

LAND USE ALTERNATIVES WORKBOOK



August 24, 2005

PURPOSE

As part of the General Plan program, the Planning Commission (PC) will be asked to consider land use alternatives for seven (7) focus areas. This paper presents the land use classification system for the proposed General Plan, as well as possible alternatives for each focus area. The focus areas are:

1. **Crenshaw/Amsler** (Amsler and Moreton Streets and Dormont Avenue bounded by Crenshaw Boulevard and city limits)
2. **Western Avenue South** (between Plaza Del Amo and 228th Street)
3. **Border Avenue** (bounded by Carson Street and Lincoln Avenue)
4. **Western Avenue North** (between Artesia Boulevard and 190th Street)
5. **Redondo Beach Boulevard** (entire corridor within the City)
6. **East Victor Precinct** (bounded by Anza Avenue, Del Amo Boulevard, Torrance Boulevard, Hawthorne Specific Plan)
7. **Jefferson/Oak** (bounded by Jefferson Street, Santa Fe RR, Crenshaw Boulevard, & Carson Street)

The focus areas were determined based on interviews with Council, department heads and members of the Community; community workshops and the Open House, and City staff and the Planning Commission's recommendations. They represent areas within the City where change may occur throughout the 20-year planning horizon of this General Plan update. As shown within Table I, the proposed land use changes affect less than 2 percent of the total area within the City. For the portions of the City that do not lie within one of the identified focus areas, no major land use changes are anticipated within the General Plan update.

Table I: Proposed Land Use Changes in Focus Areas

Focus Area	Area (acres)	Area (acres) with potential for land use change	Area with potential for land use change as a % of total City acreage
1 Crenshaw/Amsler	9.9 acres	9.9 acres	0.09%
2 Western Avenue South	5.6 acres	5.6 acres	0.05%
3 Border Avenue	6.8 acres	6.8 acres	0.06%
4 Western Avenue North	42.1 acres	9.8 acres	0.09%
5 Redondo Beach Boulevard	77.3 acres	36.6 acres	0.35%
6 East Victor Precinct	175.9 acres	82.4 acres	0.78%
7 Jefferson/Oak	38.4 acres	26.5 acres	0.25%
TOTAL FOCUS AREAS	355.9 acres	177.5 acres	1.69%

Note: Total area for City of Torrance: 10,506 acres

Source: P&D Consultants, August 2005

Tonight's meeting will cover areas 1, 3, 5, and 7. Areas 4, 2, and 6 along with the proposed land use classification system were addressed at the first workshop on July 27th. A packet of maps has been provided to accompany this workbook. The maps within the packet identify the boundaries of each focus area. A third meeting will be held on September 28 to finalize the Planning Commission's recommendations in each area. At that meeting, we will discuss the school, traffic, and quality of life impacts associated with the recommendations, and allow the Commission to finalize their recommendations for each area in light of these considerations.

Please review this material and make notes in the spaces provided prior to the upcoming Planning Commission workshop on August 24. Please come to the meeting prepared to offer your comments and suggestions regarding the proposed alternatives for each focus area.

WORKBOOK CONTENT

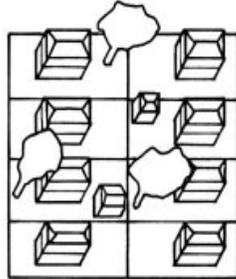
This workbook provides an overview of the land use classification system and land use alternatives for the Torrance General Plan. The topics addressed in this paper are:

- Land Use Density and Intensity
- Land Use Classification System
- Land Use Alternatives

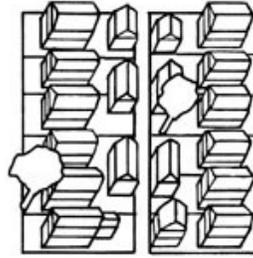
The discussions of Land Use Density and Intensity and the Land Use Classification System were provided to the Commission within the packet of materials for the July 27th workshop. They are repeated in this workbook for the convenience of the Commission.

LAND USE DENSITY AND INTENSITY

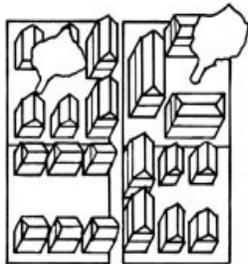
Planners describe the extent to which properties can be or are developed using the terms “density” and “intensity.” **Density** is used for residential uses and refers to the population and development capacity of a given parcel or group of parcels.



