

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose and Intent

The Boulevards at South Bay Specific Plan describes the elements, character, location and method of implementation for this 168-acre development project, 157 acres of which represent a former landfill. The purpose is to implement the vision for urban infill and the reuse and recycling of land through the establishment of land uses, design criteria, development regulations, infrastructure plans and implementation procedures that will guide development in an orderly fashion, consistent with City policies and procedures. The intent is also to implement and provide consistency with the goals, objectives and policies of the City of Carson General Plan and Redevelopment Plan.

This Specific Plan is forward thinking in that it allows some degree of flexibility in its implementation to accommodate the inevitable changes in economic conditions, market dynamics and technological advances that occur over time. The Specific Plan area has been divided into three Development Districts that respond to the type of uses planned on the site and provide a structure for their development. Development Districts 1 and 2 are both on the former landfill site, which will require complex engineering techniques and associated expenditures to develop safely and in accordance with state and federal regulations. Development District 3 is immediately across Del Amo Boulevard to the north, on uncompromised land that is currently vacant.

The Specific Plan will be adopted by ordinance and will implement zoning for the site. Going beyond the guidance typically found in a zoning ordinance, however, The Boulevards at South Bay Specific Plan provides applicants, City staff, the public and decision makers with information on the project's background, overall intent, design standards and guidelines to facilitate the project's review implementation.

#### PROJECT BACKGROUND A BRIEF HISTORY OF CARSON

Although the City of Carson has a long and colorful history that dates back to the actual founding of California, it is a very young community in terms of its age as an independent city. Carson was incorporated as a city in 1968. Compare that to Carson's neighbor to the east, Long Beach, which incorporated almost a century earlier in 1888, or to its neighbor to the west, Torrance, which became a city in 1921. In those intervening years, the area that is now Carson remained an unincorporated portion of Los Angeles County, and as a result, the young City of Carson is still struggling to overcome the penalties that came with delaying its incorporation.

In politics, there is an acronym, "N.I.M.B.Y.," which is short for "not in my back yard." People realize that society needs facilities such as garbage dumps, auto dismantling centers and waste treatment plants, but when it comes time to build them, no one wants them in their own back yard. So when such essential facilities were needed in the South Bay, the incorporated cities such as Torrance and Redondo Beach had the political clout to resist the location of such controversial projects within their city borders. Since Carson was an unincorporated area for so long, with little political representation, it often ended up as the dumping ground (both literally and figuratively) of its neighbors. By the time Carson finally

incorporated as a city in 1968, its landscape was pockmarked with dozens of refuse dumps, landfills, and auto dismantling plants that none of its neighbors would have in their own cities (source: Growing Pains of a Young City, <http://ci.carson.ca.us/Extra/GrowingPains.htm>).

As California has grown, planners, conservationists and those concerned with public health have decried urban sprawl and its social and environmental costs, and developers have gone into the hinterlands in search of cheap land where hours-long commutes from these bedroom communities to jobs are commonplace. This type of development typically has high municipal costs and it usually precedes commercial development that can generate enough taxes for City coffers to pay for the infrastructure and services to support these edge communities.

Sprawl has forced our society to look long and hard at reclaiming the underutilized urban landscape. Everyone from the United States Environmental Protection Agency to the California Center for Land Recycling now understands that our society, to become more sustainable, needs to facilitate and support urban infill types of development where existing infrastructure, strong employment base and community support services are already in place. The Boulevards at South Bay represents such an opportunity to reclaim a 157-acre landfill and replace what once was a trash dump with the vibrancy of life.

## **1.2 Project Overview**

The Boulevards at South Bay is a prime example of what can be done in the effort to recycle and reclaim urban land. What was once a landfill and blight on the neighboring community has the opportunity to become a shining example of civic pride and environmental technology with the construction of a mixed-use community of residential, retail, commercial and hospitality that will bring residents and tax generation back to a site that never could have imagined such a bright future.

The Boulevards at South Bay Specific Plan provides development standards and guidelines that allow for a potential mix of approximately 2 million square feet of commercial, a 300-room hotel and up to 1,550 residential units. Section 4 presents a land use illustrative that demonstrates a potential project configuration.

## **1.3 Authority to Prepare Specific Plan**

The California Government Code authorizes jurisdictions to adopt specific plans either by resolution as policy, by ordinance as regulation or a combination of both. The Boulevards at South Bay Specific Plan is established through the authority granted by the California Government Code, Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 3, Article 8, Sections 65450 through 65457. Both Planning Commission and City Council hearings are required. In either resolution or ordinance form, the Specific Plan must be adopted by the Carson City Council.

Upon adoption, this Specific Plan will serve as zoning for the properties involved. It establishes the necessary plans, development standards, regulations, infrastructure requirements, design guidelines, implementation programs and mitigation measures on which subsequent project-related development activities are to be founded. It is intended that local public works projects, design review plans, detailed site plans, grading permits and building permits or any other action requiring ministerial or discretionary approval applicable to this area be consistent with this Specific Plan.

## **1.4 Environmental Clearance**

This specific plan is prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An initial study was prepared, and it was determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was needed to analyze potential project impacts. Future development projects that are consistent with this specific plan will not require further environmental documentation nor focused environmental analysis pursuant to CEQA.