ideal opportunity for people to visit several different shops and services within walking distance of each other, growth and renewal of this area may be inhibited by the small parcel sizes, the lack of expansion space, and insufficient parking for many existing stores and businesses.

To make Old Torrance a dynamic and more viable downtown, improvements in the area must focus on intensification of uses, strengthening the type of and mix of tenants, and attracting recognizable retailers to the area that complement local businesses. Parking deficiencies must also be addressed, as this may be deterring a rise in activity. The City envisions an invigorated Old Torrance that attracts "magnet" or "destination" uses—uses that have regional appeal and attract other retail tenants. Priority should be placed on attracting uses that create activity and generate foot traffic. For example, many uses in Old Torrance have one-stop patrons who leave the area once their business is complete. A rise in activity levels and the establishment of complementary uses to those in the area can persuade business patrons to extend their visits in Downtown.

Commercial development in Old Torrance also needs to build upon and enhance the qualities that set this area apart from other commercial areas in the City. New businesses should respect the historical pattern of development and offer



Old Torrance:  
Commercial  
development that  
creates activity  
while respecting the  
historical pattern of  
development can  
attract more  
commercial tenants  
to Old Torrance.

design that is compatible and complementary with the area's established character. The adaptive reuse of older structures will be supported, as this can preserve architectural treasures by creating a new uses for the structure.

Overall, creating a vision for the future Old Torrance that encourages economic growth while satisfying the interests and desires of the Old Torrance business community, historic preservation groups, and residents will be the key challenge.

#### **4.1.4 COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS**

Significant commercial development in Torrance is located along major roads such as Crenshaw, Lomita, Torrance, and Sepulveda Boulevards, and Pacific Coast Highway. Along these corridors, larger shopping centers located at key intersections serve as anchors for smaller commercial uses located mid-block.

While many shopping areas in the City exhibit high-quality architecture and outstanding landscaping, many consist of older structures and outdated site design that do not encourage pedestrian activity. As commercial competition in the region increases, businesses will need to adapt to the changing marketplace. As renovation and turnover occur in older commercial areas, updated site design, façade improvements, and incorporation of design themes that complement individual districts will be encouraged. Site design that facilitates and encourages pedestrian and transit access can create organic growth by improving activity for neighboring businesses. For newer shopping areas, site maintenance and upkeep will help these centers from becoming obsolete, help them to remain competitive, and continue to attract customers and desirable retailers.



Torrance Crossroads Shopping Center: Attractive building and site design, extensive landscape treatments, and retailers and food establishments with a regional appeal have contributed to the success of the shopping center.

#### **4.2 COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

The City will maintain a viable retail base on which to base future revenue and in turn provide a high level of public services to residents and businesses. To ensure a successful commercial base, the City and business community will need to respond to changing trends in the marketplace. On-going evaluation of the commercial base, balanced distribution of commercial land uses, and high maintenance standards will maintain the City's commercial districts as leading retail destinations in the South Bay.

<b>OBJECTIVE LU.6:</b>	Economically successful commercial centers that respond to the City's changing demographic and economic conditions
<b>Policy LU.6.1:</b>	Encourage a balanced distribution of commercial development throughout the City, ensuring that neighborhoods and districts have adequate access to neighborhood-serving commercial uses.
<b>Policy LU.6.2:</b>	Encourage the intensification of commercial uses on underutilized commercial properties in accordance with the Land Use Policy Map and all applicable regulations.
<b>Policy LU.6.3:</b>	Cluster commercial development at major activity and transit nodes, and discourage the proliferation of strip commercial uses.
<b>Policy LU.6.4:</b>	Encourage and facilitate a balanced mix of desired commercial and residential uses in Downtown Torrance to ensure the area's economic viability.
<b>Policy LU.6.5:</b>	Maintain policies and standards to allow parking structures and underground parking in commercial areas, where appropriate.
<b>Policy LU.6.6:</b>	Strictly enforce City codes, including building and safety, zoning and land use regulations, and property maintenance codes to maintain safe, high-quality commercial developments.

## 5. MIXED USE

Mixed-use development refers to the mixing of compatible land uses such as residential, commercial, and office. While existing in different varieties, in most mixed-use structures or developments, commercial retail is encouraged as a focal point, particularly on ground-floor levels, as it can encourage increased activity at neighboring uses. Housing can be integrated within the same building or as separate, adjacent, free-standing use. Walkability and pedestrian access are key considerations for successful mixed-use developments. Combining land uses in appropriate locations and with appropriate site design can be beneficial to businesses and residents. Retailers have the assurance that they will always have customers living right above them or nearby, while residents have the benefit of being able to walk to get groceries, find personal services, have dinner, or see a movie.



Mixed-Use in Old Torrance: Mixed-use in Torrance will vary between lower intensity development that reuses buildings of architectural interests (left) and newer, larger scale development (right).

## 5.1 MIXED-USE IN TORRANCE

The location of mixed-use developments in appropriate locations is essential for its success. Mixed-use developments should be located in areas where services and transportation are most available and do not interfere with established residential neighborhoods. In Torrance, future mixed-use developments will most likely be located in Old Torrance, along major commercial corridors, and at key activity nodes such as major commercial intersections where development is compatible with surrounding land uses. These corridors include Redondo Beach, Hawthorne, Torrance, Crenshaw, and Sepulveda Boulevards. In Old Torrance, mixed-use can revitalize older building and add to the charm and character of the area. The design of many older buildings also offers opportunities for creative mixed-use projects, as the ground floors and upper floors are already visually distinct.

The General Plan allows mixed-use development within the *General Commercial*, *Commercial Center*, and *Residential-Office* land use designations. *General Commercial* encourages commercial and office or residential mixed-use developments along major corridors by allowing a higher intensity of development (1.0 FAR), compared with solely commercial uses.<sup>16</sup> In neighborhoods where office/business and residential uses are already gradually being combined, the *Residential-Office* land use designation will allow the location of small, less-intense office uses adjacent to residential uses. In these areas, smaller professional offices are the most desirable office use. *Residential-Office* 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 and live-work arrangements will continue to require some form of discretionary review, such as a conditional use permit.

<sup>16</sup> Solely commercial developments will be limited to a 0.6 FAR.

Pending the establishment of mixed-use design guidelines for Torrance, a case-by-case review of individual project proposals will be required to ensure that the development is located on appropriate sites, compatible with surrounding land uses, and appropriately integrates commercial and residential or office uses. Project review ensures that concerns are mitigated prior to construction. Relevant issues to be considered during project review include parking, on- and off-site pedestrian and vehicular circulation, transit access, the provision of open space and recreational facilities for residents, and impacts from traffic, noise, glare, and pollution on the residential component of the project.

## 5.2 MIXED-USE OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Mixed-use in Torrance offers residents the opportunity to live in an urban environment without disrupting established residential neighborhoods, and provides the City with a way to incorporate a mix of housing on a small scale while enhancing the aesthetic character of commercial areas. Mixed-use also has the potential to invigorate struggling areas and spur economic development by enhancing an area's unique identity and development potential. Due to recent construction of mixed-use projects in Torrance the viability of mixed-use is gradually gaining community acceptance. For mixed-use to succeed in Torrance, this type of development must be approached in a comprehensive manner that addresses site location, design, functionality, and amenities. Creating a vision for mixed-use and how it will help achieve City goals – and including community participation in this process – will be key goals during the life of the General Plan. Urban design issues for mixed-use development are addressed in Section 8.2.6 of this Element.

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<b>OBJECTIVE LU.7:</b>	A pattern of land use development which permits housing to be developed as an integrated component of commercial projects on properties designated for commercial development, where appropriate
<b>Policy LU.7.1:</b>	Permit mixed-use projects on a case-by-case basis to allow for the combination of residential units and commercial development on the same commercial site, where appropriate and compatible with long-established surrounding uses and in accordance with all applicable regulations.
<b>Policy LU.7.2:</b>	Provide opportunities for development of high-quality, side-by-side, work/live opportunities to allow residents to establish workplaces near places of residence; this type of development should enhance the visual character of the neighborhood and be encouraged only in areas where it is appropriate and consistent with existing land use patterns.
<b>Policy LU.7.3:</b>	Establish guidelines for mixed-use developments from which vibrant, attractive and high-quality developments can be designed.

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## 6. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Torrance was developed as a City with prominent industrial uses, and these uses continue to be an important part of the City's identity. Torrance has periodically reinforced policies which preserve its industrial base, encourage cooperation in the maintenance and improvement of the industrial environment, and minimize conflicts between industry and adjacent land use. This General Plan continues emphasize the importance of industrial uses to the City's financial future.

