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HARBOR GATEWAY NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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October 14, 2021

Teresa Batson, City Planner
Department of City Planning – Room 667
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: Harbor Gateway Community Plan July 2021 Draft Policy Document

Dear Ms. Batson:

On October 12, 2021, our Board voted x-x-x to approve the following comments on the July 2021 Draft Policy Document for the Harbor Gateway Community Plan, as recommended by the HGNNC Planning and Land Use Committee.

We strongly support the draft Policy Document for the Harbor Gateway Community Plan. We would like to also add in the Transportation section the need for rail transit to be added both down the middle of the Harbor Freeway and also along Vermont Avenue between 120th Street to 182nd Street (currently being considered as the Vermont Transit Corridor South Bay Extension) to provide better public transit for both our residents and those who would be traveling to work in our community. We also would like to propose an element of the Environmental Justice section that addresses hazardous run-off from businesses (such as auto-related, fast food outlets, etc.) and homeless encampments onto our streets and into the storm drain system, with preventive measures specified.

We additionally support the following language from the Policy Statement which affirms elements of the vision for our community which we have long advocated:

Plan Vision: “a Harbor Gateway with improved transit connections, regional center, pedestrian-oriented developments, park facilities and open spaces, and clean industrial uses that will contribute to a healthy and active environment. Thriving commercial corridors with community centers, and gathering spaces will bolster a sense of identity, provide new economic activity and create walkable neighborhoods. Additionally, the plan aims to preserve existing low-scale

neighborhoods and accommodate a variety of housing opportunities at densities that complement existing neighborhoods that also meet future needs.”

“Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000) requires cities to identify environmental justice communities (called “disadvantaged communities”) and address environmental justice in their general plans.

Environmental justice is especially relevant in this Community Plan Area which has experienced a disproportionate burden of pollution from exposure to multiple sources including the vehicle traffic on the 110 Freeway which bisects the northern portion of the plan area...industrial and logistics activities, container stacking, and a high volume of truck traffic for goods movement, among others.”

Core Principals:

- Improve environmental health and foster climate resilience and regional efficiency
- Promote/foster an equitable, sustainable and healthy community
- Foster complete neighborhoods and vibrant commercial districts
- Support job growth and increased local employment opportunities
- Promote industry as a good neighbor and community asset
- Strengthen neighborhood character
- Enhance connections between neighborhoods, recreational facilities and open space amenities
- Promote a transit, bicycle, and pedestrian-friendly environment

Housing and Complete Neighborhoods

The Plan’s policies also seek to preserve and enhance the distinct character, scale and integrity of the existing residential neighborhoods. In addition, they aim to support the evolution of homeownership types and access to building generational wealth that many in this community have rightfully sought to earn as an upward social and economic mobility tool.

LU 1.6

Support the homeowner’s choice to implement reasonable accommodation of ADUs (*Accessory Dwelling Units*) in a single-family zoned neighborhood that are thoughtfully designed and located in a manner consistent with the established development patterns of the street block or neighborhood.

LU 2.1

Locate higher residential densities near commercial centers and transit hubs where public service facilities, utilities, and topography will accommodate this development.

LU 3.1

Preserve the residential character and scale of neighborhoods and protect residents from adverse impacts caused by incompatible and non-conforming uses.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Single-family neighborhoods date back from the 1910s through the 1950s. Unique neighborhoods such as Athens on the Hill and the Merit Tract and Orchard Avenue (*between Gardena Blvd. and Alondra Blvd.*) are prime examples of pre and post-war residential development in the Harbor Gateway Community Plan Area.

The Plan seeks to protect and reinforce the character of many of Harbor Gateway's significant historic places by encouraging the conservation and restoration of identified historic resources and planning districts, while providing design guidance for new development to ensure that buildings are compatible with the visual character and architectural features of the Community Plan Area's distinct places.

LU 5.1

Encourage and promote the utilization of incentive programs, such as the City Mills Act, Historical Property Contract Program, the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and California Historical Building Code for owners of historic properties to conserve the integrity of historic-cultural resources.

LU 6.1

Explore the application of character districts to support efforts to conserve architecturally distinctive residential neighborhoods such as Athens on the Hill, and the Chacksfield-Merit Tract, and Orchard Avenue (*between Gardena Blvd. and Alondra Blvd.*)

LU 6.2

Retain, support, and reinforce the various historic and architectural elements of Athens on the Hill, including the development patterns, tree canopies, and the landscaped medians along Athens Boulevard and Laconia Boulevard.

LU 6.4

Maintain and strengthen the integrity of post-war architectural styles such as Traditional Ranch and distinguished Japanese-style landscaping in areas such as the Chacksfield Tract Survey LA Planning District.

