

# CHAPTER 3

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT



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### **GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

*The City of Carson is committed to pursuing, retaining, and promoting quality and sustainable economic development and jobs, at both the local and regional level, through the utilization of the City's natural advantages which include the City's strategic location in the South Bay to the ports; access to freeways and airports, and the Alameda Corridor; its multi-cultural neighborhoods; its potential for international trade; and the California State University, Dominguez Hills campus; and a diverse and skilled labor force.*

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to provide guidance for economic development with the City of Carson in order to attain an economically viable and self-sustaining community. In this sense, economically viable means providing a range of housing and employment opportunities that meet the needs of residents and workers alike, attracting families and businesses to create demand for planned land uses, and establishing and funding public service levels that preserve or enhance Carson's quality of life.

The Economic Development Element is linked primarily to the Land Use and Housing Elements. Land use policy, in which the City takes an active role in defining development intensity, balance and mix of land uses, is fundamental to economic growth and economic well being. Land use policy enables the City to plan in advance for secondary effects of development, including employment growth and infrastructure requirements. Carson's housing policy is linked to economic



development planning in that economic relationships exist between housing types and employment opportunities, as well as between housing densities and the cost to maintain City service levels. With regard to attracting commerce and industry, as well as maintaining mobility for corporate activities, the Transportation and Infrastructure Element is also important to the economic development strategy.

## **2.0 STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS**

Authority for the Economic Development Element is found in State Government Code Section 65303, which allows cities and counties to add optional elements beyond the State-mandated elements. Once adopted, an optional element carries the same legal weight as any other of the elements as required by State Government Code Section 65300.5. Although the Economic Development Element is not a required element in the General Plan, the City has prepared one in order to consolidate and codify a growing body of policy concerning the economic and fiscal viability of Carson.

## **3.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

This section of the Economic Development Element is based upon *Market Analysis, General Plan Update, City of Carson*, prepared by Robert Charles Lesser & Co. (RCL), dated April 3, 2000. This report in its entirety is included as Appendix I. The objective of the market analysis was to: 1) evaluate the local and regional real estate markets as they relate to specific economic development issues and goals important to the City, and 2) identify market-driven opportunities for real estate development that the City may wish to encourage. Data have been updated with the 2000 Census data where possible and some other data have also been updated. The remainder of the findings and projections come from the Lesser *Market Analysis* prepared with earlier data.

### **3.1 POPULATION AND INCOME TRENDS**

Carson's socioeconomic trends are generally favorable. The City's total 2000 population of 89,730 has increased by more than five percent since 1990. While this is less than Los Angeles County's growth rate of 5.8 percent, it is slightly greater than that of the South Bay. The City also has a greater percentage of school age children under 18 compared to the South Bay; however, its distribution is similar to that of Los Angeles County.

Carson's 2000 median household income of \$52,284 exceeds the County's average of \$40,949, however Carson's per capita income of \$17,107 is significantly lower than the County's average of \$21,000. This lower per capita income may be attributed to the larger average household size of 3.59 (and average family size of 3.92) compared to 2.87 in Los Angeles County.

Carson's households are distributed across the various income ranges, with 31 percent of households making in excess of \$35,000/year. The South Bay has a much



higher percentage of households earning more than \$100,000 per year than does Carson.

### **3.2 BUSINESS CLIMATE**

Carson has a favorable business climate as evidenced by its existing policies. The cost of doing business in Carson is much lower than that in other South Bay cities. Carson has one of the lowest business license fees in the South Bay and imposes no utility-user, gross receipts or parking taxes. Carson is the only city in the South Bay with no utility-user tax. The City also has one of the lowest development and planning fee structures in the area.

### **3.3 LAND AVAILABILITY**

While Carson is an urban community and almost fully developed, approximately 10 percent of its land is still available for development. The City has 937 acres of vacant land and 234 acres of underutilized land, which is discussed in more detail in Section 3.1, Land Use, in the *Existing Conditions Report*.

The largest areas of vacant land, defined as land that is clear of all buildings, structures, and appurtenant facilities, are located to the east and north of Cal State Dominguez Hills and a 157-acre site of contaminated land adjacent to the I-405 freeway. The largest underutilized parcels are located at the southwest corner of Wilmington Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard. Underutilized properties are defined by the Existing Conditions Report as:

- Large parcels occupied by a business or residential dwellings that utilize 50 percent or less of the site.
- Large parcels utilized for storage of junk and salvage materials, small vacant buildings, scattered oil wells, storage of trucks and similar vehicles, or agricultural farming operations.

However, many of these underutilized and vacant parcels are brownfields and will require environmental remediation before development can occur. The City has an abundance of brownfields largely because Los Angeles County permitted landfills in the area, prior to the City's incorporation in 1968. While remediation can be costly, the South Bay's lack of developable space provides an opportunity for Carson's remediation of these sites.

### **3.4 REDEVELOPMENT PLANS**

The City's Redevelopment Agency has adopted three redevelopment project areas: Redevelopment Project Area No. 1, Merged and Amended Redevelopment Project Area (formerly Redevelopment Project Area No. 2 and 3), and Redevelopment Project Area No. 4. Project Area No. 1 consists of approximately 2,044 acres, the Merged and Amended Project Area consists of approximately 1,634 acres, and Project Area No. 4 consists of approximately 1035 acres. The Redevelopment Plans



for all Project Areas are available for review at the City of Carson, Economic Development Group.