### 6.1 INDUSTRIAL USES IN TORRANCE

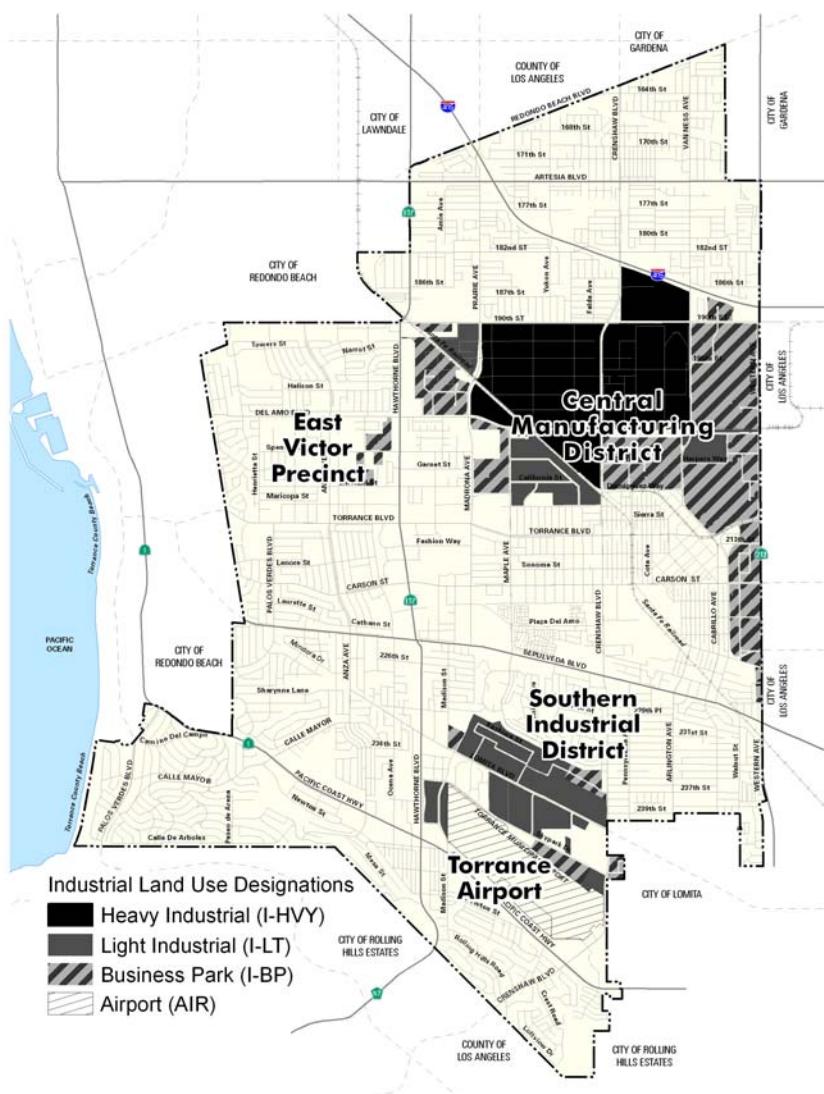
Industrial uses in Torrance provide the City with a valuable source of employment and revenue, as well as a regional industrial focal point that includes many multi-national corporations and valuable oil production and processing plants. Torrance industry has contributed to a concentration of industrial employment compared with the County of Los Angeles as a whole. In 2005, manufacturing industries contributed approximately 15 percent of the total employment in the City of Torrance, a figure slightly higher than the proportion of industrial jobs at the County level (12 percent).<sup>17</sup>

A 2005 land use survey indicated that industrial uses cover 2,276 acres, or 22 percent of the City's total land use.<sup>18</sup> Industrial uses in Torrance include light and heavy industry, which include traditional industrial processes such as manufacturing, processing, warehousing, packaging or treatment of products, and business park uses, which typically include research and development, warehousing, and office uses, with ancillary and limited commercial uses. Industrial development is concentrated in two main districts: the Central Manufacturing District (generally between Western Avenue and Hawthorne Boulevard, from I-405 to Plaza Del Amo), and the Southern Industrial District that includes airport land and areas north of the airport. The East Victor Precinct located north of Torrance Boulevard and west of Hawthorne Boulevard has a smaller concentration of industrial uses.

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<sup>17</sup> Stanley R. Hoffman Associates, "City of Torrance Existing Economic Conditions and Trends", February 23, 2005, Page 24.

<sup>18</sup> Torrance General Plan: Land Use Background Report, October 2005.



Torrance was developed as a City with prominent industrial uses, and these uses continue to be an important part of the City's identity. In 2005, manufacturing industries contributed approximately 15 percent of the total employment in the City of Torrance.

**Figure LU-17:  
Industrial Districts in Torrance**

### 6.1.1 CENTRAL MANUFACTURING DISTRICT

The Central Manufacturing District contains the largest concentration of industrial uses in Torrance. Because it is bordered by major roads, the district is reasonably well buffered from conflicting land uses such as residential neighborhoods.

The most dominant physical and industrial feature of this district is the Exxon Mobil Oil Company refinery. The refinery, established in 1929, produces nearly 10 percent of the gasoline sold in California, employs nearly 800 people, and generates millions of tax dollars for the City.<sup>19</sup> Industrial uses from 190th Street to Torrance Boulevard include the campus environments of the American Headquarters of Honda and Toyota. Land use changes in this area are not anticipated over the life of this General Plan, although the expansion and upgrade of the automobile company campuses are likely to occur. Given the employment and revenue benefits to Torrance, protecting industrial land in this area represents a City priority.

### 6.1.2 SOUTHERN INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT

The Southern Industrial District is developed with a mix of light industrial uses, including office, light manufacturing, and warehousing and distribution. This industrial area is buffered from non-industrial land uses by major roads and commercial development. Because the north boundary is adjacent to residential uses, manufacturing uses require a Precise Plan of Development to minimize land use conflicts.



Aerial views of the Toyota Motor Sales Headquarters (left) and American Honda Motor Company Headquarters (right): Given the employment and revenue benefits to Torrance, protecting industrial land in this area is a City priority.

Source: Google Earth, accessed March 1, 2007

Nearby commercial uses will play an important role in the future of this area, as the leading issue is the development pressure from neighboring commercial uses. As commercial uses in this area look to expand, they are constrained by residential uses and may explore future development possibilities on industrial

<sup>19</sup> Exxon Mobile Website; Torrance Refinery. Accessed February 27, 2007. [http://www.exxonmobil.com/NA-English/About/Torrance\\_Refinery.asp](http://www.exxonmobil.com/NA-English/About/Torrance_Refinery.asp)

land. The City recognizes the importance of this area as a means to achieve employment objectives and will limit commercial expansion into this area. Strengthening industrial uses here and citywide through design plans and business development will also promote viable industrial development.

### **6.1.3 EAST VICTOR PRECINCT**

The East Victor Precinct industrial area is located southwest of the Hawthorne and Del Amo Boulevards intersection. Formerly a manufacturing area, the area now contains a mix of industrial, office, and residential uses. Many of the approximately 33 acres of industrial land are surrounded by residential uses. To minimize land use conflicts in this area, the City will continue to require a Precise Plan of Development for industrial uses and work toward attracting clean, quiet industrial uses that offer employment and revenue benefits.

## **6.2 INDUSTRIAL OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

Torrance recognizes the importance of retaining its strong industrial base to meet revenue and employment needs. Therefore, the City will preserve the primary industrial land uses and encourage intensification and/or redevelopment of underutilized industrial parcels. Expanding industrial uses significantly is not feasible due to the lack and high cost of vacant land. However, over time, market forces may create a demand for more office space or more intense business park or warehouse uses than exist in the industrial districts. Considering ways to increase the intensity of uses throughout the City's industrial areas will encourage more productive use of limited land resources.

More non-traditional, non-industrial uses, such as medical offices, retail sales of large home appliances and building supplies, recreational facilities, wholesale and retail warehouse stores, vocational schools, and churches, have been allowed in industrial areas. Non-industrial uses, when regulated through by development and performance standards or through a use permit on a case-by-case basis, are often more appropriately located in an industrial or business park setting rather than in commercial area or residential neighborhood where impacts would be greater or more harmful. The provision of sufficient on-site parking shall be considered when non-industrial uses result in higher parking demand. Potential impacts created by the permanent or interim use of tenant space for non-industrial uses should be adequately mitigated. The ability to convert or reconvert a building or tenant space for an industrial use should be considered when allowing a non-industrial tenant. Ensuring the presence of appropriate tenants in industrial developments can minimize safety and traffic conflicts and ensure that these areas are preserved for industrial businesses that contribute positively to the City economy through jobs creation and tax revenue.

In areas where industrial uses are located in close proximity to residential, public, or commercial uses, the City will continue to minimize land use conflicts by requiring a Precise Plan of Development and working with businesses and developers to mitigate impacts related to industrial processes. The Safety Element of the General Plan also addresses safety hazards associated with industrial processes (Policies S.3.I-3.4, S.4.3).

