

## ABOUT THE CITY OF CARSON

### History

Carson was part of a Spanish Land Grant known as Rancho San Pedro that was deeded to Juan Jose Dominguez over 200 years ago. During the incorporation process, the community chose the name of "Carson" in honor of George Henry Carson, a member of the Dominguez family. The name "Dominguez," also considered as a name for the newly incorporated city, is found often in the City, labeling a street, a park, and, most notably, a California State University. Incorporated as a general law city on February 20, 1968, the City adopted the motto "Future Unlimited." Its strategic location and vacant land were part of the reason for that statement of unbridled optimism.

### General Profile

Carson, located less than 20 miles south of downtown Los Angeles, is part of the South Bay section of Los Angeles County. Carson has grown from a population of 66,000 in 1968 to 97,981 in 2006. Three annexations have increased the City's size to 19.2 square miles. Carson is an attractive city to live and work in, having mild temperatures year round, and being naturally air-conditioned by westerly ocean breezes.

Carson is a culturally diverse community that is accessible by air, rail, and freeway. The MTA Blue Line stops in Carson on its route between Los Angeles and Long Beach. The City's own bus system, the Carson Circuit, provides convenient bus transportation within the City. Carson is close to the Los Angeles International Airport, the Long Beach Airport, the Port of Los Angeles, and the Port of Long Beach. Four freeways are adjacent to or run through the City. They are the Harbor (110), the San Diego (405), the Artesia (91), and the Long Beach (710). There is no other city in the Los Angeles-Orange County region that can match Carson's inventory of available space and ease of accessibility.

Carson is a no-utility tax city. It has the lowest business license fee, development and planning fees among selected Southbay cities like Torrance, El Segundo, Compton and Long Beach. This has contributed to the marketability of Carson to businesses. There are large modern petro-chemical facilities (e.g. Arco, Tosco Refining, Shell), electronics manufacturers (e.g. Sony, Kenwood, Pioneer, Sansui), automobile dealers (e.g. Don Kott Ford, Cormier Chevrolet, Nissan, Mercedes Benz, Toyota, Honda), aerospace companies (e.g. In-Eros Corporation, Northrop), trucking companies (e.g. Southwest Trails, Proceed USA, USC Intermodal Services Inc.) and retail stores (e.g. Ikea, JCPenny, Target, Home Depot, and Staples) within the City. Many have stayed for years and expanded (e.g. Pioneer Video, Leiner Products, Don Kott Ford). The City has an active Chamber of Commerce working with it to retain and attract business. The City Council's emphasis on quality developments - both commercial and residential - along with a citywide beautification effort, have had a positive impact on the City. In recent years, well-known builders have chosen Carson as a location for their projects. Several new developments have recently been completed or are in the planning or construction phases.

In the area of residential developments, we have the following on-going projects:

1. Villa Andalusia/Elite Homes - 40 attached townhouses at 643 E. 223<sup>rd</sup> Street
2. Bella Vista/Comstock Homes - 11 detached condominium units at 235 E. 220<sup>th</sup> St
3. Steve Nazemi - 7 condominium units at 1216-1226 E. Carson Street
4. 8 detached condominiums at 21841 Orrick Street
5. 8 detached condominiums at 630 E. 220<sup>th</sup> Street
6. 7 detached condominiums at 553 E. 213<sup>th</sup> Street
7. 7 detached condominiums at 1211-1239 E. Ashmill Street

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### 8. 3 detached condominiums at 22028 Grace Street

Carson continues to sustain the demand for commercial development. The Carson Redevelopment Agency has been involved in facilitating development that increases the general fund, creates shopping opportunities for residents, adds to the existing housing stock and removes blighting influences caused prior to the city's incorporation. Blight elimination activities include the resolution of contaminated sites known as Brownfields. Agency and City accomplishments toward that goal are described below.

Development of the Carson Auto Row is in its final stage. The auto row, which was formerly a brownfield site, now includes a new Nissan franchise with a state-of-the-art facility, and a new Honda franchise facility, and soon a new Carson Toyota with an upgraded showroom and service center. The expanded and renovated Toyota dealership anticipates opening by December 2006. The existing Cormier Chevrolet dealership, also located on 223<sup>rd</sup> street auto row, improved its showroom, service area and administrative offices. Cruise America, a recreational vehicle rental business, has relocated adjacent to Cormier Chevrolet adding to the Auto Row. Also, in partnership with the Agency, Altman's Winnebago recreational vehicle dealership completed its facility upgrade and has implemented a very aggressive marketing campaign increasing sales.

The City is making headway on the proposed development of the 157-acre landfill site. The City is currently working with a Carson Marketplace Specific plan which provides development standards and guidelines that allow for a potential mix of approximately 2 million square feet of commercial, restaurant and entertainment venues, big box retail store, a 300-room hotel and up to 1,150 residential units. The project called the Carson Marketplace is expected to open in 2012. In connection with this development is a 22 million dollar project to modify the Avalon interchange. The plan is to reconfigure the existing on and off ramps to ease traffic and accessibility when the Carson Marketplace is completed.

One project of the Agency is the acquisition of the former Ideal Auto Junkyard, located on Main Street between the 91 Freeway and the Carson Hotel. The Agency removed the junkyard which was a significant blighting influence in the area. Negotiations are underway to sell this property to the adjacent property owner for the development of industrial space for small businesses. Another project, at 501 E. Albertoni site adjacent to the 91 freeway, will be a new retail mall anchored by the El Pescador Restaurant.