### **3.5 REGIONAL TRENDS**

The Southern California economy remained exceptionally strong through the second quarter of 1999. Job creation totaled 81,400 in Los Angeles County in 1998, or 2.1 percent, following employment increases of 42,000 and 76,600 in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

Employment gains in software development and services, construction, and business services as a whole have offset job losses in the manufacturing sector, particularly in the aerospace industry. Although entertainment industry job growth was lackluster in the first half of 1998, with some film production moving to lower cost areas, such as Canada, the second half of 1998 and early 1999 showed signs of revitalization in the entertainment sector.

The Los Angeles County employment outlook is positive, with the County expected to add an average of 62,000 jobs annually through 2005. Although interest rate and fuel increases may have a negative affect on the economy in the near future, the economy has seen the longest economic growth period in history.

### **3.6 LOCAL TRENDS**

The South Bay has similarly enjoyed robust economic activity. Although the region was greatly impacted by a significant loss of aerospace jobs, the area has largely recovered through the addition of advanced technology and international trade employment. In 1999, employment was expected to have increased by 3.8 percent, bringing total employment in the South Bay to 453,500.

### **3.7 MARKET ANALYSIS**

This section contains a detailed overview of the following land uses:

- Industrial;
- Retail; and
- Office.

Each land use section includes a basic market summary of the South Bay and Carson sub-market, and analyzes demand and development potential. All support data is summarized in a series of exhibits contained in Appendix I.

#### **3.7.1 INDUSTRIAL**

##### **SUPPLY TRENDS AND CONDITIONS, 2000-2002**

Los Angeles County's industrial market remains vigorous. As of the third quarter 1999, vacancies were down to 3 percent. The market has tightened significantly over



the past several years. Just a year ago, vacancies were 6 percent in Los Angeles and in 1992 were as high as 12 percent. The lack of prime industrial space has put a stain on the market, as demand for space has been greater than available supply. Driven by rapid employment growth, resurgence in international trade activity, and an improving public infrastructure system, Los Angeles County is well positioned for continued industrial activity.

The South Bay is holding steady in the industrial market with second quarter 2002 vacancies of 4.7 percent. Similar to Los Angeles County, the South Bay also had vacancies of 13 percent in the early 1990s. Much of the South Bay's recovery has been due to existing firm expansions and in-migration of domestic and foreign companies involved in international trade. Although there have been new buildings constructed primarily at Watson and Carson Companies' Dominguez Technology Center, the Harbor Gateway Commerce Center in Torrance, and the Harbor City Business Park in Harbor City, this space will expand the total supply by only 0.5 percent. As a result, the South Bay's vacancy rate should continue to remain low.

The City of Carson's industrial space lies within the Carson sub-market, which has been defined by the major brokerage firms as encompassing Carson, Compton, and Rancho Dominguez. This sub-market has 83 million square feet of industrial space and comprises 45 percent of the South Bay market and 10 percent of Los Angeles County. Carson is approximately 43 percent of the Carson, Compton, Rancho Dominguez sub-market.

Industrial uses have provided jobs to residents and aided in the economic well being of the City. They have also contributed tax revenues to provide health, safety, and social services to residents. Carson's industrial market has been predominately comprised of manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution uses. According to a study by the Los Angeles Regional Technology Alliance, only 48 out of 1,000 technology related businesses in the South Bay are located within Carson.

Land scarcity and rising lease rates are forcing some companies from the South Bay to areas where land prices are more affordable. The South Bay should however continue to have a strong demand for industrial space given the region's strategic location. Expansion plans at Los Angeles International Airport, and the Los Angeles and Long Beach seaports should also increase the potential to attract companies to the area, especially in the distribution and warehousing operations.

### **DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

The demand for industrial space is holding steady. The industrial demand methodology used by Robert Charles Lesser & Co. focuses on employment growth projections by sector. The net absorption of new industrial space in Los Angeles County in 1998 was 11.8 million square feet. In 1997, Los Angeles County net absorption was 25 million square feet, and 11.8 million in 1996. Given employment growth projections by industry, RCL projected the 1999 net absorption of industrial space to total approximately 13.8 million square feet. For the 1999-2005 period, RCL projected that the annual average industrial absorption is 9.9 million square



feet. During the past five quarters, industrial activity has fluctuated between 10 million and 13 million square feet.

Of the total Los Angeles demand, the South Bay is anticipated to capture approximately 23 percent or 1.8 million square feet of industrial space per year. Of this, Carson is expected to capture 317,000 square feet or 20 to 25 acres of industrial space per year.

There should be continued demand for new modernized facilities in Carson. Some of the City's newer industrial developments have combined office space with light industrial, warehouse facilities and manufacturing. Watson Land Company and Carson Companies have been at the forefront at developing these new "flex" spaces. These flex spaces will be an asset in keeping the City's industrial space competitive, since a large portion of the existing industrial inventory is outdated and unable to accommodate many of the emerging industries.

Manufacturing and warehousing space will continue to be in great demand in Carson; however, whether the City has the ability to attract higher quality research and development as well as high technology uses remains unknown. High technology companies generally tend to cluster around research institutions and other like industries, seek highly amenitized areas with executive housing and a highly educated labor pool. Carson does not possess these characteristics. The City will need to be proactive in order to attract these industries. While several technology related companies have recently moved to the area, the firm's appear to be using space in Carson primarily for distribution or warehousing purposes.

In the South Bay, current long-range land developments include 300 acres at Watson and Carson Companies' Dominguez Technology Center in Carson and unincorporated Los Angeles County; the Harbor Gateway project in Torrance; and the 105-acre Northrop Grumman mixed use development in Hawthorne, which includes 30 acres of retail as well as office and light industrial uses. The Dominguez Technology Center will be adding over 3 million square feet of new industrial space to the area within the five year period 2000-2005.