<b>OBJECTIVE LU.8:</b>	Establishment, maintenance, and protection of economically viable industrial uses
<b>Policy LU.8.1:</b>	Ensure that non-industrial uses do not negatively impact the viability of industrial areas.
<b>Policy LU.8.2:</b>	Protect industrial districts by updating the types of uses that are allowed in the zones designated for manufacturing.
<b>Policy LU.8.3:</b>	Clarify and expand guidelines to address assembly of people uses, such as recreational and educational businesses and faith organizations within business parks, based on factors such as site design, safety considerations, and parking requirements.
<b>Policy LU.8.4:</b>	Require that oil recovery operations locate in appropriate locations and that they do not cause blight.
<b>Policy LU.8.5:</b>	Establish high performance, safety, maintenance, and development standards as a condition of approval of secondary oil recovery projects.
<b>Policy LU.8.6:</b>	Guide development in industrial districts through design and performance standards. Allow flexibility for industrial uses to respond to the changing demand of industry.
<b>Policy LU.8.7:</b>	Strictly enforce City codes, including building and safety, zoning and land use regulations, and property maintenance codes, to maintain safe, high-quality industrial developments.

## 7. PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC USES

Public and quasi-public uses include private and publicly owned land serving public agencies. Public uses include the Civic Center, public schools, parks, government facilities, police and fire stations, libraries, and water treatment facilities. Quasi-public uses include land owned by private entities that serve a community-wide function, such as private schools and utility easements.

Public and quasi-public uses are an important part of what makes Torrance a desirable place to live. The *Public/Quasi-Public* land use designation is intended to protect, encourage, and expand, where possible, uses essential for the provision of public services. In response to changing demographics over time, the City will re-evaluate its public services and facilities to better serve the community. For example, the increase in senior-aged residents will necessitate community facilities that can serve the health, education, and cultural enrichment needs of senior citizens. Community facilities and services such as

parks and recreation, libraries, schools, sumps (basins), and drainage facilities are discussed in detail in the Community Resources Element. Emergency facilities such as police and fire stations are discussed in the Safety Element. Hospitals and the Torrance Municipal Airport are discussed below to address land-use-related issues.

Although not included in the *Public/Quasi-Public* designation, private amenities in residential development provide additional, although limited community resources. The Torrance Municipal Code (Division 9: Land Use) establishes requirements for inclusion of useable open space in residential development.

## 7.1 HOSPITAL FACILITIES

The City of Torrance has two full-care hospitals within its corporate limits. Little Company of Mary Hospital (LCMH), located north of Torrance Boulevard between Earl Street and Hawthorne Boulevard, features 317 acute care beds and a full range of primary care and medical-surgical services. In addition to the primary hospital facility, LCMH operates an Outpatient Radiology Center located just north of the Del Amo Shopping Center, the LCMH Pavilion, a 121-bed transitional and long-term care facility located a block west of the hospital, and offices for home health care services.

Torrance Memorial Hospital located east of Hawthorne Boulevard between Lomita Boulevard and Skypark Drive, is a fully accredited, full-service, 376-bed, non-profit community medical center. Torrance Memorial Medical Center was the South Bay's first hospital. Founded by Jared Sidney Torrance in 1925, the institution serves more than 30,000 people annually.



Torrance Memorial Medical Center: Founded by Jared Sidney Torrance in 1925, the hospital offers general acute care services and serves as one of the only three burn centers in Los Angeles County. With approximately 2,700 employees, Torrance Memorial is one of the South Bay's largest employers.

In addition to providing invaluable medical resources, these two major hospitals generate revenue and employment benefits to Torrance. National labor statistics indicate that wage and salary employment in the healthcare industry is projected to increase 27 percent through 2014, compared with 14 percent for all industries combined.<sup>20</sup> This increased demand can benefit the Torrance community, as average earnings of non-supervisory workers in most health care segments are higher than the average for all private industry, with hospital workers earning considerably more than the average and those employed in nursing and residential care facilities and home healthcare services earning less.<sup>21</sup> Average earnings often are higher in hospitals because the percentage of jobs requiring higher levels of education and training is greater than in other segments.

Previous General Plan policies sought to contain medical uses within their historic locations due to perceived traffic impacts and limited expansion needs. Through the first decade of the twenty-first century, the need for medical services and full-service hospitals in particular has become acute, and these demands are anticipated to increase. Factors contributing to high demand for health services include an aging population which will continue to require more services, medical technological advances which have increased longevity and the quality of life of the severely ill who may need extensive care from therapists and social workers, as well as other support personnel. The closure of other hospitals in the region has also put more pressure on local hospitals to serve a larger population and expand their facilities.

Expansion of medical facilities due to State-required expansion and required seismic retrofitting of hospital facilities is expected to occur over the life of the General Plan. Potential expansion of hospitals and related medical uses are important to the City, as expanded medical facilities can position the City as a health



Expansion of medical facilities will occur in a manner and timeline that takes into consideration parking requirements and the capability of existing infrastructure to absorb increased activity.

**Figure LU-18:**  
**Torrance Memorial Medical Center and**  
**Hospital Medical Designation**

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Career Guide to Industries: Health Care. <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm> accessed February 6, 2007

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Career Guide to Industries: Health Care. <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm> accessed February 6, 2007

care focal point for the South Bay and create higher wage jobs for the Torrance community. Expansion efforts will also include addition of medical office space in close proximity to the hospitals. Medical offices are a critical component of a hospital campus, as they allow doctors to locate private offices in close proximity. By concentrating medical uses, the City of Torrance can benefit from economic activity related to medical uses and a potential increase in the number of professional, higher-paid medical jobs.

To support 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, a new land use designation has been created. The *Hospital/Medical* designation will encourage the establishment and expansion of hospitals; professional offices offering medical, dental, or related services; and accessory buildings and facilities. The *Hospital/Medical* designation allows a 0.6 FAR for non-hospital uses such as medical related offices, general office, and other non-medical uses. The 0.6 FAR may be exceeded for a full-service hospital and related uses with the approval of the Planning Commission or City Council. A maximum FAR of 1.0 is allowed for hospital-adjacent medical offices that are within the *Hospital/Medical* designation.

LCMH has indicated that by approximately 2020, the hospital will need to replace towers to meet the State of California seismic regulations and expand to meet the health care needs of an aging community. By 2013, LCMH anticipates building a new 225,000-square foot hospital tower that would necessitate the addition of 500 parking spaces.<sup>22</sup> The new tower will accommodate 178 beds, a variety of support services, and an expanded emergency room. LCMH also looks to expand its medical offerings with the addition of medical office space in areas adjacent to or near the main hospital. Between 2006 and 2020, LCMH hopes to add 400,000 square feet of office space and 2,000 parking spaces.

The City of Torrance will work closely with LCMH and Torrance Memorial Hospital to facilitate the expansion of medical facilities within the "sphere of influence" adjacent to or in close proximity to the existing hospital facilities. In these areas, the City will consider land use and zoning changes to accommodate hospital-related development, as reflected in Policy LU.9.7. The



The *Hospital/Medical* (HM) land use designation will encourage the orderly expansion of hospitals, professional, medical, and dental offices and related services.

**Figure LU-19:  
Little Company of Mary Hospital and  
Hospital-Medical Designation**

<sup>22</sup> Correspondence: Barbara Riegel, LCMH Service Area Director to Jeff Gibson, City of Torrance Community Development Director, July 10 2006

expansion of medical facilities will only be undertaken with affected property owners' consent and participation in the process. Neither the City nor the hospitals will acquire properties through condemnation. The sole intent of Policy LU.9.7 is to facilitate expansion of hospital facilities as those properties become available to the hospitals.

In addition to accommodating land use and zoning changes, expansion of hospital facilities on non-contiguous properties will be acceptable. This expansion of medical facilities will also occur in a manner and timeline that takes into consideration parking requirements and the capability of existing infrastructure to absorb increased activity. As is the case with other types of development, hospital facilities will pay their full fair share of the cost of added services and public facilities necessitated by their expansion.

## 7.2 TORRANCE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

Torrance Municipal Airport, also known as Zamperini Field, has been of service to the aviation community for many years by providing regional aviation access to recreational pilots, businesses, and emergency services flights. Many aeronautics-related businesses are located on the 500-acre airport property. Of this area, 140 acres are leased at commercial rates for non-aeronautical purposes, and a total of 360 acres are dedicated to aeronautical use. About 140 acres of the aeronautical land is open and partially used for agriculture.<sup>23</sup> The benefits of having a municipal airport extend beyond airport property. The airport can facilitate business attraction and retention, as it provides local air access to businesses and industries that rely on frequent air travel.

