Florence-Firestone Community Plan
Industrial Preservation Zoning
Florence-Firestone/Walnut Park
Chamber of Commerce
April 22, 2014

MEETING OBJECTIVE

For the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) to engage the Florence-Firestone/Walnut Park Chamber of Commerce on the Florence-Firestone Community Plan (Draft Plan) and the Employment Protection District (EPD) and Industrial Preservation (IP) combining zone proposed in the General Plan 2035 update.

MEETING DESCRIPTION

On the morning of Tuesday, April 22, 2014, a meeting was conducted at the headquarters of the Florence-Firestone/Walnut Park Chamber of Commerce (Chamber). The Chamber previously submitted a comment letter on May 20, 2012 that: 1) asked for clarification on the proposed EPD, 2) expressed a need to protect industrial business along Alameda Street, and 3) emphasized the benefit of developing more business-friendly environment in the community. The purpose of meeting was to initiate a dialogue and gather feedback on the proposed EPD and IP zone overlay for Florence-Firestone and potential adoption as part of the General Plan and Draft Plan. Attendees included: Supervising Regional Planner Carmen Sainz and Draft Plan project manager Jonathan P. Bell from Community Studies East, Mr. Efren Martinez, Executive Director of the Chamber, and Mr. Marty Cohen, President of the Chamber. During the two-hour meeting, staff and Chamber members discussed the Draft Plan, Florence-Firestone Community Standards District update, General Plan 2035 update, the General Plan's proposed EPD and IP combining zones, and potential impacts of these initiatives on the community.

MEETING SUMMARY

The event was conducted in the Chamber's board room. Staff prepared an agenda outlining the discussion items. Maps were provided showing the proposed EPD and IP-zoned area on Alameda Street. Staff provided Mr. Martinez and Mr. Cohen a packet that included the proposed IP combining zone text, existing M-1 and M-2 zoning codes, the existing Florence-Firestone Community Standards District zoning code, and a copy of the General Plan section's notice that was mailed to industrial property owners regarding proposed rezoning for the General Plan update. One day before the meeting, staff emailed the Chamber the following links from the General Plan website:

Proposed IP combining zone: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_zoning_IP-zone_20140430_draft.pdf

Industrial Land Analysis (AKA Appendix J in draft General Plan 2035 update) by Los Angeles County Economic Development Commission/Community Development Commission that proposed EPDs in the County: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_2035_Appendices_J_2014.pdf

Proposed industrial zoning clean-up:
http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_zoning_industrial-zones_20140127_draft.pdf

Per the Chamber's request, staff also provided Zoning Enforcement and Yard Sale enforcement flyers (English and Spanish) for distribution to stakeholders.

Staff's discussion items followed the prepared agenda. Chamber representatives and staff had a productive dialogue regarding the General Plan, Draft Plan, proposed IP zone, how IP zones work, and potential pros and cons of IP zoning. The conversation centered on potential policy and code application in Florence-Firestone. Much of the discussion also covered the "permit hurdles" associated with Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) for industrial businesses on Alameda Street. In expressing their concerns, Chamber representatives said they spoke for 99% of businesses on Alameda Street in Florence-Firestone. Chamber representatives provided analysis of the state of the local industrial economy. The concluding Q&A session produced important questions and proposed solutions by the Chamber.

Summary of the Chamber's comments, questions, and analysis:

- **Chamber:** Regarding EPDs and the importance of maintaining a traditional manufacturing base: industrial uses are important because they offer community members stable careers including full-time jobs, steady work, and pay exceeding the minimum wage.

- **Chamber:** Although they are a solid base of employment, industrial businesses are being driven out of the community by increasing local taxes and redevelopment efforts.

- **Chamber:** From a property owner's perspective, industrial business adjacent to residential uses has killed the market value of the property. It is a "joke" that CUPs are required to operate industrial uses.

- **Chamber:** What are you giving us with an IP zone? More limits to land and business owners. IP zoning contributes to the feeling that industrial business is not wanted here. The County needs to facilitate business, not restrict business.

- **Chamber:** If the County is saying "we want to ensure the future of your industrial business," then we need to see fair enforcement and consistency in the application of standards for industrial businesses.

- **Chamber:** Many legal nonconforming uses on Alameda Street would be negatively impacted by the IP zone. It appears that some would have to alter or shut down their operations to comply.

- **Chamber:** The County's message should be, "We want you to stay here!"

- **Chamber:** In its current form, the IP zone tells businesses "what you can't do."

- **Chamber:** We speak for 99% of businesses on Alameda Street. The majority would reject the IP zone because it is designed to tell them what they <u>cannot</u> do with their business.

- **Chamber:** Would the IP zone change the CUP process for industrial uses?
  DRP Staff: No. That is not the intent of IP zoning.

- **Chamber:** The CUP process should be overhauled as it creates an unfavorable "permit hurdle" for industrial businesses.

- **Chamber:** Can the CUP requirement be removed for industrial business along Alameda Street?
  DRP Staff: Staff can look into updating the CSD to allow, for example, a Director's Review (Discretionary Site Plan Review in Zoning Ordinance Technical Update) instead of a CUP for certain industrial uses.

- **Chamber:** We heard about the Director's Review option from DRP two years ago. We would like to see this explored. We would like DRP to tell us how they will help us.

