Strategic Guide for Development for the Central Study Area

Framework Plan

June 2003

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City of Long Beach Redevelopment Agency

June 2003

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LONG BEACH CENTRAL AREA STRATEGIC GUIDE FOR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Framework Plan is a major component of the Long Beach Central Area Strategic Guide and is intended to define land use planning and urban design concepts to facilitate the transformation of the Central Study Area from a blighted area lacking in adequate retail, open space and housing to a vibrant and attractive area within the City of Long Beach.

The Central Study Area is illustrated in figure 2-1 and its boundaries are further described in section 2.1. The Framework Plan consists of the following sections.

Section 1– Introduction – describes the community involvement process, which led to the recommendations in the Framework Plan. These recommendations include the Vision and Community Design Strategy statements, which were developed with the community to provide a foundation for all aspects of the plan.
Section 2 – Existing Conditions Analysis – provides an understanding of the existing physical and economic conditions, which provide the context for the Framework Plan recommendations.
Section 3 – Areawide Recommendations – provides the framework concepts for the environment of the entire Study Area in terms of Land Use, Open Space and Streetscapes, and Urban Design.
Section 4 – Neighborhood Centers Recommendations – provides recommendations for representative Neighborhood Centers and Transit Oriented District wherein shopping, parks, schools and pedestrian oriented streetscape enhancements are combined to create new focal points for neighborhood services and residential revitalization.

1.2 PROCESS

The Framework Plan for the Long Beach Central Area Strategic Guide was developed through the following activities:

Extensive field surveys were conducted by The Arroyo Group (TAG) to evaluate land uses, streetscapes, open spaces and urban design for both the overall Study Area and within the six Neighborhood Centers and Transit Oriented District. Field inspections and evaluation of existing traffic data for the most significant travel streets in the Study Area was conducted by Linscott, Law and Greenspan (LLG). A demographic analysis of the population of the Central Study area was conducted by Keyser Marston Associates (KMA) to identify support for retail activity. Interdisciplinary planning meetings were conducted by TAG with KMA, LLG and EPT Design (EPT) – the TAG team's landscape architects.

Discussions were held with Agency, City and Long Beach Unified School District Staff regarding the needs and plans for libraries, parks and schools. Representatives of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine and the Department of Libraries presented information at several of the Steering Committee meetings.

An extensive community dialogue was conducted during eight meetings with a Steering Committee composed of members of the Central Project Area Committee and other organizations representing various areas and interests in the Central Study Area. The dialogue with the Steering Committee included:

- definition and refinement of the Vision Statement and Community Design Strategy
- review and refinement of areawide maps of land use, open space and streetscapes and urban design
- mapping of where people work and shop for their various types of retail needs
- questionnaires related to needed uses in the Neighborhood Centers
- discussion of land use, circulation and parking concepts for six Neighborhood Centers and one Transit Oriented District including background data on the trade area for each center and the need for supermarkets and/or drugstores

Refinements were made to Areawide, Neighborhood Centers and Transit Oriented District recommendations based on inputs from the Steering Committee. Periodic progress reports were given to the Council Districts related to the Central Study Area.

1.3 VISION

The Vision for the Central Area Strategic Guide was developed through extensive discussion during the first two Steering Committee Meetings of the strategic planning process. Subsequent refinements in content and terminology were made at later Steering Committee Meetings. Following is the Vision statement that reflects this process.

The Central Study Area is envisioned to be a diverse community comprised of unique neighborhoods, community focal areas and employment centers.

The revitalized Central Study Area will be a community with:

- *Residential neighborhoods that meets the needs of families, seniors and individuals with an emphasis on affordable and accessible ownership opportunities,*
- *More open space and parks,*
- *More community facilities to serve youth, families and seniors including libraries, sports facilities and schools,*
- *Preserved historic residential, commercial and institutional structure and fabric,*
- *New infill and adaptive reuse projects that are economically viable, compatible in scale and appearance with the neighborhoods and focal areas, and*
- *New or rehabilitated residential structures replacing deteriorated housing including "cracker box" apartments.*

Special streetscape treatments will reinforce the unique character of different neighborhoods, link open spaces, parks and community facilities, and enhance the overall appearance of the Central Study Area.

Distinctive neighborhood centers will anchor neighborhoods providing local retail, restaurants and mixed uses combining retail, residential and local-serving office. The diversity of the Central Study Area will be recognized in the preservation of historic structures and integration of cultural themes into the neighborhood centers.

Employment opportunities in the Central Study Area will be increased by the development of the neighborhood centers, new industrial developments, and additional medical-related uses around the hospitals.

The revitalized Central Study Area will take advantage of the unique potentials afforded by the Los Angeles River, light rail accessibility and the proximity of Downtown.

1.4 COMMUNITY DESIGN STRATEGY

Following discussion of the Vision, the Steering Committee then developed a Community Design Strategy. This Strategy was also reviewed and refined during the process to date.

The Central Study Area is envisioned to be a community of quality, diversity and character.

Residential Neighborhoods *provide housing that meets the needs of families, seniors and individuals with an emphasis on affordable, home ownership opportunities. The Neighborhoods:*

- *include housing choices ranging from single family, to condominiums and apartments in varied configurations such as duplexes, triplexes and four-plexes,*
- *preserve historic structures and streetscapes, and*
- *relate to their unique edges including Downtown Long Beach and the Los Angeles River.*

Neighborhood Centers *provide retail and community facilities serving the Residential Neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Centers:*

- *include locally oriented or community retail and local office that serve the nearby residential neighborhoods and major employment centers such as the hospitals,*
- *incorporate new high-density housing options for the elderly and singles,*
- *contain Public Facilities and Parks or Plazas as needed,*
- *relate to Blue Line Light Rail Stations where appropriate, and*
- *celebrate the diversity of the Central Study Area through unique architecture, graphics and public art.*

Community Streetscapes and Open Space Networks *connect the Residential Neighborhoods with:*

- *Neighborhood Centers*
- *Community Shopping Centers for shopping and access to public transportation,*
- *Public Facilities including Schools, Libraries and Parks,*
- *Other community serving facilities such as churches and day care centers, and*
- *the major hospitals and educational Institutions of the Central Study Area including Long Beach City College.*

Appropriate pedestrian lighting, street furniture, banners and landscape elements enhance the security, appearance and character of the Streetscape and Open Space Networks.

Employment Areas *provide jobs for residents of the Central Study Area at varied, nearby locations including the Industrial District, Service Corridors, Neighborhood Centers, Community Shopping Centers, and Health and Educational Institutions. Light Rail and buses provide connections from the Neighborhood Centers to nearby employment in Downtown, the Port and Airport as well as to jobs in nearby cities.*

Effective ***Maintenance and Security Programs*** *support the quality of life in the Residential Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Centers, Community Shopping Areas, Streetscapes and Open Space Networks, and Employment Areas.*