The airport is owned and operated by the City of Torrance. Originally called Lomita Flight Strip, the airport was established in 1931, initially deeded to the City in 1948, and finally deeded in 1956. The City has full control of the administration and daily operations at the Airport. The City coordinates with agencies such as the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on issues related to safety. The FAA is responsible for control of airspace. The City limits based aircraft to 825 airplanes, which does not include transient aircraft which visit the field for a brief time, and which may be parked or tied down at the airport. Some types of aircraft are banned from the airport because they are considered too noisy and incapable of



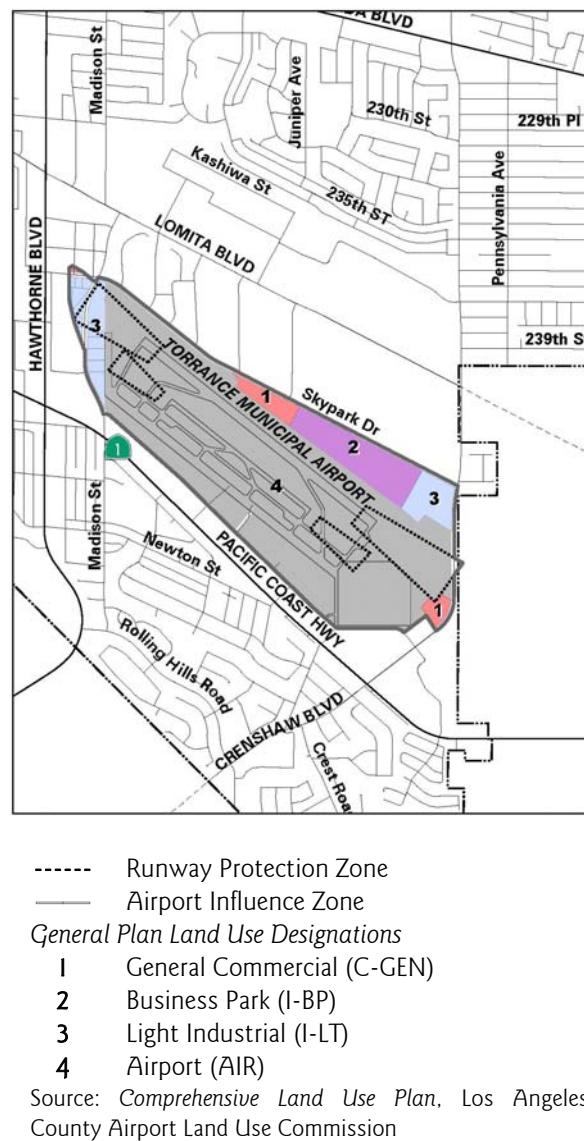
**Torrance Municipal Airport:** The goals of the Torrance Municipal Airport are: Safe operations to, from, and around the Airport, harmony among the diverse stakeholders in the Airport and efficient administration.

<sup>23</sup> *Torrance Airport General Information*, City of Torrance, General Services Department. <http://www.ci.torrance.ca.us/Airport/9595.htm>

meeting the City's stringent noise ordinance (Municipal Code Division 4, Chapter 6, Article 8: Aircraft Noise Limits). While noise related to aircraft operations is expected, noise complaints and noise levels have declined over the years since the inception of the City's Noise Abatement Program.

### 7.2.1 AIRPORT LAND USE COMPATIBILITY AND SAFETY ZONES

The variety of air services and separate flight paths at an airport require regional coordination to prevent confusion in flight patterns and to maintain safety. Potential damage to aircraft may also result in loss of life and property along flight paths. Noise-related issues also negatively affect residents and businesses located in close proximity to the airport's flight path. To avoid such outcomes, the FAA has established land use restrictions to areas surrounding airports and flight paths. To comply with FAA regulations, a Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) has been established at each end of each active runway at Torrance Municipal Airport. A RPZ is an area at ground level that provides for the unobstructed passage of landing aircraft through the above airspace.<sup>24</sup> The geographic scope of the RPZ is determined by the type of landing approach used for that runway. The City of Torrance has control over 57 percent of the RPZ for the 5,000-foot runway. The remaining 43 percent is under the jurisdiction of the city of Lomita. The FAA mandates the airport operator to restrict uses of RPZ land under its control to those compatible with airport operations. In particular, the FAA recommends restricting uses that include congregation of people and limiting building heights with the airport influence area, shown in Figure LU-20.



**Figure LU-20:**  
**Torrance Airport Land Use**

<sup>24</sup> Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission, Page 9,1991

State law requires that General Plans be consistent with land use compatibility plans established by an Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC). The Los Angeles County ALUC Land Use Plan, which covers Torrance Municipal Airport, was adopted in 1991. The land use plan is intended to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the public by minimizing the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within and around public use airports. When a city whose territory falls within the influence area of a particular airport amends its General Plan, referral must be made to the appropriate ALUC for determination on consistency with the ALUC's Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP).<sup>25</sup>

To maintain land use compatibility in and around the airport, the City will require that land use decisions within the airport-influence area be consistent with the General Plan Safety Element and the Torrance Airport CLUP. To ensure the City's vision for the future of the airport is consistent with regional airport planning efforts, close coordination with the Los Angeles County ALUC will be maintained, particularly when the Commission commences revisions to the Airport Land Use Plan. Airport-related safety and noise issues are addressed in more detail in the Safety and Noise Elements, respectively.

### 7.3 PUBLIC AND QUASI-PUBLIC USES AND AIRPORT OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

<b>OBJECTIVE LU.9:</b>	Public and quasi-public uses that provide community-wide benefits vital to the City and that meet the needs of Torrance residents
<b>Policy LU.9.1:</b>	Preserve, protect, and maintain open space, parks, and recreation facilities as desirable land uses, recognizing that such uses contribute to the high quality of life in Torrance.
<b>Policy LU.9.2:</b>	Protect those lands needed for public and quasi-public services which benefit the City as a whole and in accordance with the Community Resources Element.
<b>Policy LU.9.3:</b>	Provide and facilitate public and quasi-public uses in accordance with the Community Resources Element.
<b>Policy LU.9.4:</b>	Accommodate the provision of public and quasi-public uses that meet the needs of shifting demographic groups, such as those aimed at senior populations, and day-care facilities to meet the needs of Torrance families and workers.
<b>Policy LU.9.5:</b>	Establish incentives and development standards to encourage development of land uses that provide public amenities and/or desirable facilities or features including amenities such as private open space and recreation.

<sup>25</sup> *Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission, Page 14,1991

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- Policy LU.9.6:** Permit the orderly expansion of health facilities immediately surrounding the Little Company of Mary and Torrance Memorial hospitals to meet the growing demand for hospital and medical services.
- Policy LU.9.7:** Consider land use and zoning designation changes to accommodate hospital-related development within a reasonable radius from existing hospital facilities.
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- OBJECTIVE LU.10:** A general aviation airport that meets the needs of residents and the business community, while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding land uses
- Policy LU.10.1:** Maintain an updated Long Range Master Plan which defines the future uses and development standards applicable to the airport.
- Policy LU.10.2:** Maintain local authority over airport operations.
- Policy LU.10.3:** Consider the cumulative impact of private, non-emergency heliports and helistops in the City when reviewing applications for their approval, especially with regard to impact on residential areas.
- Policy LU.10.4:** Work closely with airport personnel and patrons to ensure the viability of the airport in the long run. Maintain efficient management of the airport and encourage harmony among the diverse stakeholders in the airport.
- Policy LU.10.5:** Ensure that land use decisions within the airport influence area are consistent with the Safety Element and the Torrance Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
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## 8. URBAN DESIGN

Urban design encompasses many components for cities: the functional aspects of buildings and space, landscaping, safety and accessibility, and elements of a more subjective nature. The primary objective of urban design is to achieve beautiful, inspiring, and successful neighborhoods and business districts. Well-designed, well-built projects that fit into existing neighborhoods are good for the community. Good community design is not only intended to improve the physical appearance of the City, but also to invigorate the local economy by attracting shoppers and visitors. Areas in Torrance where urban design is critically important include Old Torrance, older commercial and industrial districts that will be re-developed during the life of this General Plan, and new residential developments.

When discussing urban design, it is important to note that while design objectives that aim to improve the appearance of the City are important and future establishment of design guidelines will be appropriate in Torrance, these topics and documents must function with the acknowledgement that existing

regulations may prevail, specifically zoning, and that they must be balanced with the rights of owners to develop their property in accordance with established regulations.

