

In compliance with Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, which suspended portions of the Brown Act, Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-33-20 (Stay At Home Order issued March 19, 2020), Acting State Public Health Officer Erica Pan's Regional Stay at Home Order (issued December 3, 2020), and the County of Los Angeles Public Health Officer's Temporary Targeted Safer at Home Health Officer Order for Control of COVID-19: Tier 1 Substantial Surge Updated Response (revised Order issued December 6, 2020) that temporarily replaces and suspends the Public Health Officer's Temporary Targeted Safer at Home Health Officer Order for Control of COVID-19: Tier 1 Substantial Surge Updated Response (revised Order issued November 28, 2020) and the Public Health Officer's Reopening Safer at Work and in the Community for Control of COVID-19 Order Blueprint for a Safer Economy - Tier 1 Surge Response (revised Order issued November 25, 2020), members of the Torrance City Council and staff will participate in this meeting via teleconference or other electronic means in our continuing effort to practice social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

**VIEW AND PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING:**

**ZOOM Link to join the webinar:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87095671570?pwd=NEx3RU1sREtPcUVVU3I3eWhYY2dBdz09>

**Passcode:** 601310

**PARTICIPATE BEFORE THE MEETING** by emailing [CDDInfo@TorranceCA.Gov](mailto:CDDInfo@TorranceCA.Gov) and write "Downtown Revitalization Council Workshop" in the subject line. In the body of the email include the item number and/or title of the item with your comments. All comments emailed by 2 p.m. on Tuesday, December 15, 2020 will be included as a "Supplemental" on the City's website prior to the meeting. Comments received after 2 p.m., but prior to the end of the meeting will be added to the record.

**TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
DECEMBER 15, 2020  
ADJOURNED REGULAR MEETING  
6:00 P.M. – CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
VIA TELECONFERENCE OR OTHER ELECTRONIC MEANS**

**CITY COUNCIL MAY TAKE ACTION ON ANY ITEM LISTED ON THE AGENDA**

**WORKSHOP (NOT Televised)**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL:** Councilmembers Ashcraft, Chen, Goodrich, Griffiths, Kalani, Mattucci, and Mayor Furey

**2. FLAG SALUTE**

**3. REPORT OF THE CITY CLERK ON THE POSTING OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was posted on the Public Notice Board at 3031 Torrance Bl. and on the City's Website on Thursday, December 10, 2020 /s/ Rebecca Poirier

**4. Community Development – Conduct Workshop to Review the Progress of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Expenditure: None.**

Recommendation of the Community Development Director that City Council conduct a Workshop to review the progress on the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment of City Council Workshop to Tuesday, December 15, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. for a regular meeting. In compliance with Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, which suspended portions of the Brown Act, Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-33-20 (Stay At Home Order issued March 19, 2020), Acting State Public Health Officer Erica Pan's Regional Stay at Home Order (issued December 3, 2020), and the County of Los Angeles Public Health Officer's Temporary Targeted Safer at Home Health Officer Order for Control of COVID-19: Tier 1 Substantial Surge Updated Response (revised Order issued December 6, 2020) that temporarily replaces and suspends the Public Health Officer's Temporary Targeted Safer at Home Health Officer Order for Control of COVID-19: Tier 1 Substantial Surge Updated Response (revised Order issued November 28, 2020) and the Public Health Officer's Reopening Safer at Work and in the Community for Control of COVID-19 Order Blueprint for a Safer Economy - Tier 1 Surge Response (revised Order issued November 25, 2020), members of the Torrance City Council and staff will participate in this meeting via teleconference or other electronic means in our continuing effort to practice social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Members of the public are encouraged to watch the meeting via CitiCABLE Channel 3 (Spectrum) and Channel 31 (Frontier), streaming on [TorranceCA.Gov](http://TorranceCA.Gov), Facebook @ [City of Torrance CA Government](https://www.facebook.com/CityofTorranceCA), and YouTube Channel [TorranceCitiCABLE](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8v8).



Honorable Mayor and Member  
of the City Council  
City Hall  
Torrance, California

**Members of the Council:**

**SUBJECT: Community Development – Conduct Workshop to review the progress of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Expenditure: None.**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Recommendation of the Community Development Director that City Council conduct a Workshop to review the progress on the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

**BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

In spring of 2020, the City of Torrance embarked on the preparation of a Downtown Revitalization Plan. The goal of this effort was to review the existing conditions within the Downtown area and four surrounding corridors that feed into the core of what is commonly referred to as Downtown. A map of the study areas is provided as Attachment A. The other goals for the Revitalization Plan are to examine the Zoning Standards and Development Process as well as review the existing market conditions in the area. Utilizing this base of information, City Staff along with the Consultant Team headed by HR&A Advisors, are analyzing the Downtown, assisting the Property Owners, Business Owners and Residents of Downtown Torrance and the City to define our collective vision for the area and lastly will be providing recommendations for strategies to help implement that vision. Staff was successful in obtaining grant funding from Caltrans in the amount of \$277,640 which is funding the majority of the Plan, along with contributions from the City's Economic Development Fund, and the Long Range Community Planning Reserve Fund, thereby limiting impacts to the City's General Fund.