LU 6.5

Support the restoration of the historic homes on Orchard Avenue (*between Gardena Blvd. and Alondra Blvd.*) in a manner that preserves the craftsman and cottage architectural elements and integrity of existing structures.

LU 6.7

Support the rehabilitation and reuse of buildings and materials with architectural character, such as existing early 20th Century brick commercial buildings, especially along Gardena Boulevard.

Centers, Villages, and Corridors

A guiding principle for the community is to foster vibrant commercial districts and corridors, which include regional centers, that are currently underutilized and are not providing adequate goods and services to community residents and stakeholders. In addition to encouraging well-designed, environmentally sustainable commercial development, the Community Plan aims to balance good urban design with the growth of small and medium-sized businesses that provide local employment opportunities, generate economic activity and enhance the sense of community.

Primarily, commercial centers and corridors include Sepulveda Boulevard, Gardena Boulevard, ~~Rosecrans Street, El Segundo~~, 190th Street, Normandie Avenue, Vermont Avenue, Redondo Beach Boulevard, Western Avenue, and Carson Street. They currently serve as focal points for shopping, civic, social and recreation activities and provide space for professional offices, small department stores, restaurants, neighborhood services, and entertainment facilities.

LU 7.1

Encourage investment and new commercial uses in established commercial areas, existing shopping centers, and the regional center.

LU 7.3

Encourage the use of private and public resources designed to stimulate commercial rehabilitation and new development.

LU 7.5

Encourage neighborhood-oriented shopping and services to be developed within walking distance to residential areas.

LU 7.6

Encourage the commercial expansion along Gardena Boulevard, Vermont Avenue, 190th Street, and Carson Boulevard to increase the variety of goods and services, improve shopping convenience, and stimulate business and investment.

LU 7.7

Promote a broad range of uses and streetscape improvements, including an urban tree canopy, that support and enhance El Segundo Boulevard, Rosecrans Boulevard, Redondo Beach Boulevard, Gardena Boulevard, 182nd Street, Vermont Avenue, Normandie Avenue, Western Avenue, 190th Street, Carson Boulevard, and Sepulveda Boulevard.

LU 7.9

Support increases to the residential unit density of future development located at strategic points along commercial corridors such as Gardena Boulevard (*while retaining the old Main Street character of Gardena Blvd. at a three to four story height and low scale*)

LU 10.2

Accommodate the needs of employees and public parking for all commercial facilities and ensure that they are well-designed and screened from public view by landscaping, berms and/or walls, in order to discourage parking from commercial areas from spilling over onto residential streets.

Jobs and Economic Development

LU 13.1

Retain viable industrially-designated lands for the continuation of existing industry and development of new clean industries, research and development uses, light manufacturing, and similar uses which provide employment opportunities for community residents.

LU 13.3

Incentivize safe, job-rich industries that provide new employment opportunities for the residents of the community, while discouraging businesses that do not generate significant employment opportunities.

LU 13.4

Promote job training, living wage provisions and local hiring for community residents and develop partnerships between major employers and local educational institutions to create career pathways that connect local residents and students with green job opportunities and occupational and professional service jobs.

LU 13.5

Encourage efforts to upgrade the appearance, infrastructure and built environment of the industrial areas to improve economic activity and viability of those areas.

LU 14.1

Create light industrial and hybrid industrial areas that foster clean and emerging industries that are compatible with adjacent residential areas.

Urban Form

LU 16.1

Seek a high degree of architectural compatibility and landscaping for new infill development to protect the character and scale of existing residential neighborhoods.

LU 16.2

Protect existing lower density residential neighborhoods from new construction that is out-of-scale by introducing frontage standards and building envelope requirements that achieve compatibility with the existing built form and allow for contextual infill.

LU 16.3

Protect existing characteristics of the residential neighborhoods through attention to the building orientation, prominent front yard setbacks, overall site design, and outdoor amenity space.

LU 16.4

Support the contextual rear infill of new additions and accessory structures in established neighborhoods that contribute to the overall existing development patterns and property values, and do not disrupt the integrity of the historic or building era they represent.

LU 17.3

Encourage new development to have prominent pedestrian-oriented design at the ground floor with a variety of commercial uses, and, where permitted, individual entrances for limited ground floor residential with abundant landscaping, pedestrian pathways and open space.

LU 17.4

Encourage new infill multi-family residential development that is consistent with the existing neighborhood character.

LU 17.5

Encourage appropriate and contextual building articulation features such as design elements, building materials, or physical building breaks that allow for natural light infiltration while incorporating designs that allow for optional natural ventilation and cooling features.