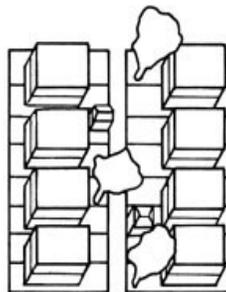
Low Density
1-9 units/acre



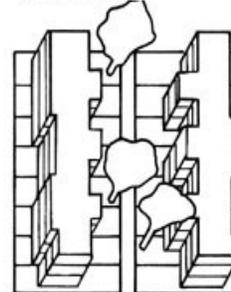
Low-Medium Density
9-18 units/acre



Medium Density
18-28 units/acre



Medium-High Density
28-44 units/acre



High Density
> 44 units/acre

Density within this paper is described in terms of dwelling units per acre of land (du/ac), exclusive of existing or proposed streets and rights-of-way. Typical residential densities found within the City of Torrance, and described within the current General Plan, are illustrated above.

Development **intensity** refers to the extent of development on a parcel of land or lot (that is, the total building square footage, building height, type of use, traffic generation, lot coverage, employment, number of units per acre, height limits, and not the physical characterization of buildings or uses of the buildings). While intensity is often used to describe non-residential development levels, in a broader sense, intensity also can describe overall levels of mixed residential and non-residential development. Throughout this paper, floor-area ratio (FAR) and building floor area square footage are used as measures of non-residential development intensity.

FAR represents the ratio between the total gross floor area of all buildings on a lot and the total land area of that lot. For example, a 20,000-square-foot building on a 40,000-square-foot lot yields an FAR of 0.50. A 0.50 FAR describes a single-story building that covers half of the lot, a two-story building covering approximately one-quarter of the lot, or a four-story building covering one-eighth of the lot.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

The existing General Plan Land Use Element provides for 13 land use categories. Five categories are established for residential development, ranging from single-family residential development to multiple-family development. Three commercial categories, three categories for industrial development, a public activities/open space category, and an airport category are also established.

The land use designations from the current General Plan (1992) are listed below along with maximum permitted densities/intensities.

- **Low Density Residential** (1-9 units per acre)
- **Low Medium Density Residential** (9-18 units per acre)
- **Medium Density Residential** (18-28 units per acre)
- **Medium High Density Residential** (28-44 units per acre)
- **High Density Residential** (44+ units per acre)
- **Local Commercial** (Maximum 0.4 FAR)
- **General Commercial** (Maximum 0.6 FAR)
- **Commercial Center** (Maximum 1.0 FAR)
- **Heavy Industrial** (FAR does not apply)
- **Light Industrial** (Maximum 0.6 FAR)
- **Business Park** (Maximum 0.6 FAR)
- **Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space** (FAR does not apply)
- **Airport** (FAR does not apply)

PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN

As part of the General Plan update effort, these land use categories were based on interviews with Council, department heads and members of the Community; community workshops and the Open House; and City staff and the Planning Commission's recommendations to determine whether changes were needed to reflect development trends affecting Torrance's near and long-term futures. The proposed land use classification system presented in Table 1 contains two new land use designations (*Residential-Office and Hospital/Medical*), and eliminates one land use designation (*Local Commercial*). The City is also considering allowing mixed use commercial and residential developments with a maximum FAR of 1.0 under the Residential Office and General Commercial designations. The higher FAR is intended to provide incentives for mixed use projects. Existing commercial zone districts will establish maximum FARs for traditional commercial uses within areas designated *Residential Office* and *General Commercial*. The maximum FARs for commercial uses within these designations will be lower than 1.0.

The *Residential-Office* (R-OF) designation permits the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses. The designation is intended to accommodate neighborhoods where office/ business and residential uses are gradually being combined. Smaller professional offices are

the most desirable office uses within this designation. Housing can include low- to medium-rise apartments or townhouses, and condominiums on smaller lots. Projects that integrate residential and office uses within one structure will also require a conditional use permit. This designation provides for a maximum FAR of 1.0, with residential densities ranging from 18 to 31 du/ac. The 1.0 FAR is intended to provide incentives for mixed use projects. Existing commercial zone districts will establish maximum FARs for traditional commercial uses within *Residential Office* areas. The maximum FARs for commercial uses will be lower than 1.0. The density range recommended for this designation is consistent with existing conditions in the areas where the designation is applied (R-MD; 18-31 du/ac).

The *Hospital/Medical* (HM) designation is intended to encourage 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. Appropriate uses include hospitals, professional offices offering medical, dental, or related services, and accessory buildings and facilities. The current General Plan designates hospital and medical uses as *General Commercial* or *Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space*.