In late April and early May of 2020, Staff and the Consultant Team met with individual members of the City Council to discuss the downtown and to provide their insight on the Downtown area and their initial feedback on a vision for the area. Subsequent to these discussions, the Consultant team took time to review the physical conditions in the area, and review city records such as the Zoning Code, General Plan, former Redevelopment Plan and other pertinent materials. The Team also conducted a Market Analysis for the area and reviewed parking, transportation data and pedestrian connectivity information.

Beginning in late August 2020, a series of seven virtual Focus Groups were held with Property Owners, Restaurant and Business Operators, and Residents of the study area. These focus groups focused on topics such as what participants like/dislike about downtown, and what changes would be desired. They also discussed other California

Downtown areas participants liked, and the features which made them desirable. A summary of the August Focus Group Meetings is provided in Attachment B.

The information gathered to this point has allowed the consultant team to prepare a Draft Diagnostic Report, Executive Summary. (Attachment C.) This document includes information on the demographics for the area, and a Real Estate Market Study. The draft also contains a discussion of the physical characteristics of Downtown Torrance, Mobility issues, and Parking.

Staff and the Consultant Team would like the opportunity to share this material with the Council. The Workshop will consist of a roughly 30 minute presentation followed by time for discussion. Elements of the presentation include the following:

**Presentation Elements**

- Review of project purpose and scope
- Summary of existing conditions
  - SWOT Analysis & Focus Group Feedback
- Display of a draft vision statement
- Discussion of next steps

This will help to conclude the Diagnostic Phase of the Study and will allow us to advance the Visioning process and commence the development of potential strategies to achieve the finalized vision concept.

Staff recommends that the City Council conduct a Workshop to review the progress on the Downtown Revitalization Plan and provide feedback as we advance the Visioning process.

Respectfully submitted,

DANNY E. SANTANA  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

CONCUR



Danny E. Santana  
Community Development Director

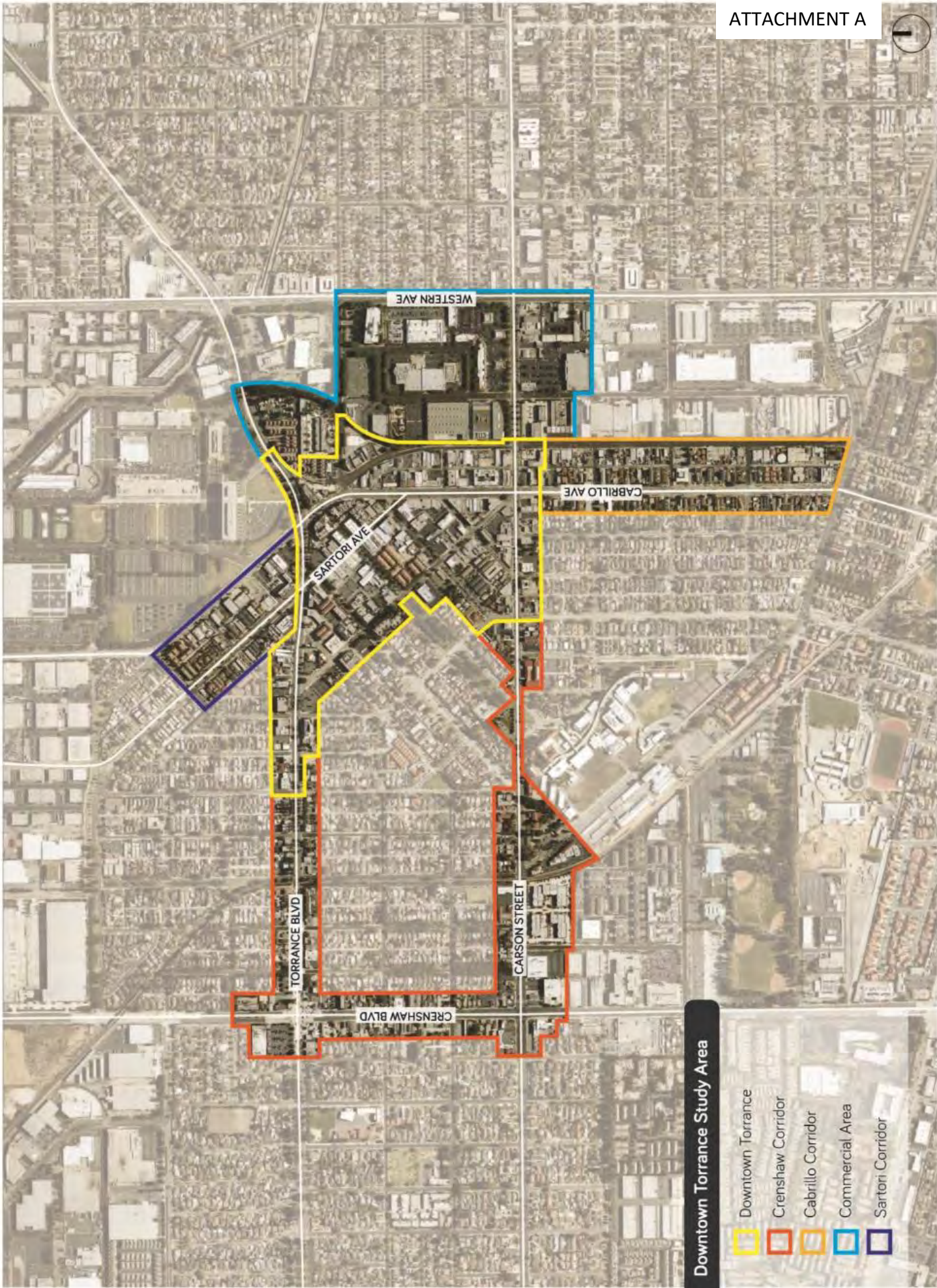
By   
Gregg Lodan, AICP  
Planning Manager