## **3.7.2 OFFICE**

### **SUPPLY TRENDS AND CONDITIONS, 2000**

The South Bay office market, defined as the area encompassing Long Beach on the south to El Segundo on the north, is comprised of nearly 30 million square feet of office space, and represents 19 percent of the total space in Los Angeles County. In the last three years, this market's absorption amounted to 19 percent of Los Angeles County, which is equivalent to its share of the County's inventory.

Carson has a small office market that consists of approximately five percent of the total South Bay market. The City has only 1.6 million square feet of office space and has averaged 10,000 square feet of net absorption per year from 1990 to 1998. Most of the space is also relatively old.



Demand for office space in the South Bay continues to be strong, with the largest gains in net absorption occurring in El Segundo. The South Bay however has not fully recovered as overall vacancies are at 15 percent. Although vacancies have decreased since the mid-20 percent levels of the early 1990s, this is still relatively high. Certain sub-markets are strong and there has been some new construction in El Segundo and Long Beach. However, demand for space in Carson has not been high. Vacancies have remained at the 20 percent level as of third quarter 1999 and have fluctuated between 16 and 25 percent since 1990.

South Bay office rents have been on the rise. El Segundo and Long Beach have typically obtained the highest rents in the South Bay. Per the First Quarter 1999 Grubb and Ellis report, rents averaged \$1.85 in the South Bay, while Carson rents averaged only \$1.40 per square foot per month, full service gross.

### **DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

The net absorption of new office space in Los Angeles County in 1998 was 4.2 million square feet, 3.2 million square feet in 1997, and 2.6 million square feet in 1996. Given employment growth projects by industry, RCL projected the 1999 net absorption of office space to total approximately 5.3 million square feet. For the 1999-2005 period, RCL projected the annual average industrial absorption to be 3.6 million square feet.

Of the Los Angeles County total demand, the South Bay is anticipated to capture approximately 12 percent or 430,000 per year. Of this, Carson is only expected to capture 16,500 square feet of office space per year.

In short, office development opportunities are limited in Carson. Carson comprises a small market and does not have adequate support services, amenities, or commercial appeal to attract a substantial number of tenants to the area.

### **3.7.3 RETAIL**

The South Bay offers numerous shopping alternatives to residents and workers, with the major retail centers concentrated in Torrance and Long Beach. Six super regional centers are present in the South Bay, as well as major power centers.

While Carson appears to be importing much of its retail sales from visitors and non-locals, there seems to be unmet resident and worker retail needs. As a predominately industrial community, many of the basic retail needs of residents, such as apparel, food and restaurants may have been neglected and overlooked by the market in the past. Expanding the retail market by targeting these areas may be important in reaching the retail development goals of the City.

### **RETAIL SALES OVERVIEW, 2000**

In 1997, Carson had approximately \$748 million in retail sales, representing 3.4 percent of Los Angeles County's total sales of \$217 billion. Taxable retail sales in



Carson grew an average of 2.0 percent annually in current dollars between 1990 and 1997, lower than Los Angeles County's growth rate of 2.6 percent. In constant dollars (1997), there has been a slight decrease in taxable sales for this period in Carson (average annual change of -0.4 percent), compared to a 1.1 percent decrease in Los Angeles County's sales overall.

Retail categories that have shown the strongest gains in Carson since 1990 are:

- General Merchandise (6.4 percent average annual change),
- Home Furnishing and Appliances (27.0 percent), and
- Building Material and Farming Implements (5.3 percent).

Leaders for California overall since 1990 are:

- General Merchandise Stores (2.9 percent),
- Eating and Drinking Places (2.8 percent),
- Service Station (2.9 percent), and
- Specialty Retail Stores (5.2 percent).

The City of Carson "imports" retail sales from visitors and non-locals. Of the \$748,295,000 in taxable sales, RCL estimates that visitors and non-locals contribute \$270,785,000, or 36 percent of the total. Only the Eating and Drinking Places, Drug Store, Packaged Liquor, Apparel, and Food categories show leakage of sales outside City limits. Carson residents most likely travel to surrounding cities including Torrance and Long Beach to dine and shop for these basic goods.

The categories with the highest volume of sales from visitors are:

- General Merchandise with \$46,174,000,
- Auto Dealers and Auto Supplies with \$101,911,000, and
- Other Retail with \$69,171,000.

### **3.7.4 POWER CENTERS AND CHAIN RETAILERS**

#### **SUPPLY CONDITIONS, 2000**

For the purpose of this Element, a power center is defined as a grouping of retail stores. Power centers typically range from 250,000 and 500,000 square feet gross leaseable area, with several category-specific, narrowly focused, but deeply merchandised anchors with 25,000 square feet or more. The emergence of power centers is a response to the evolution and repositioning of older regional centers and the consumers' changing shopping patterns, as they become more value and travel conscious.

Carson has two new power centers, Carson Town Center, which includes Super Kmart and Burger King, and Carson Depot Center, which includes Home Depot, Albertsons, Staples, McDonald's and Starbucks. Other uses are anticipated at the Carson Town Center, however, they are in the early development stages. There are



two other power centers within a five-mile trade area, including the Long Beach Town Center and the Crossroads Shopping Center in Torrance.

The inventory of major chain retailers in the South Bay includes a wide variety of stores, however the majority are located outside of Carson, primarily within regional shopping centers, including the Del Amo Fashion Center, The Galleria at South Bay, and the Long Beach Plaza as well as at the major power centers described above. Although Carson has a regional shopping center, the South Bay Pavilion, many of the in-line stores within the center are local and representative of the major chains. This center has recently sold and many physical and use changes are proposed.