LU 17.6

Promote varied and engaging building façades by providing functional and quality design features, such as layering that adds texture and visual interest and an architectural accent signifying the main entry.

LU 18.1

Encourage the design of commercial development, including infill development, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and reuse efforts, to support a high-quality built environment that is compatible with adjacent development, and reflects the community's unique historic, cultural, and architectural context and overall enhances community identity.

LU 18.6

Encourage an active street environment along commercial corridors by incorporating commercial or other active public uses along the street frontages

LU 18.9

Promote new development with ground floor transparency and entries along the sidewalk to sustain street level interest and enhance pedestrian activity and safety.

LU 18.10

Encourage architectural features that reinforce the pedestrian character of the ground floor street wall and help define the pedestrian environment along the sidewalk, such as canopies, awnings, and overhangs, as integral to the architecture of the building.

LU 18.18

Encourage building design and orientation that eliminates negative space between buildings in favor of establishing a strong, seamless, and active streetwall.

LU 19.4

Support practical design features that help to screen open storage, recycling centers and auto uses, and limit visibility of automobile parts storage and other related products from public view.

LU 20.3

Encourage building facade treatments that provide visual interest, articulation such as climbing plants, vegetation and green walls. All of which discourage vandalism and promote a healthy and visual aesthetic that enhances the built environment

LU 20.5

Encourage paved areas such as driveways, walkways, and outdoor spaces to be designed with permeable surfaces in order to increase infiltration and reduce runoff.

GOAL LU 21

A healthy community with access to a diversity of public and open spaces that includes green open spaces, recreational and park facilities for the community to gather, socialize, and celebrate.

Environmental Justice

In April 2021, according to CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 9 out of 9 of the census tracts in the Harbor Gateway Community Plan Area met the criteria as disadvantaged communities. According to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's CalEnviroScreen, data indicated that Harbor Gateway has worse public health factors and more social and economic disadvantages compared to California as a whole. The CalEnviroScreen 4.0 rankings for Harbor Gateway ranged from 86% to 100%.

EJ 1.6

Prioritize the health, safety and needs of residents over special interests.

Health, Wealth and Sustainability

EJ 3.1

Promote public health, climate adaptability, and environmental sustainability outcomes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, expand access to green and healthy spaces, improve air quality and encourage physical activity with the opportunity for all residents to access good jobs.

EJ 3.3

Encourage the creation of landscaped corridors and enhancement through the planting of street trees along commercial corridor segments and through median plantings to provide shade and diminish heat island effects.

EJ 3.10

Promote land use and development patterns that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce climate change impacts in DACs (*Disadvantaged Communities*).

EJ 4.1

Encourage green, sustainable industries that bolster the economic base and provide high-skill and high-wage job opportunities for local residents.

EJ 4.2

Incentivize development opportunities for environmentally sustainable businesses that employ green building practices and processes and involve clean technologies.

EJ 5.2

Minimize residential-industrial land use incompatibilities and discourage the introduction of heavy industrial uses adjacent to residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, and outdoor recreational amenities.

EJ 5.7

Support the creation of green buffers next to freeways to help reduce the amount of particulate matter - (PM2.5) spillover and reduce noise in residential areas.

EJ 7.4

Support the enforcement of existing regulations that prohibit cargo container storage yards within 300 feet of any residential zone.

EJ 7.5

Seek to prohibit cargo container storage yards and other outdoor storage in close proximity to residential areas and if permitted, limit cargo container stacking to no more than “two-high”.

EJ 7.6 Discourage the intensification of existing industrial and auto-related businesses/uses through the co-location or addition of supplementary uses, particularly near sensitive uses. (*needs re-wording for more clarity*)

EJ 8.3

Ensure that cargo container storage yards and other open storage facilities provide landscaped buffering, height limitations, noise and view mitigation measures designed to protect nearby residential areas.

EJ 9.1

Create Hybrid Industrial areas with landscaped buffers, trails, pedestrian walkways, and bikeways, that facilitate transitions from traditional industrial districts to residential neighborhoods and commercial areas and phase out existing non-compatible uses.

EJ 11.2

Encourage efforts that seek the reduction of existing oil and gas wells within and adjacent to residential neighborhoods and the relocation of other oil-related facilities to non-residential areas

Public Realm and Open Space

PO 1.1

Develop new community, neighborhood and pocket parks to increase parks and open space for the residents of Harbor Gateway.

Sincerely,

David Matthews, Chairperson
Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council

cc: Vince Bertoni, Director of Planning – Department of City Planning
Christopher Pina, City Planner - Department of City Planning
Councilmember Joe Buscaino – Council District 15
Aksel Palacios, Planning Deputy – Council District 15
Caitlin Muldoon, Field Deputy – Council District 15