  
Aram Chaparyan  
City Manager

Attachments:

- A. Map of Study Area
- B. Summary of August Focus Group Meetings
- C. Draft Executive Summary





Downtown Torrance Study Area

- Downtown Torrance
- Crenshaw Corridor
- Cabrillo Corridor
- Commercial Area
- Sartori Corridor



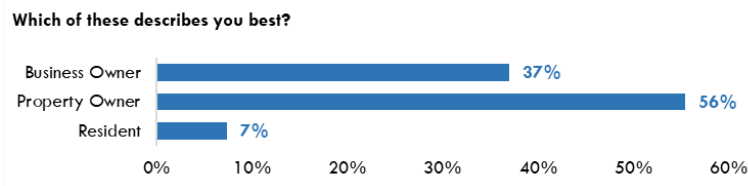
## Downtown Torrance Revitalization | **DRAFT** Community Outreach Key Takeaways

Between August 26<sup>th</sup> and September 10<sup>th</sup>, HR&A Advisors, Studio One Eleven, and General Technologies and Solutions (“the Consultant Team”), with support from the City of Torrance (“the City” or “Torrance”), conducted a series of six focus group meetings via videoconference in order to solicit input from community stakeholders for the Downtown Torrance Revitalization Plan. The objectives of the focus group meetings were to 1) understand stakeholder vision and aspirations for the Study Area; 2) solicit feedback from businesses and property owners on the challenges currently facing Downtown and its corridors; 3) better understand the unique needs of businesses and property owners in the Study Area; 4) compare feedback to the Consultant Team’s initial findings and identify areas that may require further study; and 5) invite ideas on a vision and potential strategies for revitalization.

Community stakeholders were invited to participate in one of six 90-minute focus group sessions. The Consultant Team began the meetings with a short presentation on the objectives of the revitalization plan and an overview of the process and schedule. The remainder of the time was spent in group discussion on topics such as downtown visitors and retail customers, business performance, open space, parking, programming, and visions for Downtown Torrance (“Downtown”). The Consultant Team also asked participants to respond to poll questions during the meeting (see results below). The City organized the following participant groups based on geographic area and interest: Crenshaw Boulevard, Western Avenue, Sartori and Cabrillo Avenues, Downtown Torrance business owners, Downtown Torrance property owners, and the Old Torrance Neighborhood Association. The Downtown and Old Torrance Neighborhood Association focus groups were the most well attended, with between seven and ten participants, each.

### SUMMARY OF KEY TAKEAWAYS

The focus group meetings were well attended by both property and business owners. The summary below represents a synthesis of feedback from each focus group categorized by key questions.



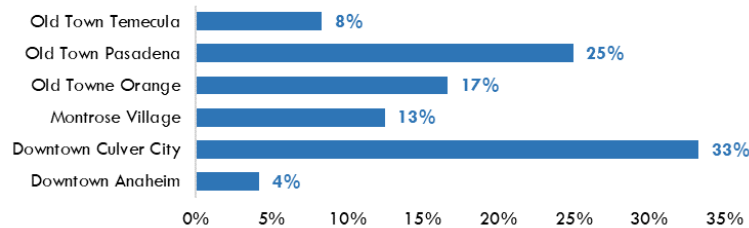
#### **What is your vision for Downtown Torrance?**

- Create a walkable community** with active and inviting public plazas and outdoor spaces.
 

*“Beautifully decorated, romantic Hallmark movie set”*
- Encourage a “pandemic proof” downtown** with outdoor seating options. Several business owners expressed the need to build on the changes made Downtown during the pandemic, including the successful Al Fresco program.

- Model Downtown after **comparable cities**.

Which would you consider a good inspiration for Downtown Torrance?



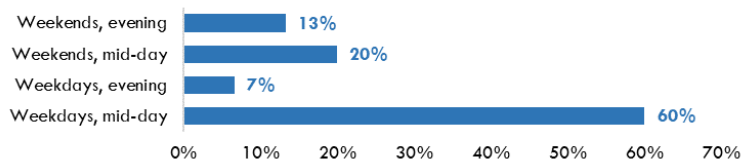
- **Establish programmed places with** regular events that drive nighttime and weekend traffic. Stakeholders described Downtown Torrance as vibrant and attractive during the weekdays at lunchtime, but quieter in the evenings and on the weekends.
- **Maintain the character** of Downtown Torrance.

*“[Downtown] requires a facelift not reconstructive surgery”*

**What are some strengths of Downtown Torrance?**

- **The “quaint”, “charming”, and historic atmosphere in Downtown should be preserved.** Downtown is a unique retail opportunity, distinct from the Del Amo Mall to the west. Residents expressed a desire to support and encourage small, independent businesses to maintain the character of the downtown. Stakeholders also recognized the need for a larger, more diverse customer base to support businesses.
- **Restaurants in Downtown are typically busiest at lunchtime when nearby employees patronize the businesses, but over the last few months restaurants have seen an increase in evening customers.** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and an increase in employees working from home, restaurants have seen a decline in lunchtime customers. However, outdoor dining, including the Al Fresco program, has resulted in a modest increase in evening and weekend traffic. Business owners foresee outdoor dining as a potential long-term opportunity.