Several large commercial or mixed use developments are on the drawing board, including the 157-acre site at the I-405, the Gateway to Carson, and a project which includes a BENI grant for site remediation.

### **DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

Strictly analyzing the volume of sales and inventory of power centers quantitatively, the trade area within the City would appear to be oversupplied, with \$219 million in estimated sales compared to a demand potential of \$92 million. The larger five-mile Carson trade area, however, would appear to be undersupplied, with \$219 million in estimated sales compared to a demand potential of \$574 million.

Projections indicate the population of this trade area will increase from 488,000 to 509,000 by the year 2004, which will further increase this demand.

Complementing the quantitative demand approach, the local and subregional inventory list includes many categories completely underrepresented by brand-name retailers. Local residents have expressed a lack of satisfaction with the selection and quality of merchandise offered in Carson, and have stated that they would welcome new retail to the area.

The successful introduction of power center-type tenants would favorably augment the City's retail sales base. Residents would benefit, as they would not be forced to shop in Torrance or Long Beach as often. However, with the introduction of the chain store tenants, this positive overall impact would be mitigated by the loss of sales at smaller local businesses.

## **3.7.5 NEIGHBORHOOD SHOPPING AND GROCERY STORES**

### **SUPPLY CONDITIONS, 2000**

Carson's major neighborhood shopping centers are centralized on Carson Street, west from the I-405 freeway and Sepulveda Boulevard. There are four stores representing two major grocery chains within the City, one of which is considerably smaller than the industry average. Grocery stores are location sensitive and most consumers shop at stores closest to their residence. As a result, the clustering that is



currently prevalent in Carson may pose inconveniences to most residents. Two other grocery stores included in this analysis are not major chains. They were included since they appear to fill a need for residents living along the periphery of the City and they are fairly large in size.

### **DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

The City of Carson is currently undersupplied by approximately three grocery stores given the size of its population and per capita income level.

The resident retail demand versus reported sales analysis in 1997 reinforces the need for additional neighborhood shopping centers. Approximately \$7.1 million in taxable retail sales for food was leaking outside City limits.

## **3.7.6 RESTAURANTS**

### **SUPPLY CONDITIONS, 2000**

Carson has a handful of major chain restaurants and limited “sit-down” dining locations. The majority of dining opportunities are fast food and limited numbers of mid-range, family-style restaurants, such as Tony Romas, International House of Pancakes, and Sizzler. Residents and businesses agree that Carson has few restaurants that could be considered fine dining. In terms of taxable sales, restaurants and bars in Carson make up 7.4 percent of total retail stores compared to 13 percent within the State of California. This indicates a disproportionate lack of potential dining opportunities within the City.

### **DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

Demand for restaurants was conducted by analyzing both resident and employee spending patterns. It is important to include employee figures in the analysis, since Carson has such a large daytime population. Although there are no published reports indicating industrial worker spending patterns at restaurants, the International Council of Shopping Center estimates for office worker was used as a proxy. Accordingly, Carson may support an additional 315,000 square feet of additional eating and drinking establishments including, 171,000 square feet of fast food dining, 74,000 square feet of restaurants that serve beer and wine, and 69,000 square feet of fine dining.

Examining restaurant taxable sales by category (with or without alcohol sales on premises), Carson’s inventory is heavily weighted toward restaurants that do not serve alcohol compared to the County and State ratios. Taxable sales at restaurants without alcoholic beverages make up 75 percent of Carson’s total, compared to 55 percent for Los Angeles County and 44 percent for California. Taxable sales at restaurants that serve all types of liquor comprise only 7 percent of Carson’s total, compared to 22 percent for Los Angeles County and 31 percent for California. These figures substantiate the opinions described above regarding the lack of fine or family dining opportunities.



### **3.7.7 MOVIE THEATERS**

#### **SUPPLY CONDITIONS, 2000**

Carson does not have any movie theaters within the City's limit. A drive-in theater existed previously, but it has been closed for many years. The closest theater is 4 miles from City Hall and located in the City of Torrance. Within the primary 5-mile trade area, there are six theaters with 18 traditional style screens and 36 stadium seats. In the secondary trade area, which includes theaters within a 7-mile trade area, there are an additional four theaters or 37 traditional style screens.

#### **DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

An unmet demand for new movie theaters exists in the five-mile trade area. The unmet demand is estimated at 20 screens. Current development trends are to build movie theaters in complexes of eight screens or more, although in larger markets, theater complexes of 24 screens and greater are common. This translates into one or two new movie theater complexes in the area.

Movie theaters function as excellent anchors for a retail shopping/entertainment center that also includes family and better-quality restaurants and specialty retail. A movie theater has synergy with restaurants.

Movie theater developers, in general, want to build at least eight screens to achieve efficiencies in development costs. A new eight-screen movie theater with the latest sound equipment and possible stadium-style seating represents an opportunity that would serve the City and surrounding communities. Any new theater built in Carson should strive to feature the most up-to-date systems in order to compete effectively with theaters in neighboring cities.

### **3.8 MARKET CONCLUSIONS**

Based upon the Market Analysis prepared by Robert Charles Lesser & Co., the economic development outlook for the City of Carson is generally favorable from an overall market perspective. The strongest development potential lies in the industrial market, although there may be opportunities in retail. The regional and local economy appears to be favorable in the short-term. Combined with the shortage of developable land in the South Bay and Carson's locational advantages, the City has an opportunity to promote economic development activities.

