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Direct questions or concerns to the Commission Liaison, Planning Manager Gregg Lodan at (310) 618-5990, or individual department head prior to submission to the Commission. Parties will be notified if the complaint will be included on a subsequent agenda.

Security procedures: Members of the public will be directed to enter City Hall on the East side of the building through the sliding door. All other entrances will remain locked for entry. Oversized bags or backpacks will not be allowed in the Council Chamber or Commission meeting room. All bags are subject to search.

Any correspondence received after 2:00 p.m. on Thursday on any item on the agenda will be provided to the Commission electronically and available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office. A copy of the correspondence will be available for public inspection in a binder at the back of the Council Chamber or Commission Meeting room.

**TORRANCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2021  
ADJOURNED / REGULAR MEETING  
7:00 P.M. IN WEST ANNEX COMMISSION MEETING ROOM  
AT 3031 TORRANCE BOULEVARD  
TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA 90503**

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MAY TAKE ACTION ON ANY ITEM  
LISTED ON THE AGENDA**

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL:** Commission members: DeBlock, G. Higginbotham, M. Higginbotham, O'Donnell, Riggs, Trivelli, and Chairman Weideman

**2. FLAG SALUTE**

**3. REPORT OF THE STAFF 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 Friday, September 3, 2021

**4. ANNOUNCEMENT OF WITHDRAWN, DEFERRED, AND/OR SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS**

**5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #1 (Limited to a 30 minute period)**

*This portion of the meeting is reserved for comment on items not on the agenda. Under the Ralph M. Brown Act, City Council cannot act on items raised during public comment, but may respond briefly to statements made or questions posed; request clarification; or refer the item to staff. **Speakers under Orals are limited to either Oral Communications #1 or Oral Communication #2 and no longer than 3 minutes per speaker.** Speakers please turn off or leave your cellular phone when you come to the podium to speak. If presenting handout material to Council, please provide 10 copies to the City Clerk before speaking.*

**6. CONSENT CALENDAR**

*Matters listed under the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion and one vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed by a Councilmember from the Consent Calendar and considered separately.*

**6A. Approve Commission Minutes: None**

**7. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**7A.** Appointment of Commission Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

**7B.** Report of the Community Development Department efforts and activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

**7C.** Report of previous Historic Preservation Commission meetings and proposed updated work plan

**8. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS #2**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

**10A.** Adjournment of Historic Preservation Commission Meeting to Thursday, October 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex Commission Meeting Room.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7A**

**TO:** Member of the Historic Preservation Commission  
**FROM:** Long Range Planning Division  
**DATE:** September 16, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Appointment of Commission Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Section 13.21.060 of the Torrance Municipal Code provides that “at the first meeting of the Commission and at the first meeting of the Commission in every fiscal year thereafter, the members shall appoint one (1) of their number as Chairperson who shall hold the office for one (1) year and until the successor is appointed. Consistent with other City Commissions, staff recommends that a Vice Chairperson also be appointed to preside over meetings in the absence of the Chairperson. Based on discussion with the City Clerk it was recommended that the Commission conduct an election during tonight’s meeting to select a Chair and Vice-Chair for the remaining balance of Fiscal Year 2021/2022, which ends on June 30, 2022.

At the Commission’s inaugural meeting on October 17, 2019, Commissioner Weideman was appointed Chairperson and Gene Higginbotham was appointed Vice Chairperson. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Historic Preservation Commission meetings were temporarily suspended to comply with the Governor and Los Angeles County Public Health Department orders and as such, September 16, 2021 is the first Commission meeting since February 20, 2020. Staff recommends the reappointment of Commissioners Weideman and Higginbotham as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Prepared by,



Kevin Joe, AICP  
Planning Associate

Respectfully Submitted,



Gregg Lodan, AICP  
Planning Manager

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 7B**

**To:** Members of the Historic Preservation Commission

**From:** Long Range Planning Division

**Date:** September 16, 2021

**Subject:** Report of the Community Development Department efforts and activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Although the Historic Preservation Commission went on hiatus in March of 2020, staff members of the City of Torrance were busy during the past years Covid-19 Pandemic. In particular, the Community Development Department was faced with developing new safeguards for development and entitlement permits, building and safety submittal processing, and staffing of the Emergency Operation Center (EOC). Staff also played a major role in the Torrance Cares 2-Go program, which was a home delivery service of grocery and sanitary items for Torrance senior residents, those with disabilities and with underlying health conditions. Staff also worked on different ways to keep the businesses operational and assessed the needs of Torrance Residents during the past year during. The Community Development Department was also busy working on several long-term projects such as the Downtown Revitalization and Connectivity Plan, the Wayfinding Signage Plan and Inventory, and the Housing Element Update and Housing Corridor Study. One of the programs developed was the outdoor dining and business assistance program.