What are the busiest times for businesses?

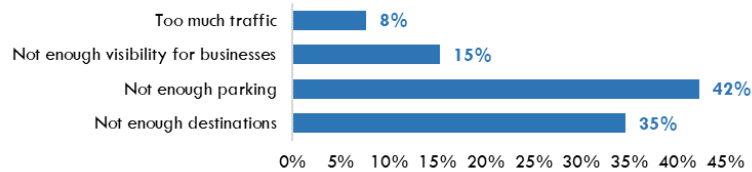


- **Restaurants and breweries attract visitors by distinguishing Downtown Torrance from the larger-scale retail hub at the Del Amo Mall.** Stakeholders enjoy the restaurants and breweries in Downtown Torrance, especially with outdoor seating options which activate the street.
- **The Downtown Business Association is a diverse group of business owners that gathers regularly.** Meetings are typically well attended by restaurant owners, antique dealers, professional offices, and insurance agents.

*“The discourse is positive, averaging twenty to twenty-five entities per meeting”*

### What are some of the challenges faced by Downtown Torrance?

What are some existing challenges in the Study Area?

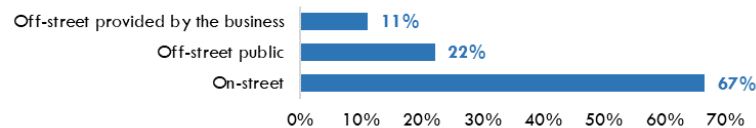


- Finding parking in Downtown is often challenging for visitors.** Stakeholders expressed concerns with Bank of America, gym, and ballet studio customers occupying large shares of public spaces and private parking lots owned by other businesses. The existing parking structure could provide relief, but is underutilized, not well identified, and viewed as unsafe by employees and visitors. Stakeholders found consensus around issues of parking enforcement. Employees use 2-hour street parking spaces all-day, limiting the supply for customers and residents.

*“Old Torrance residents have small garages and short driveways and also rely on street parking. Having it all be taken up by employees is very inconvenient.”*

*“Parking is the main concern [with Downtown]”*

Where do customers typically park?



- Poor connection to Downtown from the corridors inhibits pedestrian access.** Employees from nearby employment centers hesitate to walk to Downtown because many intersections are hazardous and challenging for pedestrians to cross. This also adds pressure on limited parking resources.
- Programming is largely business-owner led due to lack of a Business Improvement District or similar organization.** Participants noted reliance on a select few individuals, who are also often running a business full-time, as a reason for historically inconsistent programming in Downtown.
- Downtown is lacking destination retail.** The type of retail in Downtown does not draw people in. There is not a major anchor tenant like a grocery store, or a concentration of restaurants and popular retail destinations.

*“I used to go to old Torrance often, but now find fewer reasons to.”*

### What are some strategies for achieving your vision for Downtown Torrance?

- Downtown Torrance could benefit from more retail ‘anchors’,** especially community-oriented anchors to pull from a wider market. Grocery stores and unique food and beverage retailers were mentioned as examples that would draw customers into Downtown. Stakeholders want to preserve the character of Downtown, distinct from the Del Amo Mall.
- Mixed-use housing development in and near Downtown** could increase the number of customers and activate the space. Large business owners in the commercial district shared that most of their employees commute to Torrance and patronize downtown businesses at lunchtime. More rental housing opportunities would offer their employees an opportunity to live near work and support the downtown. Most stakeholders were open to high-density, mixed-use housing development in Downtown.



*“We would like to see more mixed-use projects. Restaurant/bar/retail on the first floor with residential on top.”*

- **Improved visibility and entry-points to Downtown** would help attract pedestrian traffic and customers. Stakeholders recommended specific opportunities for improving streetscape and sense of place including a revitalized and programmed El Prado Park, gateway signage, and more overhead lighting.

*“We can utilize El Prado Park for more uses such as weekly concerts, play area for children, designated eating/drinking area to include alcohol.”*

- **Forming a Business Improvement District, or similar governance organization** could facilitate programming and help businesses grow. Stakeholders acknowledged that efforts like these have not been successful in the past, mostly due to the lack of leadership and time commitment required, but many were open to the idea of organizing themselves more formally in the future.
- **Addressing parking issues in Downtown Torrance is a priority for stakeholders.** Many businesses and property owners were open to metered street parking or paid parking structures, while others see free parking as an important perk for Downtown that should be preserved. Property owners and business owners seemed open to shared parking arrangements on nearby lots. They also expressed a desire for scattered parking structures in Downtown to alleviate the street parking burden, and improved signage to direct visitors to the existing structure. Stakeholders insisted that the City address employee parking by enforcing the 2-hour parking limit in Downtown and possibly providing a designated parking zone and shuttle for employees.
- **Improved branding in Downtown Torrance** could enhance the historic character and sense of place. Some stakeholders recommended updating the design guidelines and development review process to ensure that new development fits with the historic character of Downtown. Others suggested historical signs throughout Downtown and gateway signage at entry points.

*“A facelift is needed—new greenery and sidewalks. Downtown looks tired.”*

## FOCUS GROUP MEETING NOTES

This section includes detailed notes from each of the six stakeholder focus groups: Crenshaw Businesses and Property Owners, Downtown Businesses, Downtown Property Owners, Old Torrance Neighborhood Association, Sartori and Cabrillo Business and Property Owners, and Western Businesses and Property Owners.