Market conclusions for industrial, office and retail sectors are provided in the following paragraphs.

#### **3.8.1 INDUSTRIAL**

Industrial potential should increase in the long term by 300,000 square feet of space per year (20 to 25 years at a 0.32 floor area ratio), with further stimulus provided by the expansion of the nearby Los Angeles and Long Beach Ports and the Los Angeles International Airport, improvements planned for truck and rail traffic due to the Alameda Corridor, and the lack of developable land in the South Bay.



Industrial land supply in Los Angeles County is near exhaustion. This provides Carson with an opportunity to capitalize on its land holdings and redevelop underutilized and vacant properties to meet demands for new industrial space.

Warehousing and distribution uses should continue to hold the strongest demand due to Carson's locational advantage to major transportation systems. Attraction of higher-end technology and research and development companies will continue to be challenging due to the lack of amenities, such as restaurants, shopping areas and entertainment, executive housing, and a highly educated work force as compared to other subregions in Southern California.

### **3.8.2 OFFICE**

Office opportunities in Carson are limited. The South Bay office market is largely concentrated in El Segundo, Long Beach and Torrance. Carson comprises a small market and does not have enough support services, amenities or appeal to attract a substantial number of tenants to the area. Vacancy rates remain high, and rental rates have not appreciated greatly.

The precluding conclusions should be understood as representing a continuation of general market trends. Impacting major market directions is difficult, but aggressive cities can affect the share of the market that they can attract. This is possible by working with local landowners.

### **3.8.3 RETAIL**

New retail development opportunities are possible. The key is to provide large sized sites (minimum 20 to 30 acres), which have regional visibility and accessibility, preferably from a freeway. In this manner, the City will be able to respond to developers and chain stores pursuing a market penetration strategy. Additional retail opportunities can also be further encouraged by working with large tenant holders.

Carson has the opportunity to generate sales tax revenues and capture additional sales of apparel, restaurants, movie theaters and grocery food stores. Local demand for these goods is leaking to surrounding cities, especially Torrance and Long Beach. Carson should consider proactively encouraging the development of retail projects, especially at new locations and existing centers that appear to be underutilized to meet the needs of current residents and workers.

## **4.0 PLANNING ISSUES, GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The acronyms listed below are used for the implementation measures:

RA/D: Responsible Agency/Division  
FS: Funding Source  
TF: Time Frame



**ISSUE: CARSON IS NOT CAPTURING THE POTENTIAL RESIDENT DEMAND WITHIN THE CITY**

*Citizens have expressed a desire to have a greater variety of commercial uses in Carson, including quality retail, restaurants and commercial recreation uses. Enhancing the physical image and services offered within the City, as well as encouraging job and housing opportunities, can lead to an improvement in the quality of life.*

**Goal:** ED-1: Strengthen existing City services and support systems.

**Policies:** ED-1.1 Evaluate existing City services and programs to determine whether they are adequately meeting the needs of residents.

ED-1.2 Encourage the development of quality housing.

ED-1.3 Promote the development of cultural activities and events.

ED-1.4 Strengthen the physical image of Carson through visual enhancement along freeway corridors, major traffic routes, and areas adjoining residential neighborhoods. To this end:

- Aggressively pursue code enforcement activities;
- Develop good design standards; and
- Establish a City identity.

ED-1.5 Enhance the City’s website to include more extensive economic development information and interactive tools to promote and evaluate properties, development, and other business opportunities in Carson.

ED-1.6 Provide appropriate infrastructure to support economic development.

**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-1.1 Require each City division to review its programs for conformity with the goals and policies of the General Plan. *(Implements Policies ED-1.1, ED-1.2, ED-1.3, ED-1.6)*

**RA/D:** All Agencies and Divisions

**FS:** General Fund

**TF:** Annually

ED-IM-1.2 Require each City division to prioritize and schedule the appropriate implementation measures included in the General Plan. *(Implements Policies ED-1.1, ED-1.2, ED-1.3, ED-1.6)*



**RA/D:** All Agencies and Divisions  
**FS:** General Fund  
**TF:** Annually

ED-IM-1.3 Develop design standards and guidelines and special plans for targeted areas, such as Carson Street, Automobile Row, and others. *(Implements Policy ED-1.4)*

**RA/D:** Planning, Economic Development  
**FS:** General Fund  
**TF:** 2002-2003

ED-IM-1.4 Develop economic development materials to be included on the City's website. *(Implements Policy ED-1.5)*

**RA/D:** Economic Development  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2003-2004

**Goal:** ED-2: Encourage a variety of commercial activities to enhance and retain shopping opportunities to serve the population and increase sales tax revenues.

**Policies:** ED-2.1 Pursue categories of resident retail demand which are not being met within the City. To this end, initiate strategies to market, attract, and retain targeted types of retail commercial uses, including expanded use of the City's website.

ED-2.2 Continue to enhance the City's public relations/marketing program to improve communications through the business community and the City.

ED-2.3 Provide rehabilitation assistance in targeted commercial districts to enable the upgrade of commercial properties.