Chamber's proposed solutions:

1. Protect industrial uses by reducing the "permit hurdle" for industrial business along Alameda Street. Look into updating the CSD to reduce the permit hurdle and make permits less expensive.

2. Update the CSD to grant industrial uses more than the current 10-year grant term. Look into allowing 30-year grant terms, or no expiration of the CUP.

NEXT STEPS

- Provide Chamber's comments to General Plan and Ordinance Studies sections working on proposed EPD and IP combining zone
- Incorporate feedback into the Draft Plan
- Maintain dialog on proposed IP zone and EPD

FF/WP Chamber of Commerce
2156 E. Florence Avenue, 2nd Floor, Walnut Park
Tuesday, April 22, 2014 @ 11 am – 1 pm

10:50 am **Arrive early to display maps and distribute materials (copies of the draft IP zones)**

11:00 – 11:05 am **Introduction**

11:05 – 11:10 am **FFCP Program (FFCP, CSD Update, Zone Changes & Neg. Decl.) – Carmen**

11:10 – 11:20 am **Background on "Employment Protection Districts" – Jonathan/Carmen**

- General Plan 2035 – long-range policy document guiding growth in the County through 2035 – ongoing now, taking to commission this year.
- FFCP – long-range policy document guiding growth in FF – ongoing now, taking to commission in 2015.
  - Preserving industrial uses are important policy goals within these plans. Goal is to preserve economic vitality of the County.
- 2008 study by LA EDC /CDC recommended preservation of:
  - "Employment rich" industrially zoned properties throughout the County.
  - Strong and viable traditional manufacturing base.
  - Idea is to prevent conversion to non-manufacturing uses thru a designation.
  - Study called these "**Employment Protection Districts**: These areas represent economically viable industrial and employment-rich lands, where industrial zoning and industrial land use designations should remain, and where policies to protect industrial land from non-industrial uses should be enforced."
  - Study findings are incorporated into the DRAFT general plan in Appendix J. Source: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_2035_Appendices_J_2014.pdf

- Florence-Firestone is one of many UIA with potential for EPD preservation.
- Major focus area is industrially zoned properties along Alameda Corridor. 2008 study recommend EPD for this area.

11:20 – 11:30 am **Industrial Preservation zones – Jonathan/Carmen**

- EPD is the land use overlay in General Plan update (policy level).
- Implementation would be thru new IP designation added onto the base manufacturing zones (zoning code level).
- For FF Alameda Corridor, we have M-1 and M-2.

*See: http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_zoning_IP-zone_20140127_draft.pdf

11:30 – 11:40 am **How it works – Jonathan/Carmen**

- Industrial Preservation (-IP) designation would be combined with base zoning M-1 or M-2. For example: M-1-IP.
- IP zone is mapped on to selected industrial parcels in the employment-rich corridor.
- IP designation will prohibit certain non-industrial uses – uses other otherwise allowed in industrial zones without the IP designation.
- Examples

11:40 – 11:50 am **Pros and Cons of IP zone – Jonathan/Carmen**

Pros

- Preserves the existing major job center on Alameda for FF.
- Preserves traditional manufacturing job base in FF.
- Preserves existing permitted industrial uses on Alameda.
- Preserving industrial uses solidifies Alameda's future as an industrial corridor.

Cons

- Prohibits new non-industrial businesses along Alameda.
- Restricts job base to industrial-only for M-zoned properties on Alameda.
- No variances available. Would have to do zone change and plan amendment for non-industrial uses.
- Prohibits non-industrial uses on Alameda that would be otherwise allowed in other industrial areas in FF. For example: Slauson, Compton Av, Hooper.

11:50 – 11:55 am **Next Steps - Carmen**

11:55 am – 12 pm **Questions – Carmen**

FF/WP Chamber of Commerce
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Sign-in Sheet

Name	Organization	Email	Phone Number
Carmen Sainz	Regional Planning	csainz@planning.lacounty.gov	213-974-6425
Jonathan Bell	Regional Planning	jpbell@planning.lacounty.gov	213-974-6425
Efren Martinez	Chamber of Commerce		
Marty Cohen	Chamber of Commerce		

Talking points for EPD / IP zone meeting at Florence-Firestone/Walnut Park Chamber of Commerce – April 22, 2014

1. Background on Employment Protection Districts

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- FFCP – long-range policy document guiding growth in Florence-Firestone – ongoing now, taking to commission in 2015.
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- 2008 study by L.A. EDC /CDC recommended preservation of:
  - "Employment rich" industrially zoned properties throughout the County.
  - Strong and viable traditional manufacturing base.
  - How? Idea is to prevent conversion to non-manufacturing uses through a designation.
  - Study called these "**Employment Protection Districts**: These areas represent economically viable industrial and employment-rich lands, where industrial zoning and industrial land use designations should remain, and where policies to protect industrial land from non-industrial uses should be enforced."
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- Florence-Firestone is one of many UIA with potential for EPD preservation.
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2. Industrial Preservation zones

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3. How it works

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4. Pros and Cons of IP zone

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- Preserves traditional manufacturing job base in Florence-Firestone.
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- Prohibits non-industrial uses on Alameda Street that would be otherwise allowed in other industrial areas in Florence-Firestone. For example: Slauson Av, Compton Av, Hooper St.