Table 1 presents descriptions of each proposed General Plan land use designation and the corresponding range of density or intensity of development permitted for each. The maximum allowable development on any individual parcel is governed by these measures of density or intensity, with the actual yield influenced by the physical characteristics of a parcel, access and infrastructure issues, and compatibility considerations, among other factors. These and other General Plan land use policies are implemented largely through the City's Land Use Code.

Table 2 Proposed Land Use Classification System (2005)			
Land Use Designation	Density or Intensity Range	Description	
Residential Designations			
Low Density Residential	1-9 DU/Acre	Conventional single-family residential development.	
Low Medium Density Residential	9-18 DU/Acre	Includes small lot single-family, two-family, townhouse developments and mobile home parks. Mobile homes are included to reflect current uses and as a guide for future development.	
Medium Density Residential	18-31 DU/Acre	Includes townhouses and low rise apartment buildings.	
Medium High Density Residential	32-44 DU/Acre	Includes low and medium rise apartments.	
High Density Residential	44+ DU/Acre	Includes medium and high rise apartment buildings.	
Commercial Designations			
General Commercial	Max. 1.0 FAR	Intended to permit a wide range of commercial uses. Permitted uses include shopping centers, professional and medical offices, food and beverage establishments, entertainment facilities, financial institutions and automotive sales. Maximum FAR has been increased to 1.0 to encourage development of mixed-use commercial and residential projects within this designation. Solely residential or commercial projects will be limited to a FAR of .60.	

**Table 2
Proposed Land Use Classification System (2005)**

Land Use Designation		Density or Intensity Range	Description
	Commercial Center	Max. 1.0 FAR	Used for areas where there is a concentration of intense commercial uses. (Currently used in the Del Amo Business Center and in Old Torrance.) Mixed-use commercial and residential uses are also permitted.
	Residential Office	Max. 1.0 FAR/18-31 DU/Acre	Permits the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses. Maximum FAR of 1.0 to encourage development of mixed use commercial and residential projects within this designation. Solely residential or commercial projects will be limited to a FAR of .60.
Industrial Designations			
	Light Industrial	Max. 0.6 FAR	Characterized by a wide range of industrial uses where manufacture or assembly are primarily limited to enclosed buildings.
	Heavy Industrial	NA	Characterized by manufacturing industries which process raw or extracted substances and new industries which use hazardous materials. I-HVY uses should be segregated from other uses. The various oil refineries are the main uses in this designation. There is no proposed maximum FAR.
	Business Park	Max. 0.6 FAR	Characterized by a mixture of business and industrial uses. Ancillary retail uses are allowed but shopping centers are not appropriate. Development standards are more stringent than for other industrial designations to maximize compatibility with neighboring uses.
Public and Medical Uses			
	Public/Quasi-Public/Open Space	NA	Provides for open space, land owned by public agencies and jurisdictions, and land owned by private entities for uses which serve the community.
	Hospital/Medical		Provides for existing and proposed healthcare facilities and their related uses in a manner that will establish and maintain orderly growth of health care facilities
	Airport	NA	Torrance Municipal Airport and surrounding properties..

COMMUNITY INPUT

Through workshops conducted for the General Plan update, the community has expressed that land use decisions in Torrance should take into account the following:

- Impacts on traffic and circulation
- Impacts on the school district
- Impacts on existing and future infrastructure
- Need to preserve employment-generating land uses
- Continued trend of using industrial land for residential uses
- Historic preservation
- Need for senior housing
- Expansion needs of existing medical facilities

CHOOSING FOCUS AREAS

Understanding that land uses within most areas within the City are well-established and many are viable for the long term, most locations within the City will not change as a result of the General Plan update. Numerous focus areas throughout the City were determined based on interviews with Council, department heads and members of the community; community workshops and the Open House; and City staff and the Planning Commission's recommendations. Seven (7) focus areas were selected for further examination. These seven sites 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 areas; and
- Recycling outdated industrial uses.

While the remaining areas were found not to need land use changes, the General Plan will include a discussion of many of these areas and present goals and policies to deal with specific issues raised by the community within those areas.

LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

This section of the workbook presents possible alternatives for four of the focus areas, drawn from discussion of land use and economic development goals for each area. For each area, as few as one or as many as three land use alternatives are being considered, depending on the range of viable possibilities at each location. In addition, existing General Plan land use designations remain possible options within each area and will be referred to as the Existing General Plan Alternative.

This workbook does not discuss in detail the relative benefits/disadvantages of each alternative; that conversation will occur with the Planning Commission during the course of meetings to be held in August and September of 2005. The objective of those meetings is to consider and discuss the options that have been developed to date, evaluate the effectiveness of the current General Plan designations, suggest modifications to the options under consideration, and recommend a preferred land use plan for each area that best matches the City's long-range goals.