**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-2.1 Annually monitor, in the Annual Report on the General Plan, the extent and location of development and changes occurring within the City, in order to measure the degree to which needed balance between land uses allocated in the General Plan is maintained. *(Implements Policy ED-2.1)*

**RA/D:** Planning  
**FS:** General Fund  
**TF:** Annually



ED-IM-2.2      Annually evaluate and target underutilized and/or older centers and develop strategies with the owners and tenants to revitalize these areas. *(Implements Policy ED-2.3)*

**RA/D:**    Redevelopment, Housing and Neighborhoods  
**FS:**      Redevelopment, Community Development Block Grant  
**TF:**      2004-2005 and Annually

ED-IM-2.3      Focus on upgrading older centers in order to encourage new or expanding businesses to relocate to these areas. *(Implements Policy ED-2.3)*

**RA/D:**    Redevelopment, Business Development  
**FS:**      Redevelopment, Community Development Block Grant  
**TF:**      2004-2005

ED-IM-2.4      Encourage the concentration of commercial clusters which can create “agglomeration economies” and encourage new and/or expanding businesses into existing vacant space. *(Implements Policy ED-2.1)*

**RA/D:**    Redevelopment, Business Development  
**FS:**      Redevelopment  
**TF:**      2004-2006

**Goal:**        ED-3:      Maximize the City’s market potential, in order to enhance and retain retail opportunities to serve the population, increase City revenues, as well as provide new employment opportunities.

**Policies:**    ED-3.1    Continue to implement, and expand when necessary, strategies to market, attract, and/or retain retail commercial areas. These strategies should, at a minimum, address target areas and the tools necessary to implement such strategies.

ED-3.2      Identify and pursue areas of retail demand leakage.

ED-3.3      Develop a comprehensive economic development program and initiate strategies to retain existing businesses, as well as markets, and attract new office, commercial and industrial activity.

ED-3.4      Continue to maintain, and expand as necessary, the City’s marketing and business retention/attraction program to effectively compete with neighboring cities in attracting and



retaining regional businesses. Said program to include business outreach programs, business assistance programs, business incentives, use of public/private partnerships to promote business relations, and other programs and/or incentives.

- ED-3.5 Identify unique economic opportunities, such as niche markets, that will allow the City to capitalize on the City's location in Southern California, the community's cultural diversity, and the tourism industry in the region.
- ED-3.6 Capitalize on potential physical and market linkages among land uses.
- ED-3.7 Continue to enhance the City's public relations program in order to improve communications through the business community and the City.
- ED-3.8 Maximize secondary industrial activity providing services to existing industrial and commercial establishments in Carson.
- ED-3.9 Leverage public improvements to facilitate economic development.
- ED-3.10 Provide rehabilitation assistance in targeted commercial districts to enable the upgrade of commercial properties.

**Implementation Measures:**

- ED-IM-3.1 Examine the potential to rezone land to accommodate projected market demand for all types of economic activity. *(Implements Policy ED-3.1)*
  - RA/D:** Planning
  - FS:** General Fund
  - TF:** Ongoing
- ED-IM-3.2 Develop strategies to focus development in targeted areas. *(Implements Policy ED-3.1)*
  - RA/D:** Redevelopment
  - FS:** Redevelopment
  - TF:** 2005-2006
- ED-IM-3.3 Actively market large vacant parcels. *(Implements Policy ED-3.1)*
  - RA/D:** Redevelopment
  - FS:** Redevelopment
  - TF:** Ongoing



- ED-IM-3.4 Use redevelopment tools to assemble land, assist development and provide for on-going area improvement. *(Implements Policy ED-3.3)*
- RA/D:** Redevelopment  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** Ongoing
- ED-IM-3.5 Encourage specialty retail development to concentrate in targeted areas of the City to enable “critical mass” thresholds of such uses to be established. *(Implements Policies ED-3.2, ED-3.3)*
- RA/D:** Redevelopment, Business Development  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** Ongoing
- ED-IM-3.6 Periodically evaluate which retail categories are experiencing leakage and approach existing retailers within these categories and encourage their relocation to Carson, especially sit-down restaurants. *(Implements Policy ED-3.2)*
- RA/D:** Business Development, Redevelopment  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2003-2004 and Ongoing
- ED-IM-3.7 Enhance the streamlined permit process. *(Implements Policy ED-3.3)*
- RA/D:** Planning, Engineering, Building and Safety  
**FS:** General Fund  
**TF:** 2002-2003 and Ongoing
- ED-IM-3.8 Encourage support services as part of industrial/commercial development, e.g., child care, convenience shopping, personal services, and restaurants. *(Implements Policy ED-3.8)*
- RA/D:** Planning, Business Development  
**FS:** Application Fees  
**TF:** Ongoing
- ED-IM-3.9 Continue to cooperate with the Chamber of Commerce, economic development groups, and other business associations to retain and attract businesses. *(Implements Policies ED-3.4, ED-3.5, ED-3.7)*
- RA/D:** Business Development  
**FS:** General Fund, Redevelopment  
**TF:** Ongoing



ED-IM-3.10 Monitor market information in nearby communities where businesses have relocated, in order to more effectively compete with these communities and retain the current retail, office and industrial firms located in the City. *(Implements Policy ED-3.4)*

**RA/D:** Business Development  
**FS:** General Fund, Redevelopment  
**TF:** Ongoing

ED-IM-3.11 Monitor and respond to inquiries received by the Chamber of Commerce, other business associations and various City departments. *(Implements Policies ED-3.4, ED-3.7)*

**RA/D:** Business Development  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2003-2004 and Ongoing

ED-IM-3.12 Continue to provide informational material to the owners of potential rehabilitation properties identifying the types of assistance available and work with them in the upgrading of their properties. *(Implements Policy ED-3.10)*

**RA/D:** Housing and Neighborhood  
**FS:** CDBG, Other Grants  
**TF:** Ongoing



**ISSUE: POTENTIALLY MISSED REVENUES**

*Carson may not be generating revenues to its full potential. The City should explore options to increase resources.*

**Goal:** ED-4: Maintain and increase net fiscal gains to the City.

**Policies:** ED-4.1 Evaluate existing City services and programs and compare efficiency and net result of providing the programs and services.