In the past 3-4 years, the City invested over \$10 million to acquire parcels along Carson Street to significantly influence the anticipated development of the Carson Street Corridor. Then the City completed the Carson Street Visualization Study used as the spring board for the development of the Carson Street Master Plan. Today the City has embarked upon the Carson Street Mixed Used District Master Plan. This plan focuses on a 1.75 mile section of Carson Street between the I-405 San Diego Freeway and the I-110 Harbor Freeway. The plan is intended to help the community share their vision with those participating in development efforts along Carson Street. The plan will be used as a guide by the City Council, Redevelopment Agency, Planning Commission and other commissions for review of public improvements such as streetscape and environmental graphics as well as private development and related improvements.

Another Agency acquisition on Carson Street is a 9-acre former mobile home park adjacent to an outdated shopping center anchored by a Ralph's Market. The Agency is currently negotiating to expand and modernize the Ralphs store. This land will either be marketed or developed through the private sector.

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The Agency also made a commitment of \$250,000 to the Grow America Fund, which in turn made a \$1,000,000 loan to Lucas Brothers Construction to assist in building their new 15,000-square foot facility on Figueroa Street.

The Hopkins Real Estate Group, along with Genesis Shamrock Holdings, purchased the Southbay Pavilion at Carson in April 2003. The Phase I expansion and renovation of the mall is almost complete and has added a Chili's Restaurant, a Target store, a 24 Hour Fitness, a Washington Mutual Bank, and parking lot and landscaping improvements. Construction of Phase II of the expansion will bring to Carson a transit facility, Radio Shack, Jamba Juice, Wing Stop, Big 5, Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Panda Express and T-Mobile. Negotiations are on going to bring upscale tenants possibly Old Navy, Children's Place, Elephant Bar, El Torito or Outback Steak House inside the mall.

The Alameda Corridor is the primary rail access route and a significant truck access route to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The City is currently working proactively with the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA) to develop a strategy for mitigating noise and other impacts brought by continued growth in port activity along the Alameda Corridor. Studies are being made to determine the feasibility of a sound wall to mitigate noise and other impacts.

The City has initiated the annexation of the 1,710 acres of unincorporated Los Angeles County, located between Carson, Long Beach and Compton, known as Rancho Dominguez. The area is predominantly industrial in character and includes two mobile home parks and the Rancho San Pedro Dominguez Adobe, a 16-acre property with historical significance. In March 2006, the Los Angeles County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) placed the property into a joint sphere of influence shared by the Cities of Carson, Long Beach and Compton. City Council has now authorized staff to move forward with the application process to initiate territorial reorganizations before LAFCO.

Finally, the City has the following projects which are expected to be completed before the fiscal year ends:

1. Main St. Median Landscape from Carson Street to the 223<sup>rd</sup> Street
2. Figueroa Street improvements from Victoria Street to Alondra Blvd.
3. Fiat Street improvements from Moneta Avenue to 650 Ft. Westerly
4. Citywide Annual Pavement Maintenance
5. Citywide Annual Concrete Replacement
6. Traffic Light improvements at 223<sup>rd</sup> Street and Bonita (Turn Arrow) and Del Amo Blvd. and Central Ave (Left Turn Signal)
7. Facility Improvements - Council Chambers Audio/Visual- Sound system and Digital recording enhancements
8. Median Irrigation system upgrade
9. Senior Citizens computer lab expansion
10. Civic Center and Community Center parking lot light poles replacement

### **Community Facilities**

The City operates many community facilities. The two major facilities, City Hall and the Community Center, are located in the Civic Center Plaza. The City Hall is where most of City administration and operations are conducted. Renovation efforts have just been completed at the City Hall including the Council Chambers. The Community Center is a 73,000 square-foot facility used as a meeting center for community and business sponsored events. The Community Center East Wing improvement project, completed in October 2003, has brought in a new senior hall

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for Carson residents, as well as an expanded and upgraded Early Childhood Education Center.

The Parks and Recreation division, located at 2400 East Dominguez Street, operates 12 parks, 3 swimming pools, 2 mini-parks, a boxing center, an indoor sports complex and a skate park that opened in February 2003 at Veterans Park. Park improvements for the year that just passed include the installation of new fitness equipments at Veterans Park, the installation of new irrigation system at Carson Park. Another significant park investment is the continuation of a Park Enforcement Team. This contingent of eight sheriff's deputies and one sergeant will patrol the City's park for added security and safety of Carson residents.

### Government and Administration

The City of Carson has a Council-Manager form of government, with an elected Mayor, a Mayor Pro Tem, three Councilmembers, and a City Manager. The City has had a directly elected Mayor since April 1992. Carson residents, during a special election in March 2000, voted to lengthen the term of the mayor from two to four years. The four-year term for Mayor went into effect with the City's March 2001 general municipal elections. Councilmembers are elected to alternating four-year terms. Other elected City officials include the City Clerk and City Treasurer; both also serve four-year terms.

The City government is operated on a competitive system of appointments and promotions. The positions of City Manager and City Attorney are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the City Council. The Work Group General Managers are appointed by, and serve at the will of, the City Manager. All other positions are filled by appointment, based on structured competitive examinations. Currently, the City has 397 authorized full-time positions, which provide a wide range of municipal services. The City has streamlined operations from 12 departments into ten distinct work groups namely City Council, City Attorney, City Clerk, City Treasurer, Non-departmental, City Manager, Administrative Services, Economic Development, Development Services and Public Services.

The significant investment in commercial, retail and residential development demonstrates the City's resolve to live up to a reputation as a business-friendly, well-managed and financially-sound City. Its financial position should sustain its strength, allowing the Council to invest in programs that will provide a high quality of life for its residents and a vibrant economy for its business community.