### **Outdoor Dining and Business Assistance program**

As you know, in-person business activities and public gatherings were limited or remained closed for most of the year. In March 2020, the Los Angeles County Health Department began limiting indoor activities such as dining, non-essential retail, gyms, religious institutions, etc. in order to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus. At the time, with the City Manager's concurrence, the Community Development Department began to issue Parking Lot Event Permits to leverage an existing review process to allow restaurants, retail uses, gyms, salons, and other uses to expand outdoors, often into their private parking areas. This allowed businesses to regain the ability to operate during the pandemic. This approach worked for businesses with adjacent parking on private property; however businesses in Downtown had limited opportunity as very few properties feature private parking lots. Several restaurant owners within Downtown contacted the City and expressed an interest in outdoor dining as well.

In response to these requests from local businesses, in June 2020, the City Council authorized an Outdoor Dining Pilot program called "Al Fresco in Downtown Torrance". The Pilot Program began in July and consisted of several phases beginning with the closure of a portion of Sartori Avenue on weekends beginning Friday afternoon and reopening early Monday morning. The street closures changed over time, as more restaurants began to participate and included various portions of Sartori Avenue and El Prado Avenue. Ultimately, individual restaurants were able to source their own Department of Transportation rated traffic barricades. This allowed individual businesses to create parklets for their use.

During the Pilot Program, the City and businesses found that the outdoor dining and activities were largely well received. Patrons often commented that the city should be encouraging outdoor uses more routinely and that it adds life to the downtown area. The COVID-19 Pandemic forced businesses and local governments to examine operations and adapt to a new normal. In doing so, this provided an opportunity to rethink how routine business is done. Temporary measures to facilitate outdoor dining, religious services, gyms and other businesses were instituted for survival. These measures allowed businesses to identify improvements for the long term.

Businesses often made substantial investments in these temporary measures and the City Council recently allowed their continued use into January 2022 as to provide more certainty about their ability to operate outdoors. A more permanent solution of creating an outdoor dining program is also being considered.

### **Downtown Revitalization and Connectivity Plan**

In spring of 2020, the City of Torrance embarked on the preparation of a Downtown Revitalization and Connectivity Plan. The City of Torrance with the assistance of our Consulting Team embarked on the preparation of a revitalization and connectivity plan for Downtown Torrance. Staff was successful in obtaining grant funding from Caltrans which funded 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.

The goal of this effort was to review the existing conditions within the Downtown area and surrounding corridors that feed into the commercial core of the greater Downtown area to provide recommendations to help revitalize the area and better connect it to nearby mobility options. The Consultant team took time to examine physical conditions in the area and review city documents 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. The study has five focus areas (see map below) that included the Downtown Business Core, Crenshaw Boulevard/Carson Street/Torrance Boulevard Corridor, Cabrillo Avenue Corridor, Western Avenue Corridor and Van Ness Avenue Corridor.

Beginning in late August 2020, a series of virtual Focus Groups were held with Property Owners, Restaurant and Business Operators, and Residents of the study area. Meetings were also held with the downtown merchants association (DTA) and the Old Torrance Neighborhood Association (OTNA). These focus groups explored 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. Utilizing this base of information, a vision for the area began to be developed. In December 2020, the Downtown Revitalization Study process continued to move forward and a draft of the diagnostic portion of the plan was prepared. This included a Market Study for the downtown, a Study of the Character and Physical Conditions, a Parking and Mobility Analysis as well as first portion of the Study's Draft Executive Summary. Round two of public outreach meetings between the consultant team and property owners, business owners and residents in the area occurred on December 1, 2020 and December 3, 2020. The meetings were held virtually and hosted by the consultant team on their conferencing software

On December 15, 2020, a workshop was held with the City Council. At the workshop, the Council reviewed the Draft Executive Summary of the Diagnostic Report, which included a summary of existing conditions, a demographic profile, and an overview of the real estate market. The document also looked at the physical conditions in the area, including the public realm, parking, and mobility. All of this material helped to advance the Visioning process as well as the development of strategies for the downtown area. In March 2021, additional volumes of the diagnostic report were completed and can be viewed on the City's website. A two-week online community survey was launched in April 2021, to solicit input and feedback on draft goals and priorities for the Study Areas. The survey was publicized and shared with the community through two pop-up demonstrations at the Torrance Antique Fair at El Prado and Sartori Avenue and the Torrance Farmers' Market at Wilson Park. The demonstration included project information boards that displayed goals, priorities and ideas for downtown, and provided the link to the online survey where community members could provide their feedback. In addition, project flyers publicizing the survey were distributed to businesses to display in storefronts, and the survey link was shared through the City's social media channels and through an email blast.

