

**MINUTES OF GENERAL PLAN WORKSHOP #15
THE TORRANCE PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Planning Commission convened in a regular session at 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, January 30, 2008 in the Council Chambers at Torrance City Hall.

2. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by former Councilman Rod Guyton.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Browning, Gibson, Horwich, Uchima, Weideman and Chairperson Busch.

Absent: Commissioner Skoll (excused).

Also Present: Deputy Community Development Director Cessna, Sr. Planning Associate Chun, Planning Assistant Kevin Joe, Planning Associate Richardson, Planning Associate Cutting and Transportation Planning Manager Semaan.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 10, 2006

Chairperson Busch noted that staff discovered, subsequent to the posting of the agenda, that the General Plan Workshop Minutes of May 10, 2006 were approved in June of 2006 therefore no action was required.

5. OVERVIEW OF GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS AND PREVIOUS WORKSHOPS

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna reported on the progress of the General Plan Update. She noted that preliminary drafts have been prepared of the two elements to be considered at this meeting, the Community Resources and Safety Elements, and staff was requesting feedback from the Planning Commission, as well as other City commissions before preparing the final draft.

6. INTRODUCTION OF DRAFT ELEMENTS

6A. COMMUNITY RESOURCES ELEMENT

Planning Assistant Joe reported that the Community Resources Element combines three elements that were included as separate elements in the previous General Plan, the Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Elements, and sets forth goals, objectives, and policies that build on current recreation, social services and resource conservation programs.

Discussion of Community Resources Draft Element/Community input

Chairperson Busch invited comments from the audience on the Community Resources Element.

Janet Payne, 1318 Engracia Avenue, suggested that "Triangle Park," at Cota and Engracia, and open space at Border and Dominguez be added to the list on page CR-14, Special Use Properties/Facilities.

Dale Lincoln, 20524 Wayne Avenue, commended staff for the work that has been done on this element, but disputed the claim in CR3.5, Wildlife Protection, that almost no wildlife habitat remains in Torrance, with the exception of Madrona Marsh. He noted that he submitted a letter (supplemental material) detailing five additional natural habitat and wildlife areas – Entradero Park; Henrietta Marsh; Los Arboles (Rocket Ship) Park; Torrance Beach (and Rat Beach); and Walteria Retention Basin Sump – and asked that they be included in the text of the General Plan to encourage the preservation of these areas and possible future enhancements and enrichment programs.

Chairperson Busch, with the concurrence of the Commission, asked that staff review the information submitted by Mr. Lincoln and report back to the Commission.

Gavin Wasserman, 4788 Steele Street, stated that he wasn't sure that the goal listed under 1.1.3 – Open Space that Beautifies (page CR-6) was reflected in 1.3 – Open Space Objectives and Policies (page CR-7) because there seems to be an emphasis on functional and accessible open space.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna related her understanding that this objective is covered under Objective CR.4 (page CR-8) "To create and maintain open space as an aesthetic enhancement within the urban environment.

Charles M. Deemer, 21225 Talisman, referring to Table CR-2, Torrance Unified School District Facilities, suggested that the acreage of athletic fields/tennis courts at schools should be listed and credited as part of the City's recreational resources. He noted that Levy School and Hamilton School are not on the list of school facilities and both of them have athletic fields.

Chairperson Busch invited comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Horwich stated that he thought the draft Community Resources Element was very well organized, however, he was not sure he agreed with everything in the implementation program.

Commissioner Weideman noted his agreement with Mr. Deemer's comments.

Chairperson Busch suggested that it would be helpful to have the TUSD send a representative when the Commission revisits the Community Resources Element, and commended staff for a very thorough report.

6B. SAFETY ELEMENT

Sr. Planning Associate Chun advised that the Safety Element sets forth policies designed to minimize threats from natural and human-caused hazards and helps establish safety-related priorities for the City.

Discussion of Safety Element/Community input

Chairperson Busch invited comments from the audience on the Safety Element.

Irene Griffith, 3416 W. 229th Street, suggested including in the Safety Element that the City is providing cooling centers during heat waves and warming centers in winter during prolonged power outages.

Cliff Numark, 20721 Ladeene Avenue, stressed the need for the City to educate individuals so they will be prepared to take care of themselves when disaster strikes and emergency resources are strained.