## 8.1 WHAT IS GOOD URBAN DESIGN?

Desired design elements should be required of homeowners, business owners, architects, and developers to achieve superior quality and design of new construction and additions to existing buildings in Torrance. In general, good urban design aims to:

- Establish distinct identities for residential neighborhoods and commercial districts;
- Create attractive and functional urban environments;
- Increase occupant satisfaction and community pride, inspiring ongoing concern and care for the project or building;
- Enhance and help stabilize neighborhoods, primarily through the pride and commitment of occupants' or owners' respect for the project;
- Ensure durability and easy maintenance; and
- Appreciate in value, all other things being equal.

Throughout the General Plan, terms such as *attractive* and *high quality* are used to describe the type of development that Torrance will strive to achieve. As mentioned in the introduction to this Element, these terms are highly subjective, and an evaluation of what is attractive or of high quality can change from person to person and from time period to time period. The Land Use Element and this section in particular can serve as a foundation for decision-making related to aesthetic value. The goals, objectives, and policies can guide future efforts to establish urban design guidelines or standards.

## 8.2 URBAN DESIGN COMPONENTS

Urban design initiatives aim to improve both the beauty and function of developments, areas, and even whole cities. Architecture, landscaping, and signage together can convey a city's values, standards, and cultural past, which in turn can create a sense of "place" and an identity. Rather than focus on the design of individual structures, urban design should be comprehensive and include the massing and organization of buildings, as well as the look and activity of the spaces between them. As interest in the development market for mixed-use structures in Torrance increases, urban design concepts such as landscaping, walkable site design, gateways, and signage will be important.



**Landscaping Adjacent to Multi-Family Housing:**  
Landscaping can add considerable character to higher-density developments and instill a greater sense of pride in residents.

Figure LU-21 indicates activity nodes, gateways, and major corridors where urban design concepts can be applied.

### **8.2.1 LANDSCAPING**

Landscaping enhances the look and feel of cities. Often treated as a secondary consideration or eliminated altogether due to cost constraints, landscaping is a critical component of any successful development project and should be considered an essential part of the design process. Landscaping along major corridors in Torrance creates a first impression of the community. Landscape treatments provide a more inviting environment for pedestrians in key activity centers and corridors. In keeping with the recurring theme of walkability, urban design should take into account how and when pedestrians will interact with the environment. If new development and redevelopment in Torrance is to contribute to the aesthetic beauty of the City, landscaping will be an important tool to achieve this.

The Community Resources Element addresses street aesthetics and the importance of trees and landscaping. As mentioned in that Element (Section 3.7), the City will continue to implement a master landscaping plan that defines the types, sizing, and spacing of street trees, and that sets forth a comprehensive approach for replacing older trees that die. As appropriate, this effort will be accomplished in conjunction with the development of corridor plans for arterial streets and with plans for key entry points into Torrance. The Implementation Program for the Community Resources Element also includes programs to create master landscaping plans for all City streets and parkways, defining the types, sizing and spacing of street trees.

Appropriate landscaping as part of low-impact development (LID) site design can also contribute to compliance with storm water regulations as LID uses the landscape areas in developments to filter and infiltrate storm water. In LID principles and practices, water can be managed in a way that reduces the impact of built areas and promotes the natural movement of water within an ecosystem or watershed. LID is discussed in the Community Resources Element.

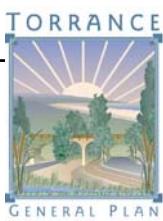
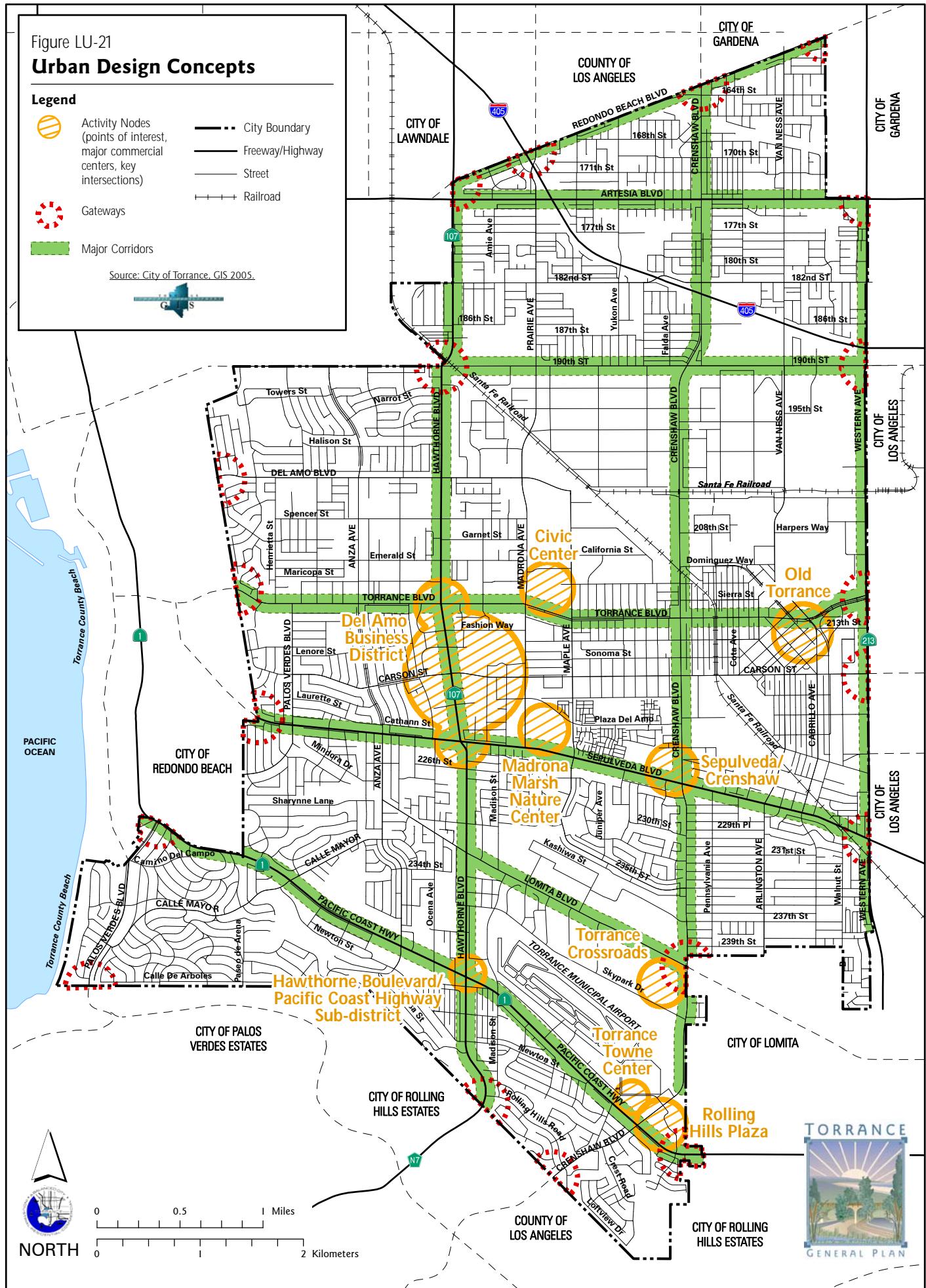
Figure LU-21

## Urban Design Concepts

### Legend

-  Activity Nodes (points of interest, major commercial centers, key intersections)
-  City Boundary
-  Freeway/Highway
-  Street
-  Railroad
-  Gateways
-  Major Corridors

Source: City of Torrance, GIS 2005.



CHAPTER I: Land Use Element

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## 8.2.2 WALKABILITY

Good urban design that includes pedestrian access and amenities and offers a pleasurable walking environment can help create successful shopping centers and residential areas. Because of the demands of automobile travel in urban areas, cities face challenges in making adequate provisions for pedestrians. But encouraging pedestrian amenities can be beneficial, especially in retail commercial areas. While many residents make one-stop shopping trips, walkability can encourage shoppers and visitors to venture on foot beyond their intended destinations and reduce the number of automobile trips.

In residential areas, creating walkable environments and especially pedestrian linkages to commercial or public uses will encourage residents to consider alternatives to the automobile and also create a sense of camaraderie between neighbors that can positively affect the quality of life for Torrance residents. Walkability in Torrance can be created by:



Former rail rights-of-way can be converted to linear parks and pedestrian paths.