ED-4.2 Research and pursue State and Federal grants as well as foundation grants for specific community and capital projects.

ED-4.3 Support public/private efforts and link infrastructure and service costs with development projects.



- ED-4.4 Encourage development opportunities that increase economic gains to the City.
- ED-4.5 Update the inventory of available land and vacant building space and market these sites to the business community.
- ED-4.6 Market the City of Carson through all available and appropriate means.

**Implementation Measures:**

- ED-IM-4.1 Require, when appropriate, fiscal impact analyses from new development. *(Implements Policy ED-4.3)*

**RA/D:** Planning  
**FS:** Environmental Application Fees  
**TF:** Ongoing

- ED-IM-4.2 Monitor the fiscal impact of development activity on an annual basis to determine the optimal phasing of new development, or redevelopment, based on its net positive or negative fiscal impact, where possible. *(Implements Policy ED-4.4)*

**RA/D:** Planning, Redevelopment, City Manager  
**FS:** Application Fees  
**TF:** 2004-2005 and Annually

- ED-IM-4.3 Evaluate alternative revenue sources for the City. *(Implements Policy ED-4.4)*

**RA/D:** City Manager  
**FS:** General Fund  
**TF:** 2004-2005

- ED-IM-4.4 Develop an Economic Five Year Plan, including a variety of economic incentives to generate a balance of projects that will contribute to the local economy. *(Implements Policies ED-4.1, ED-4.4, ED-4.5, ED-4.6)*

**RA/D:** City Manager, Redevelopment  
**FS:** General Fund, Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2004-2005





**ISSUE: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LABOR FORCE**

*There is a need to create more skilled jobs for the citizens of Carson and abate the impact of lost jobs related to the amortization of non-conforming uses. In addition, the labor force in Carson should be appropriately developed through job training programs and business schools.*

**Goal:** ED-5: Creation of employment opportunities and career advancement.

**Policies:** ED-5.1 Understand employment trends and needs of local businesses by linking residents and businesses together through an Employment Resources Program.

ED-5.2 Support a local labor force with training programs to provide skill requirements for current and prospective employers. Cooperate with the University and educational organizations within the City to develop job training programs and training for Carson’s youth.

ED-5.3 Promote opportunities for research and development incubators within the City.

ED-5.4 Encourage local industries and businesses to hire local people.

**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-5.1 Create an Employment Resources Program. *(Implements Policies ED-5.1 and ED-5.2)*

**RA/D:** Employment Development  
**FS:** General Fund, Grants  
**TF:** 2004-2005

ED-IM-5.2 Work with owners of property which would lend itself to development of or conversion to research and development incubator use. *(Implements Policy ED-5.3)*

**RA/D:** Redevelopment, Business Development  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2004-2005

ED-IM-5.3 Request industries and businesses to contact the City’s Job Clearinghouse when recruiting for employees. *(Implements Policy ED-5.4)*

**RA/D:** Planning, Job Clearinghouse  
**FS:** Application Fees  
**TF:** Ongoing





**ISSUE: BUSINESS INCENTIVES**

*The City should not only continue to promote the advantages for businesses in Carson, but also examine the potential to provide financial assistance, expedited permit processing, as well as incentives for new businesses to move into Carson.*

**Goal:** ED-6: Promote and assist and provide incentives for the growth and vitality of existing businesses.

**Policies:** ED-6.1 Assess the needs, limitations, and concerns of existing businesses and develop or enhance programs to increase their competitiveness.

ED-6.2 Educate both the residential and business communities in the advantages of shopping within the City limits and supporting local businesses.

ED-6.3 Continue to facilitate the process of operating a business within Carson through:

- A business database;
- Employment Center; and
- Streamlining and expediting the permit process.

ED-6.4 Monitor the conditions and status of dated shopping centers and smaller, underutilized commercially-zoned parcels.

ED-6.5 Provide assistance to local businesses with building improvement programs and enhance and expand these programs.

ED-6.6 Provide technical assistance to small businesses and coordinate with outside business organizations to support the specific needs of small business.

**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-6.1 Develop a program to increase competitiveness which includes:

- “Buy in Carson” business-to-business directory;
- Links from the City’s website to Carson business web sites;
- Business Visitation Program;
- Annual Business Awards Program;
- Technical Assistance Program; and
- Building Rehabilitation Program.  
*(Implements Policies ED-6.1)*



**RA/D:** Business Development  
**FS:** Redevelopment, General Fund  
**TF:** 2004-2006

ED-IM-6.2 Continue to promote and enhance the “Buy in Carson” program. *(Implements Policy ED-6.2)*

**RA/D:** Business Development  
**FS:** General Fund  
**TF:** Ongoing

ED-IM-6.3 Address the concerns of existing businesses by:

- Providing a welcome packet to new businesses;
- Promoting marketing workshops;
- Developing marketing letters;
- Promoting small business assistance programs; and
- Improving communications lines between business and City officials on issues of concern.

*(Implements Policies ED-6.3, ED-6.4, ED-6.5, ED-6.6)*

**RA/D:** Business Development  
**FS:** General Fund  
**TF:** 2003-2005

**Goal:** ED-7: Attract new wealth and job-creating businesses to Carson.

**Policies:** ED-7.1 Encourage the diversification of land uses, while not alienating existing businesses or industries requiring space in Carson.

ED-7.2 Improve the actual and perceived image of the City through improved design standards, amenities, security, continuing public improvements and positive advertising campaigns.