### Crenshaw Businesses and Property Owners:

#### Strengths:

- Very walkable neighborhood, charming character
- Great schools, big draw for young families

#### Challenges:

- Torrance should be careful of the types of commercial buildings allowed near Downtown. Some commercial development is creating an unwelcoming wall around Downtown.
- “I used to go to old Torrance often, but now find fewer reasons to.”
- Lots of existing unique small businesses are struggling, COVID is exacerbating it
- Not many destinations for a young professional crowd
- Difficult to work with the planning staff at the City

#### Opportunities:

- Torrance needs an anchor retail tenant to drive traffic (ex. Trader Joes). There are not enough destinations in the area. The revitalization plans are very encouraging!
- Torrance needs new customers. People can afford to rent in Torrance but cannot afford to own. “Downtown needs small parking structures for convenience and trendiness.”
- Build Torrance pride – open the museum up, etc.
- Rich history and existing assets like the museum should be leveraged with more activities and programs
- Downtown Torrance has a lot of unique businesses that are hurting. Ex. the WW2 store needs a face lift. Torrance should invest in advertising and marketing to bring foot traffic back into the area.
- Would love to see more businesses with outdoor seating areas that are immune to COVID.
- **Parks, Open Space, and Programming:**
  - The park that ends into Downtown would be “neat if it ended into a plaza” as one of the inlets into Downtown.
  - Programmed open space (i.e. Bingo in Pasadena) is important. Downtown Torrance should have more things like the antique fair and farmers market at Wilson Park.
  - Creating a plaza would add an atmosphere to the downtown area.
  - Farmers’ Market at Wilson Park and Antiques fair are great – more such events, even things like First Fridays in Venice / Abbot Kinney would be great
- **Parking and Mobility:**
  - Parking will be an issue if Old Torrance continues to grow. (i.e Santa Monica, with small, scattered parking structures allow people to walk and street performers outside).
  - “There’s plenty of street parking.”
  - Most people coming into Downtown are driving



- Some feel that Street parking is not an issue, usually no problem finding parking after circling the block once. If there is a parking problem it is during peak lunch hours
- Parking will be a problem if Downtown Torrance continues to grow and the concentration of people is increased – smaller scattered structures throughout the area to provide parking will allow people to walk free within downtown and create more of a ‘promenade’
- Crenshaw and Torrance are busy corridors that might be discouraging bikers due to vehicular traffic.

**Vision/Identity:**

- Create a destination for people.
- Young families and professionals will move in. Downtown Torrance should appeal to that crowd.
- Keep and celebrate the unique character of Downtown Torrance and help it modernize. Quote – “beautifully decorated romantic Hallmark movie set”.
- Quote – “requires a facelift not reconstructive surgery” – help existing small and unique businesses to stay
- The area is experiencing an aging population – make space for a younger population but help the existing senior residents stay.
- Lots of existing destinations but needs an ‘engine’ – one anchor or draw that has a daily flow of traffic and brings more people in. Could be a grocery store like Trader Joe’s or other use that brings the community together.
- Create a promenade that people come to, to enjoy being outdoors (like 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica but without the chain stores). “Pandemic Proof” the downtown if possible.
- Welcoming to seniors
- **Development**
  - No chain stores, do not want to be in competition with Del Amo mall
  - Mixed use with residential above retail is good
  - Convert old existing warehouses into trendy boutique restaurants. Add uses that attract a younger/ professional crowd
  - Create a zoning strategy that allows a gradual transition of character from the historic downtown into new buildings – should not be an abrupt change at the boundaries of Old Torrance
  - City should assist small businesses with incentive packages that allow them to stay in place and flourish
  - Feeder streets should stay residential, not compete with Downtown businesses
- **Example Downtowns**
  - 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica – for the promenade quality
  - Pasadena – programming (Bingo)
  - Downtown San Diego – downtown museum programming
  - Highland Park – cultivating a foodie culture that attracts people from afar

## Downtown Businesses:

### Challenges:

- **Parking** is an issue, especially parking availability and management (employees and residents using parking all day with no 2-hour enforcement). Some businesses see parking as a valuable resource that should be paid for, while others see free parking as a perk for Downtown. The sub-grade parking garage at Cabrillo and EL Prado is underutilized because it is not well identified, seems inconvenient to patrons, and basement parking is viewed as unsafe.
  - Bank of America ATM customers use lots of in-and-out parking. No one uses the Bank of America parking lot, they use the Redcar parking lot and street parking.
  - People prefer street to underground parking.
  - Employees from other businesses are parking on the street
  - The underground structure is not safe.
- Downtown Torrance does not have enough destinations, nor enough parking for new destinations.
- **Governance**
  - Businesses do not have time to individually organize events and marketing.
  - Challenges with forming a BID include the need for buy-in from everyone, including property owners. Stakeholders also need to understand the advantages. Some want to learn about which governance structures work and haven't worked in other downtowns.