- Encouraging pedestrian and bicycle linkages between residences and parks, trails, recreational/cultural facilities, schools, libraries, shopping, employment centers, and transit stops and pedestrian access within developments
- Providing physical buffers where feasible between walkways and traffic lanes through use of landscaping or angled on-street parking to enhance pedestrian safety
- Eliminating or minimizing utility poles, equipment vaults, and other above-ground appurtenances that encroach into the sidewalk and inhibits pedestrian movement
- Discouraging wide expanses of parking lots
- Minimizing pedestrian-auto conflicts and ensuring a high-level of safety for pedestrians
- Providing pedestrian linkages between uses and buildings
- Creating an appealing street scene through the use of attractive street furniture and landscaping
- Designing commercial projects to have a central plaza or main visual focus which is oriented towards pedestrian and transit connections
- Integrating features such as awnings and verandas that can shield visitors from weather elements and add visual interest
- Discouraging residential developments that face inward or are surrounded by walls and have no connections to neighboring uses

### 8.2.3 GATEWAYS

Entry into City limits or “gateways” are important to Torrance’s image because they provide important first impressions for motorists and pedestrians entering the City. Creating boundaries and entries can successfully signal arrival into Torrance and are important to perceptions of a strong City identity.

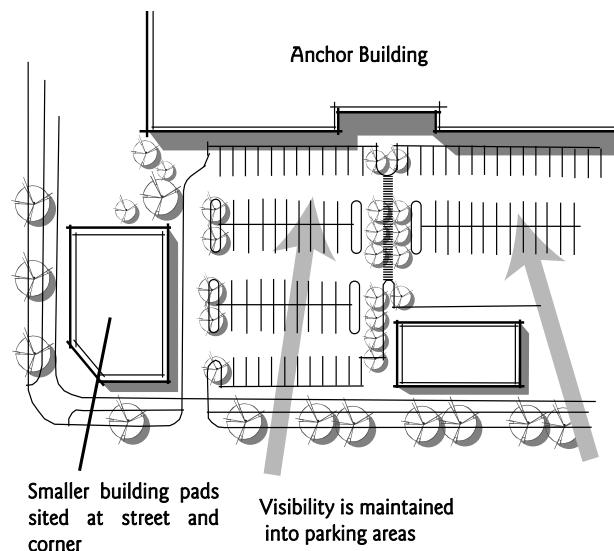
Gateway indicators that can help define the City’s major entry points include landscaping, gateway markers, monuments that integrate architectural elements, and signage. Together or separately, these indicators can portray a distinguishing visual identity for the City. City limit entryways along major corridors are potential locations for gateway elements (Artesia Boulevard, 190th Street, Del Amo Boulevard, Torrance Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, Lomita Boulevard, Pacific Coast Highway, Hawthorne Boulevard, Crenshaw Boulevard)

### 8.2.4 SIGNAGE

Signs influence the overall character and appearance of Torrance’s street environments, and should be given as much consideration as design elements such as architectural styles or building siting. Because of its importance as business identification, signage must be a part of the overall design of a project, not additive or an afterthought. Commercial signage in Torrance should serve the City’s interests in maintaining and enhancing its visual appeal for residents, tourists, and other visitors by preventing the degradation of visual quality which can result from excessive and poorly designed, located, or maintained signage. To improve the look of signage in commercial areas, signs should:



**Southern Pacific Bridge:** Located just west of Western Avenue, the Southern Pacific Bridge serves as an important gateway indicator and distinguishes the City from neighboring jurisdictions.



Large commercial anchor stores should be located to the rear, adjacent to large parking areas. Smaller buildings are encouraged to be sited along the street, and particularly at corners, to create an identifiable street edge and avoid creating centers with parking lots as focal points.

**Figure LU-22:**  
**Site Design Example**

- Be architecturally integrated with their surroundings in terms of size, shape, color, texture, and lighting so that they are complementary to the overall design of the buildings.
- Complement a building's style and coordinate with the City's desired street character,
- Be clear and legible for pedestrians and motorists, and be consistent in style and color, and
- Be enhanced with the use of landscaping or other design elements such as street furniture.

As tenants install signs, such signs must be in conformance with all applicable sign regulations and fit with the architectural character, proportions, and details of the development. Through the sign ordinance (Division 8, Chapter 8: Signs), the Environmental Division has the power to review, consider, approve, modify or disapprove any sign program which does not conform to all the provisions of ordinance with appeal rights to the appropriate commission. The review is guided by the following considerations:

- All signs are architecturally compatible with the buildings on the premises
- Compatibility with the character of the established neighborhood.
- The proliferation of signs
- The effect of signs on traffic safety
- Land use on adjacent properties

These principles will continue to guide review of commercial signage.

Cities have long traditions of using signage to call attention to civic uses and focal points. Torrance has a variety of opportunities to highlight its various neighborhoods, cultural and historical places of significance, and civic uses through signage. The signage will not only highlight these locations but also offer directional assistance to visitors.

### **8.2.5 SITE DESIGN**

Site planning is not just about locating buildings but also locating, parking areas, pedestrian walkways, driveways, trash enclosures, loading docks and service access, open space, landscaping, and other physical characteristics. A good site plan design incorporates all the physical characteristics of a large commercial, industrial, or office center into a logical design that avoids pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, increases functional compatibility between buildings and facilities, locates buildings along the street, and includes pedestrian amenities such as plazas or paseos. Site planning also takes into account pedestrian and automobile circulation. Both are necessary for the success of large commercial centers.

Encouraging good site design can also minimize the visual impact of wide expanses of parking lots seen in many shopping centers. Good site design can also minimize the proliferation of commercial strip developments by adding interest to the look of the center through variations in facades and building depths.

Good site design can also meet the City's sustainability goals (especially related to storm water management) by incorporating low impact development (LID) principles. LID has numerous benefits and advantages over conventional storm water management approaches as it is a more environmentally sound technology and a more economically sustainable approach to addressing the adverse impacts of urbanization. By managing runoff close to its source through intelligent site design, LID can enhance the local environment, protect public health, and improve community livability.

### **8.2.6 MIXED USE DESIGN**

The increase in popularity of mixed-uses will necessitate the establishment of design and performance guidelines to ensure high-quality development that suits the character of Torrance neighborhoods and districts. The success of mixed use derives from the idea of creating complementary and supportive services and activities. If accomplished correctly, mixed-use developments can become activity centers and destinations for living, eating, shopping, working, and socializing.

Mixed use works best when it is developed out of a comprehensive plan that emphasizes the connectivity and links among the uses. Results may be haphazard without guidance about the mix of uses, how those uses are spatially related, and how those uses should contribute to a neighborhood's aesthetic character. A key goal of the City will be to create mixed-use developments that are unique and incorporate high-quality architecture and design. Establishing design guidelines and related performance standards will be the first step in guiding new development and ensuring that mixed-use in Torrance is of superior quality and meets the City's high standards. Design guidelines and performance standards should require that mixed-use developments:

- Clearly articulate the function of commercial uses from residential or office uses
- Include site design and location that strongly encourages pedestrian activity and public transit use
- Incorporate design elements that enliven the street level and create a sense of place for visitors
- Include communal plazas and open space to encourage visitors to extend their stay and explore the area and private open space areas for project residents that are designed to limit intrusion by non-residents

- Integrate an appropriate amount of parking without allowing parking areas to become the focus of the development
- Are located in areas with adequate vehicular circulation

Mixed use in Torrance will vary in character and intensity based on location, and mixed-use guidelines and standards must be created to respond to the specific physical, financial, and locational differences. In Downtown Torrance, for example, mixed use will have decidedly different character than mixed use along major corridors due to the unique street grid pattern and presence of structures of historical or architectural significance.

### **8.2.7 PUBLIC ART**

Public art programs enhance the quality of the visual environment, both natural and built, and in so doing add to the visual quality of life and raise the level of citizen awareness to the importance of aesthetic and intellectual experiences in everyday life. Public art programs are intended to integrate public art with private development and can:

- Increase public access to art and to promote understanding and awareness of the visual arts in the public realm,
- Contribute to the civic pride and economic development of a community, and
- Enhance the climate for artistic creativity in a community

In 2000, the City of Torrance established an Art in Public Places (AIPP) Exploratory Committee to research establishing an AIPP program in Torrance. In addition, a preliminary inventory of public art in Torrance was established. From this effort, the Committee established a mission to:

*“...foster art in public places, to enhance neighborhoods and urban environments through the installation and maintenance of permanent artworks that reflect the local environment, cultural values and artistic vitality of the community.”*

The Committee recommended preliminary guidelines for minimum project valuations that would require a public art component and estimates for fees to be charged. The General Plan will promote further exploration of a public art program in Torrance as part of Implementation Program I-20 that recommends that the City develop and adopt design guidelines that cover general and citywide issues and topics.

## **8.3 URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES**

Design guidelines establish general criteria to be used in directing future building, site design, and landscape efforts. Policies and implementation programs direct the City to establish design guidelines and prioritize areas

which possess a unique character or which may benefit from a unified design theme. Focused plans can preserve the character of areas of architectural or historic significance and help create identifiable themes in areas that lack such distinction. Design efforts must also look to issues of land use and circulation from an integrated perspective to provide for the coordination of private and public development and to create a truly integrated, visually pleasing environment.