AREA #3: BORDER AVENUE

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Border Avenue focus area encompasses the properties on the west side of Border Avenue just south of Carson St. and north of Lincoln Ave.

EXISTING LAND USE

The properties along Border Avenue consist primarily of older business park and light industrial uses with several homes on small lots interspersed between those uses.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

The properties along Border Avenue are currently designated for *Business Park* (max. 0.6 FAR) uses.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Designate all properties in the focus area as *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18-31 du/ac). This alternative would encourage the transition of outdated industrial or office uses to residential uses characterized by townhouses or low rise apartment buildings. Care must be paid to ensuring that development is consistent with the character of Old Torrance and sensitive to surrounding single-family residential areas.

ALTERNATIVE 2

Designate all properties in the focus area as *Residential-Office* (R-OF; Max. 1.0 FAR and 18-31 du/ac). This alternative would permit the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses characterized by smaller lot, low- to medium-rise apartments or townhouse/condominiums.

COMMENTS

AREA # 1: CRENSHAW/AMSLER

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Crenshaw/Amsler focus area consists of approximately 10 acres located east of Crenshaw Boulevard along Amsler Street, Dormont Avenue, and Moreton Street. 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.

EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land uses in the focus area include Business Park and General Commercial uses. In addition to the Palos Verdes Bowling Alley fronting Crenshaw Boulevard, a variety of other uses are found in this area including a gas station, motorcycle racing gear manufacturer, an aeronautics company. The area also includes a vacant half-acre parcel along Amsler Street.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

The existing General Plan designates the entire focus area as *Business Park* (max. 0.6 FAR).

ALTERNATIVE 1

Designate properties fronting Crenshaw Boulevard *General Commercial* (C-GEN; max. 1.0 FAR) and the remaining properties *Medium High Residential* (R-MH; 32-44 du/ac). This alternative will encourage recycling of uses on the underutilized parcels facing Crenshaw Boulevard and will accommodate condominiums/townhouses or low- to mid-rise apartments. General Plan policies for residential uses in this area will emphasize buffering commercial uses from residential areas to mitigate the effects of noise and traffic.

ALTERNATIVE 2

Designate all properties in the focus area as *General Commercial* (C-GEN; max. 1.0 FAR). Appropriate commercial uses in this designation include retail, personal services, offices and food and beverage establishments. The *General Commercial* designation also provides incentives for commercial/residential mixed-use development by offering an FAR of 1.0. Solely residential and commercial projects will be limited to a FAR of .60.

ALTERNATIVE 3

Designate all properties fronting Crenshaw Boulevard *General Commercial* (C-GEN; max. 1.0 FAR), the parcels in the middle of the focus area *High Density Residential* (R-HI; 44+ du/ac) and the properties east of Dormont Avenue *Medium High Residential* (R-MH; 32-44 du/ac). This alternative will encourage recycling of uses on the underutilized parcels facing Crenshaw Boulevard and will accommodate more potential housing units than Alternative 1. Potential residential uses range from condominiums/townhouses to more traditional apartments.

ALTERNATIVE 4

Designate all properties in the focus area *Residential-Office* (R-OF; max. 1.0 FAR and 18-31 du/ac) with the exception of parcels facing Crenshaw Boulevard, south of Amsler Street which will be designated *Commercial* (C-GEN; max. 1.0 FAR). The *Residential-Office* designation permits the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses characterized by smaller lot, low- to medium-rise apartments or townhouse/condominiums. Solely residential and commercial projects will be limited to a FAR of .60.

COMMENTS

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

The current General Plan calls for predominantly *Local Commercial* uses east of Crenshaw Boulevard. West of Crenshaw Boulevard there are *Medium* and *Medium-High Density* residential uses mid-block with *Local* and *General Commercial* uses at major intersections.

ALTERNATIVE 1

West (Redondo Beach Blvd. west from Crenshaw Blvd. to Hawthorne Blvd.)

This alternative would redesignate properties from Medium Density Residential (R-MD; 18-31 du/ac) to Medium-High Density (R-MH; 32-44 du/ac) to reflect existing densities of the majority of properties. *Local Commercial* (C-LOC; max 0.4 FAR) uses will be re-designated as *General Commercial* uses (C-GEN; max. 1.0 FAR). The *General Commercial* designation facilitates commercial/residential mixed-use development by offering an FAR of 1.0. Existing commercial zone districts will establish maximum FARs lower than 1.0 for traditional commercial uses. The maximum FAR of 1.0 has been used to encourage development of mixed-use commercial and residential projects within this designation. Solely residential and commercial projects would be limited to a FAR of .60.