**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-7.1 Develop improved amenities and standards, including:

- Provide parking improvements in strip retail centers;
- Encourage the development of services to support the industrial and commercial office base; and
- Create specialized districts and nodes.

*(Implements Policy ED-7.2)*

**RA/D:** Planning, Business Development  
**FS:** General Fund, Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2005-2006





**ISSUE: COORDINATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE REGION**

*To provide economies of scale and enhance economic development opportunities, the City should coordinate economic development activities with State and regional agency efforts.*

**Goal:** ED-8: Coordinate economic development within the region to enhance opportunities.

**Policies:** ED-8.1 Identify State and regional agencies conducting economic development activities.

ED-8.2 Coordinate activities with State and regional agency efforts.

**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-8.1 Develop a program to link the City with the appropriate State and regional activities. *(Implements Policies ED-8.1, ED-8.2)*

**RA/D:** Redevelopment, Business Development

**FS:** Redevelopment

**TF:** 2004-2005



**ISSUE: ATTRACTION OF NICHE INDUSTRIES AND/OR BUSINESSES**

*The City should focus on the attraction of specialized businesses and industries to Carson. Such industries and businesses may include the motion picture industry, banking, regional tourism, as well as other unique or niche industries and businesses. To this end, the City should promote available land and facilities within Carson to demonstrate the City's desirability.*

**Goal:** ED-9: Attract specialized businesses and industries to Carson to provide diversity in the City's economic base.

**Policies:** ED-9.1 Identify target or niche industries or companies that would be suitable for Carson and that are looking for large areas of space, to diversify the City's economic base.

ED-9.2 Understand the needs, limitations, and concerns of targeted industries and companies. Develop programs to attract them to Carson in order to effectively compete with neighboring cities. To this end, develop and maintain a comprehensive database program and marketing program for the City.



**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-9.1 Use broker contacts, relationships in the business community and regional organizations, as well as a community survey to help identify target industries. Evaluate the business and other license requirements for the identified target businesses and revise, if appropriate. *(Implements Policies ED-9.1, ED-9.2, ED-9.3)*

**RA/D:** Business Development, Redevelopment  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2002-2004



**ISSUE: DEVELOPMENT OF A “SIGNATURE PROJECT”**

*It is important to develop a focal point within the community. This may include a “Main Street” along the Carson Street Corridor or a “Signature Project” along the I-405 Freeway. Quality retail and restaurant uses, as well as entertainment uses such as movie theaters, performing arts center, or other commercial recreational uses would locate in such an area.*

**Goal:** ED-10: Develop one or more “Signature Projects” to create focal points and identity for the City.

**Policies:** ED-10.1 Determine the type of facilities/uses the community would like to see in a “Signature Project.”

ED-10.2 Encourage development of desired uses such as quality retail, restaurant uses, and entertainment in targeted areas.

ED-10.3 Consider offering public incentives to promote the development of a project.

**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-10.1 Evaluate all potential “Signature Projects” and assess the feasibility and timing of each. Prioritize potential projects and determine which ranks first for implementation. *(Implements Policy ED-10.1)*

**RA/D:** Redevelopment, Planning  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2002-2004

ED-IM-10.2 Develop plans for one or more “Signature Projects,” including land uses, public and private improvements,



incentives, and funding. *(Implements Policies ED-10.2 and ED-10.3)*

**RA/D:** Redevelopment, Planning  
**FS:** Redevelopment  
**TF:** 2002-2004



**ISSUE: REUSE OF “BROWNFIELDS”**

*The City has large expanses of underutilized and vacant lands. However, most of these lands consist of brownfields and require remediation before development can occur. The City has great potential for increased revenues to the City by actively encouraging cleanup and making land available for redevelopment.*

**Goal:** ED-11: Adaptive reuse and redevelopment of “brownfields”.

- Policies:**
- ED-11.1 Encourage the redevelopment and cleanup of underutilized and contaminated land.
  - ED-11.2 Maintain proper infrastructure levels and flexible financing options to encourage redevelopment.
  - ED-11.3 Understand and promote available land inventory and initiate strategies to develop balanced land use planning.
  - ED-11.4 Encourage development of compatible uses and phase out non-conforming uses.
  - ED-11.5 Consider forming an assessment district to include brownfields and landfills which would address methane collection systems and monitoring of groundwater.

**Implementation Measures:**

ED-IM-11.1 Identify all current State and Federal funding programs for remediation, to perform studies and remediate contaminated sites. *(Implements Policy ED-11.1)*

**RA/D:** Redevelopment  
**FS:** Redevelopment, Federal Grants  
**TF:** 2002-2003

ED-IM-11.2 Contact remediation experts and developers to assist in these redevelopment efforts. *(Implements Policy ED-11.1)*



**RA/D:** Redevelopment  
**FS:** Redevelopment, Federal Grants  
**TF:** 2002-2003

ED-IM-11.2 Develop a Land/Building Inventory Program as well as a Brownfields Redevelopment Program. (*Implements Policy ED-11.3*)

**RA/D:** Redevelopment  
**FS:** Redevelopment, Federal Grants  
**TF:** 2002-2004

ED-IM-11.3 Expand the Problem Areas Study of the General Plan effort to assist with the phasing out of nonconforming uses. (*Implements Policy ED-11.4*)

**RA/D:** Planning  
**FS:** General Fund  
**TF:** 2003-2005

ED-IM-11.4 Research the feasibility of forming a brownfields assessment district. (*Implements Policy ED-11.5*)

**RA/D:** Redevelopment, Engineering  
**FS:** Redevelopment, General Fund  
**TF:** 2004-2005