Mixed-use development approaches are anticipated to be consistent with land use policy direction, and clear design objectives and guidelines will establish the City's expectations. Design standards for commercial centers will be needed, as many center owners may pursue renovations due to the age of the properties and increased competition in the commercial market. Due to the concentration of activity in commercial centers, and the associated traffic impacts, particular attention will be given to creating or augmenting an integrated circulation pattern with strong emphasis on pedestrian and transit access.

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<b>OBJECTIVE LU.11:</b>	Attractive, high-quality neighborhoods and commercial and industrial districts through the use of innovative design and architectural themes
<b>Policy LU.11.1:</b>	Encourage development which enhances the visual character, quality, and uniqueness of the City's neighborhoods and districts.
<b>Policy LU.11.2:</b>	Approve expansion of commercial centers only within the context of an overall design theme or master plan that is visually and functionally compatible with surrounding uses.
<b>Policy LU.11.3:</b>	Identify neighborhoods and districts that can be enhanced and revitalized through the implementation of an urban design theme.
<b>Policy LU.11.4:</b>	Establish corridor plans along major roads that integrate both public and private improvements and create identifiable and cohesive visual themes through the use of landscaping, hardscape, signage, and lighting.
<b>Policy LU.11.5:</b>	Require that commercial and industrial developments establish a high-quality visual environment through the use of design elements such as landscape, hardscape, signage, and lighting.
<b>Policy LU.11.6:</b>	Encourage site and building design whereby individual projects on separate lots function as unified developments to promote aesthetic and functional cohesiveness, where applicable and within the context of applicable regulations.
<b>Policy LU.11.7:</b>	Encourage the use of cohesive design elements that encourage movement of pedestrians, bicycles, and other non-automotive modes of transportation between distinct commercial establishments, between commercial and residential areas, and between residential areas, schools, recreational and cultural facilities, libraries, and transit corridors and hubs.

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<b>Policy LU.II.8:</b>	Accentuate major gateways and entryways through the use of design elements such as landscape, hardscape, gateway monuments, and signage treatments.
<b>Policy LU.II.9:</b>	Require that development along the City's boundaries emphasize the qualities and uniqueness of Torrance by using attractive and cohesive design elements and architectural themes.
<b>Policy LU.II.10:</b>	Encourage site and building design that integrates low-impact development Principles.
<b>Policy LU.II.11:</b>	Explore the establishment of a public art program.

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## 9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

### 9.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City recognizes the connection between economic development and quality of life. Economic development will continue to be a central factor in the success of Torrance, as it will strengthen the community through the expansion of the tax and employment base. A strong tax and employment base will allow the City to support a higher quality of life for its residents. Establishing and maintaining uses that create well-paid jobs can also attract residents who continue the cycle of economic growth; a skilled, well-paid population base will strengthen local spending that can increase the success of local businesses and employers, and provide private investment in the community.

#### 9.1.1 BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

The prosperity of businesses in Torrance is paramount to the City's economy. The City will focus retention and expansion efforts on industries that provide high-quality jobs, such as those found in the manufacturing, health care, information technology, and professional services industries. These types of businesses provide higher wages and better benefits relative to other sectors.

The City's Economic Development Office (EDO) facilitates and develops the relationship between the City and the Torrance business community. The EDO coordinates the use of City resources to assist business creation, attraction, retention, and expansion within the community to increase economic viability and ultimately, to pursue the following goals:<sup>26</sup>

- Goal 1. Enhance Employment Opportunities
- Goal 2. Increase the City's Revenue and Tax Base
- Goal 3. Create a Healthy and Balanced Community and Improve the Quality of Life

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<sup>26</sup> City of Torrance Economic Development Plan

- Goal 4. Ensure Economic Stability and Long-Term Self-Sufficiency

To improve and foster the success of businesses, the EDO offers a Business Visitation Program that gives each business a City contact and offers information on the range of resources available to assist them with their business. Economic assistance may also include site selection, human resource solutions, permit streamlining, information and referral, marketing opportunities and financial incentives. Additional outreach may also be coordinated with the South Bay Economic Development Partnership and the Workforce Development Division.

**Table LU-4**  
**Top 10 Private Employers in Torrance - 2007**

Business Name	Number of Employees
Toyota Motor Credit\Corporation	3,264
American Honda Motor Co. Inc.	1,639
Alcoa Fastening Systems	1,164
Honeywell Aerospace\Equipment Systems	1,149
Robinson Helicopter Co.	1,143
Motor Car Parts & Accessories Inc.	840
ExxonMobil Oil Corporations	675
Hi Shear Corporation	661
L-3 Communications Electron Tech, Inc.	648
ADECCO North America LLC	562

Source: City of Torrance Finance Department, 2007

## 9.2 REDEVELOPMENT

While most areas in Torrance function well physically and financially, some areas need an extra push to spur economic growth and revitalization. Redevelopment is a tool that is used in Torrance and many cities in California to spur economic activity and investment in urbanized areas that have experienced economic decline. Because of economic incentives, redevelopment is one of the most effective and sometimes only way to reinvigorate older neighborhoods and districts.

Redevelopment is a process created by the State of California to assist local governments in eliminating blight and revitalizing designated project areas. Redevelopment provides communities with the ability to obtain funding to make infrastructure improvements, acquire property, and otherwise bring about desired development, reconstruction, and rehabilitation. A portion of redevelopment funds must also be used to promote affordable housing opportunities in the community.<sup>27</sup> The ability to fund economic development activities can aid in encouraging private businesses to do the same.

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<sup>27</sup> California Health and Safety Code, Section 33000 et seq.

The California Health and Safety Code provides the basis for redevelopment activities (starting at Section 33000, also known as the Community Redevelopment Law). Section 33037 states that the basic goal of redevelopment is the removal of blight. Blight is a term used to describe a variety of physical and economic conditions, some of which may not fit the public's general perception of blight. Examples of physical blight include buildings that are deteriorating, aging, or poorly maintained. Blight may also describe buildings that are in good condition but need design or configuration improvements to meet current business needs. Inadequate streets, sewers, and other infrastructure are other examples of blight. Economic blight can be characterized by vacant buildings or land, high tenant turnover rates, residential overcrowding, or the inability to attract or retain businesses in a particular area.

The Torrance Redevelopment Agency was created in 1964 and works in conjunction with City departments to achieve the goals set forth by the Redevelopment Agency. The Agency uses a process called tax increment financing to carry out its goals. When an area is designated as a redevelopment area by the City Council, the property within the boundaries of the project area has a certain total property tax value. If this total assessed valuation increases due to redevelopment effort, most of the taxes that are derived from the increase go to the Redevelopment Agency. These "tax increments" can be used only in the same redevelopment project area where they were generated, except for residential projects which benefit low-and moderate income households. The Redevelopment Agency has used set-aside money to rehabilitate buildings such as the El Prado Apartments and the Newberry Building, and to finance new residential development. These new units add to the community's supply of long-term affordable housing units.

The City has three redevelopment project areas.<sup>28</sup> The areas have individual Redevelopment Plans that set forth development policies and objectives. While the underlying General Plan land use designation represents the typical land use policy, the adopted Redevelopment Plan for each area takes precedent. The redevelopment project areas also have a timeline within which redevelopment activities may occur (40 years). When a redevelopment project ends, the property taxes from the increase in property values return back into the City's General Fund. This money, no longer needed to help improve infrastructure, can now be used to improve the schools, roads, libraries, and increase public safety service to the community.

Torrance's Redevelopment Project Areas include:

- The Skypark Project Area, the second redevelopment project area established, encompasses approximately 30 acres of commercial properties located between Hawthorne Boulevard, Skypark Drive, Madison Street, and Lomita Boulevard. Shortly after completion of area

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<sup>28</sup> The Meadow Park Redevelopment Project Area plan expired in March 2007

## CHAPTER I: Land Use Element

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redevelopment, Skypark was awarded the Pacific Coast Builders Conference Gold Nugget Award for its commercial mixed-use site plan.<sup>29</sup> The Skypark Project Area plan was adopted on November 16, 1976 and has a plan duration limit of 40 years, expiring in 2016.

