



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

January 5, 2012

TO: Pat Modugno, Chair
Curt Pedersen, Vice Chair
Esther L. Valadez, Commissioner
David W. Louie, Commissioner
Harold V. Helsley, Commissioner

FROM: Carmen Sainz, Supervising Regional Planner
Community Studies East Section

**SUBJECT: PROJECT NO. R2010-01687-(2)
ADVANCE PLANNING CASE NO. 201000015
FLORENCE-FIRESTONE COMMUNITY PLAN DISCUSSION ITEM
AGENDA ITEM NO. 6, JANUARY 18, 2012**

BACKGROUND

In 2008 the Zoning Enforcement West Section was awarded a Compass Blueprint Demonstration project grant from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to develop a vision plan for the unincorporated community of Florence-Firestone. The purpose of the Florence-Firestone Vision Plan was to identify broad, long-term local goals for the community. A summary of the Vision Plan was presented to your Commission on May 26, 2009. The Vision Plan recommended that a Community Plan and additional technical studies be prepared for Florence-Firestone.

In 2010 the Community Studies East Section obtained a subsequent Compass Blueprint grant to complete the recommended technical studies, as well as a Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning grant to conduct community outreach and develop the Community Plan. A summary of the technical studies and the Florence-Firestone Parks and Recreation Plan was presented to your Commission on January 26, 2011. Community outreach was completed in May 2011, County agencies reviewed and commented on early draft components in summer 2011, and a Preliminary Draft Community Plan was completed in January 2012.

LOCATION

Florence-Firestone is an unincorporated community of 3.6 square miles located approximately 6 miles south of Downtown Los Angeles. Comprised mainly of single-family residential neighborhoods, the community was home to an estimated 63,000

people in 2010 (US Census). The community is surrounded on the north, south, and west by the City of Los Angeles, and on the east by the Cities of Huntington Park and South Gate and the unincorporated community of Walnut Park.

COMMUNITY PLAN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Public participation is at the heart of the community planning process. Outreach for the Florence-Firestone Community Plan sought to engage community residents and stakeholders at every opportunity, to ensure that the plan addresses their needs today and into the future. Community workshops built on the extensive outreach already conducted in the community for the preparation of the Vision Plan, technical studies, and Draft Parks and Recreation Plan.

The Community Plan public participation process included four community-wide workshops and one youth-focused outreach event. The workshop dates and topics were:

- **Workshop 1: Kickoff (1/29/11).** Presentation of findings from technical reports, introduction to the Community Plan purpose and content, development of Plan outline.
- **Workshop 2: From Vision to Action (2/26/11).** Translating the Vision Plan into goals and policies for the Community Plan, prioritizing goals and policies.
- **Workshop 3: Mapping Your Plan (3/26/11).** Explanation of land use and zoning, including how they implement the vision, goals, and policies, and an interactive mapping exercise to develop land use scenarios.
- **Workshop 4: Previewing Your Plan (4/30/11).** Presentation of draft poster plan, land use and zoning maps, and critique of the draft Plan components.
- **Youth Outreach Event (5/27/11).** Interactive exercise with elementary school students to identify wishes for the future of the community.

The workshops were announced with a postcard mailer to every household and property owner in the community (11,761 total) at the initiation of the public participation phase, and subsequent e-mail blasts and mailers for each workshop. The number of participants ranged from 20-40. All workshops were held on Saturday mornings at a central and neutral location within the community - the recently remodeled Florence-Firestone Service Center. All workshops were conducted simultaneously in English and Spanish and included refreshments and activities for children.

All workshops followed a similar structure that included a staff presentation, interactive group exercise, and opportunity for participants to report on their group work. The first workshop was an orientation to the community plan and update on work completed to date. Participants identified the main issues they thought needed to be addressed to achieve the community vision. The main issues identified were used as "elements" to organize work on goals and policies done at the second workshop. There, participants identified the most important goals and policies for each element, or issue area. At the

third workshop, participants translated their vision, goals, and policies into a land use map. They evaluated each type of land use in the community and provided constructive comments and critiques on the first draft land use map prepared by the Department of Regional Planning. Staff presented a draft poster plan that summarized all the input received to date at the fourth community workshop. Participants refined and revised the draft, and their edits were incorporated into the final poster plan (Attachment A: Poster Plan). At the youth outreach event, staff worked with students at Graham Elementary to identify wishes for the future through a drawing exercise. All workshop materials, including presentations, summaries, and photos were posted on the project website after the workshop to facilitate a transparent and inclusive process.

Specific input was obtained at each community outreach event that helped form the content of the Plan. Participants identified their most important issues, which became the Plan's chapters, or "elements." They edited and refined the goals and policies. Participants critiqued and corrected the draft land use map. Finally, they reviewed the draft poster plan to ensure it accurately reflected their input.

PRELIMINARY DRAFT COMMUNITY PLAN

The Preliminary Draft Community Plan was developed through an iterative process with community and County agency stakeholders. Draft components of the Plan, including the elements, goals and policies, and land use map were refined through the community workshops. These components were also presented to County agencies and Department of Regional Planning Staff members at an inter-agency summit in July 2011. Staff worked with these stakeholders to identify and address any issues and to refine the Plan accordingly. The Preliminary Draft Community Plan is the result of this collaborative and iterative process.

The Preliminary Draft Community Plan includes five chapters (Attachment B: Preliminary Draft Community Plan). Chapter 1 introduces the community, the plan and the community's vision statement. Chapter 2 includes the Community Plan goals and policies, which are organized into "elements" or priority issue areas. The elements of the Community Plan are: land use, community design and maintenance, community services and facilities, economic development, health and safety, housing, mobility, and open space and recreation. Chapter 3 contains implementation actions and programs, including target timeframes and priorities. Chapter 4 includes a conclusion followed by Chapter 5, which contains a glossary of planning-related terms used in the Community Plan.

In addition to the goals, policies, and implementation strategies, the Preliminary Draft Florence-Firestone Community Plan includes a series of maps and other tools to aid implementation and clarify policy language. The Preliminary Draft Plan maps depict the community context, land use policy, land use overlays, station area improvement recommendations, and potential opportunities. Other tools in the Preliminary Draft Plan are the design principles, and implementation strategies. Combined, these figures and

tables help to illustrate the Preliminary Draft Plan's goals and policies. They are intended to aid in implementation and to guide future project review and programming to best achieve the community's vision.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

The Preliminary Draft Community Plan is the result of extensive community engagement and a collaborative and iterative process. The Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning grant enabled the successful completion of community workshops and preparation of the Preliminary Draft Plan. The remaining milestones to complete the project are:

- Fall 2012: Complete environmental review and the zoning consistency analysis and recommendations. Release Preliminary Draft Community Plan and related documents for public review.
- Fall 2012: Hold public workshops and meetings to obtain input on Preliminary Draft Plan.
- Winter 2012: Initiate public hearings before Regional Planning Commission.

The above timeline may be adjusted based on the results of environmental analysis.

Attached please find a copy of the Florence-Firestone Community Poster Plan and Preliminary Draft Plan. For additional project materials, please visit <http://planning.lacounty.gov/ffvp>. Should you have any questions, please contact Veronica Siranosian, AICP, LEED GA at commplan@planning.lacounty.gov or (213) 974-6425 between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Our offices are closed on Friday.

CS:VS

CC: Richard J. Bruckner, Director
Jon Sanabria, Deputy Director

Attachments:

- A. Florence-Firestone Community Poster Plan
- B. Preliminary Draft Florence-Firestone Community Plan