### Opportunities:

- **Parking**
  - City must enforce the parking, there is a 2-hour parking limit.
  - One business has discussed partnering with the City to use their parking lot, but free parking is a valuable resource for Downtown Torrance which makes Torrance unique compared to other South Bay cities.
  - One business would consider paying for parking spaces to use for outdoor dining.
  - Some businesses think metered parking would not be a good solution.
  - Others think metered parking could be a solution.
- Entry points to Downtown can be improved, especially Cabrillo. Corners of Sartori and Torrance, and Cabrillo and Carson can be strong entries to downtown that can help attract customers. An archway at Sartori and Torrance can be a good and gateway into downtown (ex. the Temecula arch).
- Adding lighting and trees would help.
- More programming could be helpful. The Halloween event was successful, though it's hard for small businesses to coordinate programs. Coordinated programs would be very helpful, for example Holiday Stroll at Riviera Village.
- Consensus that more bodies are needed, and mixed-use development makes sense. Infill housing development would add residents to Torrance, which would be beneficial. Other cities (like Lomita) are developing housing and it's working.
- The park, with more lighting and visibility, could be improved and highlighted
- Community uses- dance, music, art, can be part of a Downtown destination theme
- **Governance**
  - The Downtown Business Association is an active business group that meets regularly and is harmonious given the business diversity (restaurants, antique dealers, professional offices, insurance agents). The discourse is positive, averaging 20-25 entities per meeting.



## **COVID Impacts on Downtown Businesses:**

Outdoor dining has been a boom for restaurant businesses. Some have had increased sales during COVID (Tortilla Cantina). With stay at home orders, lunchtime business has reduced, but evening dinner business has picked up.

- Music lessons business has pivoted and expanded to find customers throughout the country. The owner still works out of her store in Downtown.
- Downtown photography business used to rely heavily on weddings but has pivoted to commercial photography. This business took advantage of the PPP loan and found new customers.
- One restaurant focused on catering and take-out, and already had the infrastructure in place to pivot in that direction. The restaurant closed on March 16<sup>th</sup>. March earnings were 65% of February, April earnings were 30% of February, May earnings were 44% of February, and June earnings were 83% of February (open half of the month). Outdoor dining started in the beginning of July and earnings were 108% of February, even with no parking. People want to be outside, so Downtown Torrance needs to continue to promote and allow outdoor dining.
- Another restaurant saw a shift in the time of day people visit. During COVID, more people come in the evenings and weekends. If things get back to normal, businesses need to make financial commitments, and need security from the City about indoor vs. outdoor dining requirements.
- Pre-COVID, 60% of restaurant business was at lunch. Now, business is night-time driven.
- One antique store stays open late to take advantage of evening dining customers. The owner puts things out front of the store, but customers come inside anyway. Most other retail closes early, which is unfortunate. The customer base has not changed and is mostly attracted from online advertising.
- The bakery is taking this day-by-day, “putting out fires”, not sure of the long-term impacts. Downtown is seeing lots of vacancies and expects more businesses to close.
- There are fewer available leases in Torrance, and a new business is going in (bicycle shop and restaurant).
- The corporate lunch crowd is gone and is not expected to return anytime soon. The parklet program is a great idea to allow for outdoor dining, which offers a new opportunity that hopefully restaurant owners can maintain.
- Immediate strategies the City can employ to help businesses:
  - Certainty around future requirements (outdoor dining, etc.).
  - Approach closed businesses and encourage them to be outside. If more businesses were open, more people would come to Torrance.
  - Enforce the 2-hour parking.
- Potential Long-Term Impacts of COVID:
  - Restaurant customers enjoy eating outside and it's important that the downtown area heads that way. Old Torrance has charm and ambience. Outdoor dining will set Old Torrance apart from other areas in Torrance.
  - One antique store used to be open 7 days per week, but now is focusing on the online business and closed 2 days per week.

## **Downtown Property Owners:**

### **Opportunities and Strengths:**

- The small stores and quaint-ness is a strength of Downtown.

- Monthly antique fairs bring lots of people. Downtown should do more of that, more regularly. The farmer's markets could be on Sundays.
- **Parking:** Some feel parking is used as an excuse to stop development, where others see issues with parking management, enforcement (lack of it), and amount of parking available. All felt that better signage would help direct people to existing parking garages.
  - Torrance should create a designated parking zone for employees.
  - Downtown should close its streets and add parking structures.
  - Paid parking is a good option for the future of Downtown Torrance. No one knows that the parking structure is there.
  - The visibility of the parking structure is an issue. An above ground structure would solve this problem.
  - Turning the Bank of America building into a parking structure would allow the City to close the streets and still have plenty of parking.
  - Parking meters should only be an option if the revenue could be used to construct a parking structure.
  - "I think a lot of people are forgetting about uber and similar services. The night life should not be an issue for parking. I think money should be spent in advertising/marketing Downtown to all residents of Torrance and neighboring cities so we can steal some of the crowds from Manhattan Beach and Hermosa Beach."
  - Restriping parking could create more on-street spaces.
  - A trolley could connect Downtown to other Torrance destinations (farmers market at Wilson park, brewery hop, Scottsdale example).
- **Programming:**
  - It would be helpful to have a farmer's market in Old Torrance, where its more accessible by walking or biking.
  - Downtown Torrance should close the streets permanently every Friday from 5pm-9pm.