Dale Lincoln, 20524 Wayne Avenue, related his understanding that most of the Fire Department's day-to-day functions involve providing emergency medical service and suggested that this should be elaborated on in the Safety Element. With regard to terrorism, he emphasized the need to secure potential terrorist targets and limit accessibility to weapons of mass destruction and components used to build them as a means of preventing terrorist attacks.

Chairperson Busch noted that Torrance has an outstanding Police Department and expressed confidence that the terrorism issues Mr. Lincoln mentioned have already been addressed.

Linda Brown, 1617 El Prado, expressed concerns about the increase in homeless people in Torrance and suggested that this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Chairperson Busch invited comments from the Commission.

Commissioner Horwich noted that it is not clear whether the sites listed under "Methane Gas" (page S-23) are sites where methane gas is known to accumulate or places where explosions have occurred as a result of methane gas accumulation.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna agreed that this should be clarified in the report.

In response to Chairperson Busch's inquiry, Deputy Community Development Director Cessna confirmed that there is a well established procedure whereby ExxonMobil reports leaks of methane gas or other hazardous materials at the refinery to the Fire Department.

Commissioner Gibson questioned whether the City was prepared for a toxic spill from a derailed train, and Deputy Community Development Director Cessna confirmed that the City has conducted drills to prepare for such an incident.

Commissioner Weideman noted that under “Torrance Municipal Airport” (page S-24) it states that “The potential impact of an airplane crash at Torrance Municipal Airport is limited due to the speed, weight, and fuel load restrictions of small airplanes and helicopters.” He questioned whether the potential impact would be greater should the City change its policy regarding the types of fuel that could be sold at the airport.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna doubted that there would be an increased risk should the sale of jet fuel be allowed because the size of aircraft that could utilize the airport would remain the same.

In response to Commissioner Browning’s inquiry, Deputy Community Development Director Cessna confirmed that the fuel load is governed by the capacity of the aircraft and not by any restrictions imposed by the City.

7. SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna thanked the audience and the Commission for their input on the Community Resources and Safety Elements.

Chairperson Busch invited comments on any topic related to the General Plan update.

June Lee, 5245 Vanderhill Road, expressed concerns about missing trees in the parkways of remodeled homes and the operation of businesses in residential areas. She also expressed concerns about allowing the sale of jet fuel at Torrance Airport due to the potential for increased noise.

Commissioner Horwich, referring to the Community Resources Element, Implementation Program, Item 5A (page A-3), doubted that it would be feasible “to establish and maintain a land bank system whereby land is acquired for future recreational use” because there is only approximately 100 acres of undeveloped land in Torrance.

Referring to the map in the Safety Element, 1.1.2 Seismic-Related Activity (page S-10), Chairperson Busch noted that certain areas of Torrance are very vulnerable to damage from earthquakes.

Commissioner Gibson expressed concerns about noise from low-flying jets from LAX.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna explained that the flight pattern is controlled by the FAA; that flights are periodically directed over this area due to weather-related changes; and that residents may contact the City’s Noise Abatement Center if they feel a violation of noise standards has occurred.

Gavin Wasserman, with regard to the Safety Element, stressed the need to consider the vulnerability of children and seniors.

Janet Payne, on behalf of the Torrance Historical Society, noted that the society has submitted a preliminary report on historic preservation to Community Development staff and they will continue to work on the goals discussed on pages CR 31-34. She

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stressed the need for a historic preservation officer on staff in the Community Development Department.

Mel Glass, 2621 Plaza del Amo, suggested that the Disaster Council be allowed to provide input on the Safety Element.

Tom Rische, 22920 Carlow Road, requested clarification of the General Plan update process, which was provided by Deputy Community Development Director Cessna.

Commissioner Browning suggested that in the Safety Element, under "Torrance Municipal Airport," (page S-24) that mention be made of helicopters along with single and twin-engine airplanes with regard to weight limits. Deputy Community Development Director Cessna concurred with this suggestion.

Commissioner Browning requested that Ms. Lee be provided with a copy of regulations regarding parkway trees, noting that there are some exceptions to the requirement that a tree be planted for every 50 feet of street frontage.

On behalf of the Commission, Chairperson Busch thanked the Mayor, City Council and City Manager for the Commissioners Recognition Dinner held the previous evening and noted that Commissioner Horwich was recognized for over 25 years of service on various commissions.

Deputy Community Development Director Cessna reported that rough drafts of the Land Use, Circulation, and Noise Elements will be brought to the Commission for review within the next few months.

Chairperson Busch thanked the public for their input.

8. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Approved as Submitted July 9, 2008 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