East (Redondo Beach Blvd. east from Crenshaw Blvd. to eastern city limits).

With the exception of the Radium Open Air Market property, designate all *Commercial* (C-LOC and C-GEN) properties east of Crenshaw Boulevard as *Residential-Office* (R-OF; Max. 1.0 FAR and 18-31 du/ac). This alternative would permit the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses characterized by smaller lot, low- to medium-rise apartments or townhouse/condominiums. The transition to an R-OF designation would accommodate neighborhoods along the corridor where office, business, and residential uses are gradually being combined. The Radium Market would maintain a *General Commercial* designation (C-GEN; max. 1.0 FAR).

ALTERNATIVE 2

West (Redondo Beach Blvd. west from Crenshaw Blvd. to Hawthorne Blvd.)

Same as Alternative 1

East (Redondo Beach Blvd. east from Crenshaw Blvd. to eastern city limits).

The Radium Drive-in would change from General Commercial to Residential-Office. All Commercial (C-LOC and C-GEN) would be designated as Residential Office (R-OF; Max. 1.0 FAR and 18-31 du/ac). This alternative would permit the location of small, less intense office uses adjacent to residential uses characterized by smaller lot, low- to medium-rise apartments or townhouse/condominiums. The transition to an R-OF designation would accommodate neighborhoods along the corridor where office, business, and residential uses are gradually being combined.

ALTERNATIVE 3

West (Redondo Beach Blvd. west from Crenshaw Blvd. to Hawthorne Blvd.)

Same as Alternative 1

Torrance First Presbyterian Church. Half of a 2 acre parcel located at the corner of Oak and Jefferson Streets is currently vacant.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

The existing General Plan allows for *Local Commercial* uses (max. 0.4 FAR) at the corner of Crenshaw Boulevard and Carson Street and *Medium Density* residential uses (18-31 du/ac) on several parcels east of Oak Street. The northeast corner of Oak Street and Jefferson Street has also been designated for *Medium Density* housing. The remaining parcels are designated for *Business Park* (max. 0.6 FAR) uses.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Designate properties between Crenshaw Boulevard and Oak Street and properties facing Carson Street *General Commercial* (C-GEN; Max. 1.0 FAR) and designate the remainder of the area not already designated for residential use as *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18-31 du/ac). This alternative promotes more intense uses along one of the City's most traveled corridors and increases housing options in the area. The *General Commercial* designation also provides incentives for commercial/residential mixed use development by offering an FAR of 1.0. Solely residential and commercial projects will be limited to a FAR of .60. Mixed use developments along Carson Street would be allowed at a smaller scale than would be allowed on Crenshaw Boulevard. Church uses would be allowed.

ALTERNATIVE 2

For properties bounded by Crenshaw Boulevard, Carson Street, Oak Street, and Jefferson Street, designate the top half of the block *General Commercial* (C-GEN; Max. 1.0 FAR) and the lower half of the block *Residential-Office* (R-OF; Max. 1.0 FAR and 18-31 du/ac). Properties east of Oak Street and West of the railroad not already designated for residential use will be designated *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18-31 du/ac). The property east of the railroad will be designated *General Commercial* (C-GEN; Max. 1.0 FAR). This alternative would also promote more intense uses along one of the City's most traveled corridors and increase housing options in the area. The *General Commercial* designation also provides incentives for commercial/residential mixed use development by offering an FAR of 1.0. Existing commercial zone districts will establish maximum FARs lower than 1.0 for traditional commercial uses. Mixed use developments along Carson Street would be allowed at a smaller scale than would be allowed on Crenshaw Boulevard. Church uses would be allowed.

ALTERNATIVE 3

The properties on the northerly half of the block bounded by Crenshaw Boulevard, Carson Street, Oak Street, and Jefferson Street and the property east of the railroad will be designated *General Commercial* (C-GEN; Max. 1.0 FAR). The remainder of the properties not already designated for residential use will be designated *Medium Density Residential* (R-MD; 18-31 du/ac). This alternative increases housing options in the area more than the previous alternatives by acknowledging the transition to residential uses that is already underway within the focus area. The *General Commercial* designation also provides incentives for commercial/residential mixed-use

development by offering an FAR of 1.0. Existing commercial zone districts will establish maximum FARs lower than 1.0 for traditional commercial uses. Mixed use developments along Carson Street would be allowed at a smaller scale than would be allowed on Crenshaw Boulevard. Church uses would be allowed.

COMMENTS