### Challenges:

- Downtown Torrance needs more people, but naysayers stop "everything" and leadership needs to stand up for development and change. We need 3 story condo buildings with parking underneath (like Barcelona or Paris – no cars in the street).
- **"Parking is the #1 issue"**
  - The public parking lot next to Bank of America gets filled and employees park on the street all day. The parking structure is always full.
  - Pedestrian and bike safety are major concerns- especially crossing Torrance and Carson.
- It's hard to get into Downtown Torrance because the traffic light patterns take a long time.
- The homeless situation on Post, Marcelina, and El Prado is challenging. The City needs to create resources for the homeless.

### Vision/Identity:

- The area needs a "theme" to build on (perhaps in conjunction with a retail recruitment plan). Downtown Torrance should feel family friendly, yet "bold", but not competing with Manhattan Beach (posh shops and café's) and Hermosa Beach (younger partygoers).
- Downtown Torrance needs better design. New development in Downtown lacks character (maybe updated design guidelines and design review could help?).
- Downtown needs to be kept clean in order to attract locals.



- In order to attract the daytime crowd, Downtown Torrance needs an anchor tenant to move in (trader joes, Starbucks, coldstones, etc.). A few nationally known businesses moving in will bring the crowds.
- “The recurring theme is making it a destination. We can utilize El Prado park for more uses such as weekly concerts, play area for children, designated eating/drinking area to include alcohol.”
- Consensus that **more mixed-use development would be beneficial.**
  - More small business owners. The antique stores draw bargain hunters.
  - “A small market would be nice”
  - “Bringing a market back would be great”
  - “We would like to see more mixed-use projects. restaurant/bar/retail on 1st floor with residential on top.”
  - More mixed-use residential would be helpful. There are never vacancies in the existing multifamily buildings, which rent quickly for \$1,300.

#### **Governance/Management:**

The group felt that governance and management was an issue that needs addressing. Some thought a BID would be required to generate money for marketing and events but were frustrated that the owners cannot agree to tax themselves even for their own benefit.

- Bringing in more people is critical- Downtown is very sleepy on the weekends, most stores are closed. Most stores are closed in the evenings when people are frequenting restaurants, reducing cross shopping. Having an organization that brings in bodies and makes longer hours worth it for businesses can help.
- Property owners are not invested
- “Property owners want to make sure they are going to see results if they dedicate time and money into the cause. It is heartbreaking to invest the time and money and get shot down”
- Owners hesitate to get involved because they don’t know anyone in the City.
- “We would like to see a more streamlined regulatory process to get our property redeveloped in the future.”
- More communication in advance about City revitalization efforts would be helpful.

#### **Old Torrance Neighborhood Association:**

##### **Strengths:**

- Downtown Torrance is a small, quiet, peaceful town, not like Del Amo Mall.
- People like the street lights in Downtown Torrance.
- The small, independent shops are strengths of Downtown.
- The historic character is a strength.
- It’s one of the most walkable places, and always feels safe.

##### **Challenges:**

- Downtown has great restaurants but has struggled to attract good middle to upper end retail stores.
- It’s difficult to find Old Torrance – wayfinding is important.
- Transportation and Parking
  - Many stakeholders walk, which is a problem for people who don’t live nearby.
  - Many business employees park on street, especially on Cravens around the vet, unemployment office and mortuary.

- Old Torrance residents have small garages and short driveways and also rely on street parking – having it all be taken up by employees is very inconvenient. Residents are impacted. There is a parking structure but no one wants to park there.

#### **Opportunities:**

- **Programming:** More programming is desired in general, as ways to bring people in on a regular basis, but resources to host events are challenging at the moment. No one to take charge of it.
  - The easter egg hunt got too big.
  - Downtown Torrance needs a Business Improvement District to manage the programming, otherwise everything falls on the business owners.
  - Farmer’s market didn’t work at El Prado park. Evening / night market is also an issue as often it is too cold in the evenings.
  - Organizing programming and events is difficult. An Easter egg hunt event intended for the neighborhood got too big.
  - Having retractable bollards built into the street like 3<sup>rd</sup> street promenade would be helpful for event management.
- **Transportation and Parking:** In general, suggestions revolved around adding some amount of parking strategically and utilizing existing parking more effectively (better signage, shared parking strategies etc.).
  - Better signage for parking is needed. create a map of parking that could be shared online and by all the businesses
  - Parking lots near the hotel are underutilized and could be used for employees.
  - The parking lot on El Prado/Cravens is private but very underutilized. There is potential for shared parking.
  - A circulating shuttle for employees parking in lots that are further outside is needed.
  - Shared parking is a good idea in addition to looking at other Cities to see what they are doing.

#### **Vision/Identity:**

- More restaurants.
- More programming, especially at night.
- No more gyms.
- Downtown Torrance needs more diversity, not just restaurants.
- The streetscaping from Sartori should continue onto other streets
- Make El Prado a botanical garden, transform the rail bridge into a park like the Highline.
- Add a bookstore and shoe repair to Downtown.
- Keep the local character and local restaurant/retail businesses in the Downtown.
- Make Downtown feel cohesive, not just along a few corridors but make it feel like one area that also benefits the businesses along other corridors.
- Downtown needs people during the day and at night.
- Downtown should be a unique place for people to come to (showcase history, historical figures through historical society, make buildings more interesting through art and unique lighting).
- Bring back the Red Car – either on the bridge or as a circulator, to be an attraction.
- Lights should be used to demarcate Downtown versus Old Torrance.
- Historical signs throughout downtown would be neat.
- Uniform planters throughout (like in Oxnard) would be nice.