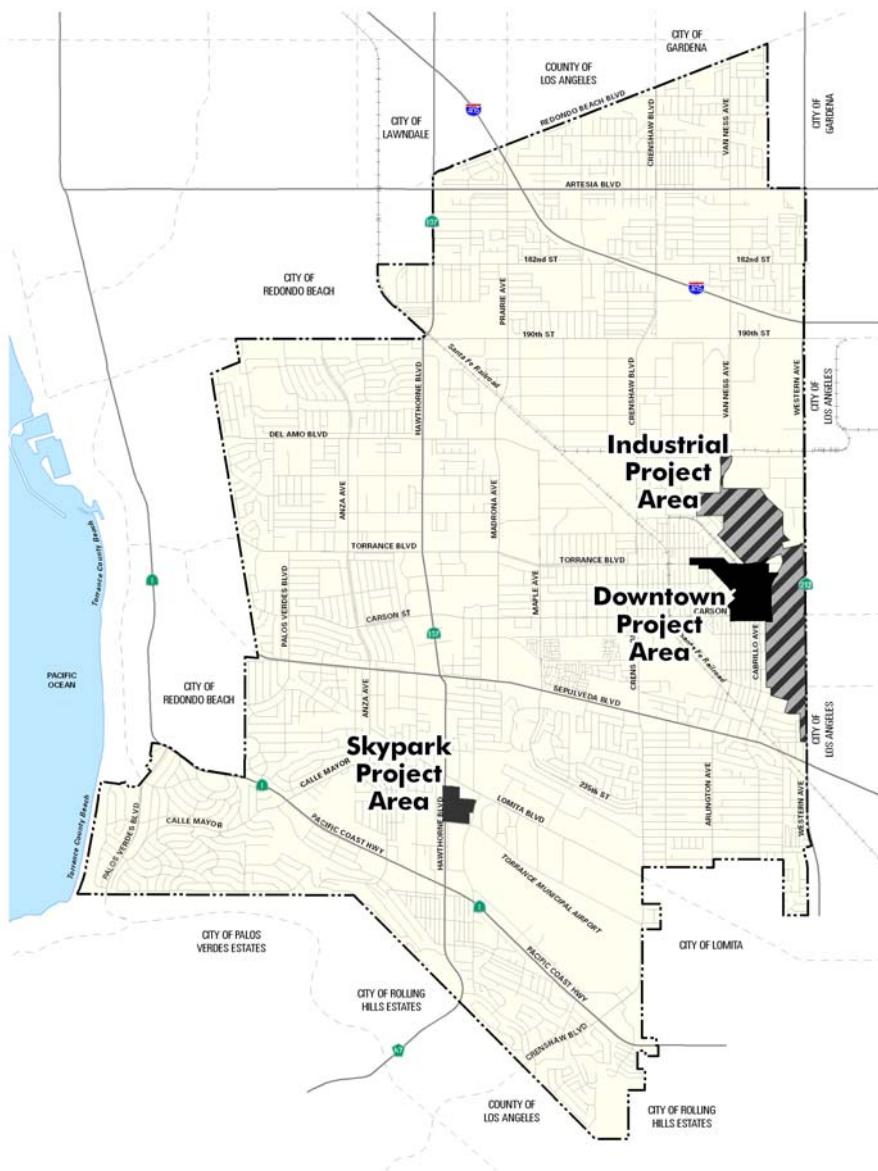
- The Industrial Redevelopment Project Area, on the east side of the City, previously was developed with large heavy industrial facilities. The project area encompasses approximately 290 acres of industrial properties. The area now is home to American Honda national headquarters, several corporate headquarters, and master planned business and industrial parks.<sup>30</sup> The Industrial Redevelopment Project Area plan was adopted on July 19, 1983 and has a plan duration limit of 40 years, expiring in 2023.
- The Downtown Redevelopment Project Area, located adjacent to the Industrial Redevelopment Project Area, encompasses 88.5 acres and contains the original commercial core of the City. The Redevelopment Agency has been instrumental in providing funds for new development and property maintenance and rehabilitation. The Downtown Redevelopment Project Area plan was adopted on July 10, 1979 and has a plan duration limit of 40 years, expiring in 2019.

The Meadow Park Redevelopment Project Area expired in March 2007. This Plan area represented the Agency's first redevelopment project effort. Prior to redevelopment, the area was plagued with frequent flooding, irregularly shaped lots, and insufficient infrastructure facilities. It is now home to many successful businesses which have taken advantage of the location and amenities offered at Meadow Park.

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<sup>29</sup> City of Torrance Redevelopment Agency January 2007

<sup>30</sup> City of Torrance Redevelopment Agency January 2007



The City's three redevelopment project areas have individual Redevelopment Plans that set forth development policies and objectives. While the underlying General Plan land use designation represents the typical land use policy, the adopted Redevelopment Plan for each area takes precedent.

**Figure LU-23:**  
**Redevelopment Project Areas**

The General Plan previously designated all the properties in the Meadow Park Redevelopment Project Area for General Commercial uses. The original redevelopment plan for the area intended for two primary uses: light industrial and commercial. To reflect the light industrial development pattern existing in the area today and to remain consistent with development patterns allowed under the flight path of Torrance Municipal Airport, properties in the Meadow Park Redevelopment Project Area north of 240th Street will be designated for *Light Industrial*. To secure consistent development in this area, development standards will be modified to resolve any inconsistencies between the General Plan designation and the Hawthorne Boulevard Corridor Specific Plan designations.

Awareness and fear of eminent domain has increased among property owners with the Supreme Court decision of *Kelo v. City of New London* in 2005. Eminent domain is the ability to take private property for public use by the state or municipality with just compensation. In California, eminent domain can only occur in the context of a redevelopment plan, and the legislature and the courts require careful scrutiny to make sure actual blight exists before eminent domain can occur. The City of Torrance strictly abides by restrictions in the California Code that aim to restrict eminent domain. State Code requires that "eminent domain have a time limit, not to exceed 12 years from the adoption of the redevelopment plan, for commencement of eminent domain proceedings to acquire property within the project area. This time limitation may be extended only by amendment of the redevelopment plan after the agency finds, based on substantial evidence, both of the following: (a) that significant blight remains within the project area, and (b) that this blight cannot be eliminated without the use of eminent domain."<sup>31</sup> The City of Torrance respects the right of property owners and has in the past used eminent domain only once since the inception of the Redevelopment Project Areas.<sup>32</sup> Because of the time that has elapsed since the adoption of the Project Areas, the use of eminent domain in the Project Areas is no longer allowed.<sup>33</sup> Policy LU.13.3 in this section requires the City to use eminent domain sparingly and then only for establishing uses that are truly "public uses" to achieve defined economic development goals.



Downtown Torrance: Redevelopment activity in Downtown Torrance has included street improvements and several historic projects.

<sup>31</sup> California Health and Safety Code Section 33333.2.a.4

<sup>32</sup> Correspondence, Redevelopment Agency Staff; Carolyn Chun, January 10, 2007

<sup>33</sup> Correspondence, Redevelopment Agency Staff; Carolyn Chun, January 10, 2007

## 9.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The future of Torrance is closely tied with its financial health. Objectives and policies in this section aim to maintain a high quality of life by ensuring the land use decisions consider the financial implications and employment benefits to residents. Redevelopment objectives and policies propose identifying new areas where redevelopment may assist in economic development activities. Because of the age of many of the Project Areas, finding innovative strategies to leverage benefits from redevelopment will be important to the City. Once redevelopment project areas expire, analysis of land use and development standards will be competed to maintain consistency between the land uses and development standards in the General Plan, Torrance Municipal Code, and any applicable specific plans.

<b>OBJECTIVE LU.12:</b>	A high quality of life for Torrance residents by developing and sustaining a strong and diverse commercial and industrial economic base
<b>Policy LU.12.1:</b>	Encourage land use decisions that are fiscally responsible and positively affect the City's economic health by creating jobs, generating tax revenue, and involving private capital investment.
<b>Policy LU.12.2:</b>	Require the equitable sharing of the full fair-share cost of public improvements between the public and private sector. Require that business- or development-specific improvements be paid for by those entities.
<b>Policy LU.12.3:</b>	Work with the business community to generate innovative ideas and strategies that will ensure the City's continued economic viability.
<b>Policy LU.12.4:</b>	Maintain a strong economic base by targeting and attracting new uses that provide high quality development and meet important economic goals such as employment and revenue generation.
<b>Policy LU.12.5:</b>	Encourage the expansion and attraction of small and medium-sized firms with growth potential.

<b>OBJECTIVE LU.13:</b>	Revitalization of the redevelopment project areas through active support of ongoing redevelopment activities and implementation of redevelopment plans
<b>Policy LU.13.1:</b>	Consider new redevelopment project plans in appropriate areas where revitalization can eliminate blight and provide aesthetic and economic benefits to the City, its businesses, and residents.
<b>Policy LU.13.2:</b>	Promote creative use of redevelopment housing funds to assist various housing programs throughout the City and increase housing opportunities for working families.
<b>Policy LU.13.3:</b>	Require the City to use eminent domain sparingly and then only for establishing uses that are truly "public uses" to achieve defined economic development goals.
<b>Policy LU.13.4:</b>	As redevelopment project areas expire, assess, and modify or create, if necessary, land uses and development standards to maintain consistency with the General Plan, Torrance Municipal Code, and any other applicable plans.