Key Takeaways of the survey included overall support for all the goals for Downtown, Programming was important to reinforce Downtown as a destination and give people reasons to come there was listed as a high-priority measure. There were several comments from survey respondents that activating the Downtown was an important aspect. Restaurant and entertainment uses were among the highest priority to encourage more visitations and keep the character of downtown. More small unique attractive businesses to keep the retail feel of downtown was also prioritized. In general, there is support for new mixed-use development in Downtown and the sub-areas, but housing without retail in Downtown sites is not a priority as expressed through the survey and written comments from some respondents. On average on the survey, parking is most important to Downtown Business Owners as a group compared to other groups of respondents. Signage, placemaking and other public realm strategies were important to complement new uses and programming, and sustain the downtown character and type of environment the community wants to see. The Downtown Revitalization and Connectivity Plan was presented to City Council and was approved on July 13, 2021. For additional information visit this link <https://www.torranceca.gov/our-city/community-development/downtown-revitalization-plan>

### **Citywide Wayfinding and Signage Plan**

During this time, Community Development Department staff also participated in a Citywide Wayfinding and signage study. Wayfinding signage is placed in public places to help people find their way to a destination. A comprehensive inventory and assessment of all traffic and wayfinding signage in the city will help improve mobility, safety, and efficiency for all modes of transportation has been analyzed. The plan will help achieve goals for sustainable travel by emphasizing signage that helps people travel to and from a new Metro Green Line light rail station currently under construction, as well as allowing vehicular traffic to circulate more efficiently. Improved wayfinding will also help enhance the city's identity and sense of place for residents and visitors alike. This plan highlighted several ideas for the Downtown Torrance Area. Also, Hunt Design, the City's consulting firm, developed a new signage/branding theme for the City of Torrance. For additional information, visit this link <https://business.torranceca.gov/services-and-programs/wayfinding>



### **Housing Element Update for the 6<sup>th</sup> RHNA Cycle**

The City with the assistance of a consultant is in the process of updating the Housing Element for the 6<sup>th</sup> Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Cycle planning period of 2021 to 2029. The Housing Element is a State-mandated policy document within the General Plan that guides the implementation of various programs to meet future housing needs for residents and households of all income levels. A total of 4,939 housing units were allocated by Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to Torrance for the 6<sup>th</sup> RHNA Cycle. The updated Housing Element must identify sites that are suitable to accommodate the RHNA allocation for very-low, low, moderate and above moderate income households as well goals, policies, and programs to accommodate the City's housing need, provide opportunities for new housing, and preserve the existing housing stock. The Housing Element Update is anticipated to be brought before the City Council for adoption before the end of the year. For additional information, visit this link <https://www.torranceca.gov/our-city/community-development/housing-element-update>

### **Housing Corridor Study**

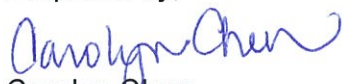
A study being conducted in conjunction with and to help shape the Housing Element Update is the Housing Corridor Study. This Study would identify areas which may be suitable to be designated as a Housing Corridor. The goal of the process will be to establish development standards and complete the environmental review on the front end of the process; so that as projects come forward which meet these standards; they will be able to enter plan check process directly. There are seven study areas currently being reviewed. For additional information, visit this link <https://www.torranceca.gov/our-city/community-development/housing-corridor-study-rfp-background/-fsiteid-1>

### **Conclusion**

While temporarily pausing the Historic Preservation Commission was not ideal, it was done in response to LA County Health Department "Safer at Home" protocols in mind. It did allow staff time to address a variety of issues for the City as well as to accommodate shifting priorities at a rapid pace.

We wanted to share with the Historic Preservation Commission, the highlights of the work that has gone on since early 2020. The City of Torrance is one of the few cities that remained open and facilitated the ability of many sectors of the economy to remain active. It also facilitated the ability of homeowners to have work to their properties permitted, completed and inspected. We appreciate your patience with the re-start of the Commission and look forward to completing the initial work plan and moving forward with Historic Preservation in the City of Torrance.

Prepared by,



Carolyn Chun  
Senior Planning Associate

Respectfully submitted,



Gregg Lodan  
Planning Manager

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7C**

**TO:** Member of the Historic Preservation Commission

**FROM:** Long Range Planning Division

**DATE** September 16, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Report of previous Historic Preservation Commission meetings and proposed updated work plan

In order to educate the Historic Preservation Commission about the Historic Preservation Programs and Commission's responsibilities, staff prepared a six-month work plan for the Commission's initial meetings. However, only four of the six planned meetings were conducted prior to the suspension of in-person City Commission meetings due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. During those meetings, the following topics were presented and actions taken:

- On October 17, 2019, the Commission appointed a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson and approved Commission Rules of Order and staff provided a background of historic preservation efforts and a six-month work plan for the Commission.
- On November 21, 2019, the City Attorney gave a presentation on the Brown Act, ethics and conflict of interest and staff gave a presentation on the Historic Landmark and District designation process.
- On January 16, 2020, staff gave a presentation on the Architectural Design Guidelines and an overview of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.
- On February 20, 2020, staff gave a presentation on preservation incentives and recognition programs.

Staff proposes, with concurrence from the Commission, the following four-month work plan to provide the Commission with a refresher of the topics covered during the previous meetings, allow the new member of the Commission to be brought up to date, and present the remaining topics of the original work plan:

- October 21, 2021 Recap of Historic Landmark and District process and Architectural Design Guidelines.
- November 18, 2021 Recap of the Secretary of Interior Standards and incentives and recognition programs.
- December 16, 2021 Project review for Historic properties
- January 20, 2022 Commission discussion and establishing standards for project review and Mills Act contracts.

Prepared by,



Kevin Joe, AICP  
Planning Associate

Respectfully Submitted,



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Planning Manager