- Uses:
  - New restaurants like an Italian Place
  - Add a small live performance (instrumental) place
  - Historic bookstore
  - Create a mix of places with not just a focus on restaurants
  - Shoe repair shop
  - Make El Prado a botanical garden
- Case Studies
  - Old Towne Orange is good inspiration.
  - San Pedro or Riviera Village are good opportunities for Torrance to learn from its neighbors.

### **COVID Response:**

- The whole street didn't need to be blocked off.
- Many businesses already had k-rails by the time the program started.
- Getting restaurants to spill out onto the street is a good idea, but it was already happening. The extra room provided by closing the street was unnecessary.
- Sustained outdoor dining post-pandemic would be great.
- Old Torrance has a buzzy vibe to it with having everybody outdoors, makes it more exciting. We didn't need the extra room to walk around that the blocked off streets provided, its fine with sidewalks the way it is. Even cars parking adds to the vibe, it helps to have cars sometimes down there.

### **Sartori and Cabrillo Business and Property Owners:**

#### **Strengths:**

- Torrance maintains a small town feel around Downtown, honoring the historic character.
- Downtown Torrance has very charming character.
- Farmer's market

#### **Challenges:**

- Parking can be very challenging
- There should be more things to do in Downtown other than just restaurants (art related, performance etc.).
- Some areas are zoned as M1 along the Cabrillo corridor but have existing homes that then cannot be renovated or redeveloped. Mixed-use zoning would be beneficial here.
- Some less desirable businesses, lower-end hotels etc. make the corridors feel unsafe. It would be good to have better tenants/ uses.
- **Parking and Mobility**
  - There is not enough parking. "I choose which restaurants to go to based on if they have a parking lot or not. For example, people go to Redcar because it has parking."
  - There is not a traffic congestion issue, but some issues with traffic light timing.
  - There is no traffic congestion issues on Sartori or Cabrillo, but there are issues on Crenshaw.
  - Parking at Wilson Park with buses provided to connect to events could be used in a much better way.

## **Opportunities:**

- Downtown Torrance has lots of potential to expand overhead lights to create a nice atmosphere.
- Downtown Torrance has potential to expand destination options.
- Expanding the usable area outside restaurants could help the restaurants survive.
- Parks and Open Space:
  - Public spaces and plazas would help businesses.
  - Expanding the usable area outside restaurants to help the restaurants survive will definitely help, and counts as usable open space
  - Public spaces and plazas would make the downtown area more inviting and help businesses
- **Development**
  - Encourage more mixed-use
  - More housing in downtown
- **Programming**
  - The Farmers' Market is great. A more typical street fair would also be good if the parking problem can be addressed.
  - Weekends and evenings are the busiest times for businesses.
- **Parking and Mobility**
  - Downtown Torrance needs a parking structure. There's only one parking structure across from Depot and public parking by the credit union on Cravens.
  - Paid parking would be fine.

## **Vision / Identity:**

- Create a combination of commercial and residential uses in Downtown (especially on the Cabrillo corridor) with ground floor commercial and residential above.
- Bring in housing and people of various economic backgrounds. Young people and old people living in dense housing downtown.
- Have an old town feel but also a sense of modernity – important to recognize and respect the past but also have a look towards the future.
- Torrance needs a “destination location” where people will travel to get it. Torrance should attract a renowned chef to Downtown (ex. Red Bird in LA and The Slanted Door revitalizing Valencia Street in San Francisco).
- Case Studies:
  - Pasadena and Culver City have an ‘upscale’ feel, and feel safe.
  - Pasadena is a good combination of history and modernity.
  - Valencia Street in San Francisco is a corridor catalyzed by one anchor restaurant.

## **COVID Response and Impacts:**

- The timing of this project is challenging because business owners and property owners are all trying to compromise in order to stay afloat. Property owners will likely have to do more in order to carry this vision forward.
- Tenants (small businesses) can't pay rent. Landowners have mortgages to pay.
- City has already leveraged an existing permit program and waived the fee to allow outdoor expansion for restaurants and some other businesses. Suggestion to send a mailer using business licenses to inform all business owners about this opportunity.



## Western Businesses and Property Owners:

### Challenges:

- The Western corridor's connection to Downtown is a challenge. Cabrillo is a subconscious barrier to Downtown.
- Most employees carpool into Downtown, rather than walking.
- Retail struggles due to so many options to the west (Del Amo Mall)

### Opportunities:

- The Mitsuwa site has potential
  - 4 acres with 60,000 SF building
  - temporary tenant
  - Has potential as apartments. Residents would stimulate current business.
  - Would need a GPA – lots of development risk (resi not currently allowed).
  - The location is attractive to apartment developers because it is close to freeways and large enough to add amenities to the site.
- Sunrider is supportive of more housing development, because housing is a challenge for employees. Most commute into Torrance and patronize Downtown at lunchtime, but few stay in the area in the evening.
- Eastgate Plaza is one of the hearts of Japanese Torrance. The tenants are acclaimed and people come from all over the region for them.
- Gateway signage and parking are big things need. "A facelift needed—need new greenery and sidewalks. Downtown looks tired."
- Breweries have brought more people downtown than anything.
- Shared parking.

### Vision:

- The area should be more of a destination with evening activities.
- More residential development.
- Case Studies
  - Trees and outdoor areas in Culver City.
  - Dedicated public space in Orange.