



## The Proposed Massive Commercial Upzoning of the Redondo Beach Harbor : Development Built on Myths

Spring 2008

The City of Redondo has proposed Rezoning the Redondo and Pier area for over 750,000 Sq ft of commercial space. In comparison, the El Segundo Plaza at Rosecrans Av and PCH is roughly 360,000 Sq ft of commercial space. As concerned Redondo residents, BBR cannot not support this level of development without a public vote, and furthermore, we believe the City is promoting this costly plan without environmental, traffic or economic studies which would make this level of large-scale development on our waterfront a success.

BBR has asked the City why it is not proceeding with a plan using current environmental impact studies and we have challenged City Council and Staff to support their case for this size development with accurate facts and statements. So far what we are hearing at Council and Planning Meetings and from City Staff sound like facts which are at best inaccurate and at worst a misrepresentation of the situation.

### The top two myths and...

... analysis the City is using to justify it's plan for massive commercial development in the Redondo Harbor and Pier Area are:

1. **MYTH #1: We do not need a new Environmental Study (EIR) to drastically develop the Harborfront - we can use the old Heart of the City study.**
2. **MYTH #2: Massive upzoning and is required to attract investment.**

### The real facts about myth #1

The City says that they do not need a new Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to move forward with developing the Harbor. They support using the same Environmental Study used for the Heart of the City Development. They say that it accurately reflects the worst case impacts. The City has already produced an Initial Environment Study for this new

harbor development that relied in totality on impact analyses from the Heart of the City EIR. They do not see a problem with it. We cannot disagree more.

**fact:** **The Old Heart of the City EIR did not evaluate zoning of this intensity and concentration being proposed by the City.** They are proposing 750,000 sq ft for the Harbor and Pier areas. The Heart of the City EIR analyzed about 3000 residential units and 650,000 square feet of commercial development in various locations.

**fact:** **The Old Heart EIR had commercial development in various areas of South Redondo...** including Catalina Ave, West of Harbor Drive and the AES Power Plant. They envisioned this area to be anywhere from 28-55 acres of land. The new Harbor Development proposes 750,000 square feet of Commercial property packed into the small area we know as our Harbor-front and Pier. What does that look like? It's almost two Plaza El Segundo's of ADDITIONAL development. This is all Upzoning on top of our current zoning!

To give you an idea of perspective, The Cheesecake Factory is about 22,000 square feet. So this impact report would permit the city to pack in 34 new Cheesecake Factory size buildings into the harbor area on top of whatever current zoning already allows!!

**fact:** The Old Heart EIR included new road extensions to alleviate traffic congestion. (The Heart plan went from Herondo to the southern end of the harbor including the Catalina Corridor, the AES Power Plant site and Edison Right of Way, and the harbor area west of Harbor Drive. The Heart of the City Specific Plan included new east-west extensions of Broadway, Gertruda, Elena and Francisca.) The current Harbor Proposal is all concentrated west of Harbor Drive. No new roads will be extended - that we know about.

The old HOC EIR did evaluate a "Waterfront Only Alternative." The name is somewhat of a misnomer. While it did include increased development west of Harbor Drive, it also included development on the AES property and Edison Right of Way. Even with being more spread out than the current proposal, the evaluation commented that the concentration of development could cause worse traffic congestion than the Heart of the City Specific Plan.

**Bottom Line: We need a new EIR specific to the Harbor and Pier areas to determine the true impacts.** By using the old Heart of the City Environment Study, the City cannot produce an impact analysis of anything that will remotely resemble the proposed massive zoning for the Redondo harbor-front and pier areas.

*(Sources: IES-003, HOC EIR, HOC Specific Plan, HOC Herald, City response to California Public Records Request).*

Another important reason we should not be using the HOC EIR for the new Harbor Development Proposal is that fact that the Heart of the City EIR is flawed.

**fact:** The Heart of the City EIR is full of blatant inaccuracies. In fact, the Heart of the City EIR so understated impacts that the City of Hermosa filed a lawsuit against the City of Redondo for signing such a flawed document. That lawsuit was only dropped after the Heart of the City was stopped. Just a few tidbits as examples:

Example 1: **Blatant understatement of vehicle trips:** The HOC EIR states that 2,998 residential units with over 6,600 new residents would generate only 868 morning rush hour trips. Industry standard trip generation tables published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers predict 1,319 morning peak hour trips. This is a 34% underprediction of traffic. Other predictions of trip generation are similarly understated.

Example 2: **Blatant miscalculation of intersection impacts and traffic:** Traffic engineers designate the flow of traffic through an intersection as a Level of Service (LOS) graded from A to F. LOS E represents an intersection at its capacity. LOS F represents an intersection that is oversaturated and takes several signal changes to move traffic through it.

Three studies, endorsed by the City's Staff, all agree that the intersection of PCH and Torrance is near its capacity. An independent analysis by BBR arrived at the same LOS grades as did these studies. The Heart of the City EIR inaccurately shows that this intersection has plenty of excess capacity. The same errors in calculation were used on every signalized intersection analyzed in the HOC EIR.

To add insult to injury, the HOC EIR makes the stunning prediction that traffic conditions at PCH/Torrance will be at an LOS C in the year 2020 with the entire HOC development fully built out and the cumulative additions of surrounding development. It is obvious from the other reports that this is a misrepresentation and under-prediction of future conditions.

It is clear that the level of Upzoning proposed for our harbor would impact this critical Redondo intersection, and affect traffic in Redondo for miles, causing gridlock and more vehicles on our residential streets.

**The people of Redondo need a City Council who will provide an accurate analysis of the traffic impacts of the proposed rezoning, not only at this intersection, but on all impacted intersections and in our neighborhoods as well.**

*(Sources: IES-003, HOC EIR, ITE Trip Generation 7th Edition, 2004 LA County Congestion Management Plan, Katz and Ikitsu Traffic Analysis of Torrance Blvd Rezoning, Febr and Peers brief to Growth Management and Traffic Committee.)*

BBR has ongoing communication with Redondo City Council and Staff and we have highlighted these flaws and many more in using the Heart of the City EIR. The Redondo City Council and Staff continues to push forward an impact study (IES-003) that says the Heart of the City EIR adequately addresses all potential impacts of the proposed rezoning for the Harbor and Pier areas.

## The real facts about myth #2:

The Redondo City Staff have testified that drastic upzoning is required to attract investment to our harbor. This is not supported by any analysis or evidence. When BBR submitted a records request for any fiscal analysis used to draw staff's conclusions, the City responded that it was relying on the expertise of the Planning staff.

**fact:** A study by the City's consultant Kosmont and Associates stated that some of leaseholds are currently at their highest and best use. This study recommended working to attract key Class A tenets to certain leaseholds that are already conducive to attracting this class of business. Attracting these key tenets would then result in attracting others businesses and investment to revitalize the harbor and pier over time. The study did not recommend a massive zoning change. Studies and actual investment examples contradict staff's position. City staff is ignoring the results of its own study on how to attract investment to our harbor.

**fact:** Evidence of recent investment. Staff would have you believe that investment in the pier and harbor has not happened in decades. Yet Kinkaid's, a successful pier restaurant was built without major upzoning. Likewise the Portofino Hotel pumped millions in investment to upgrade their hotel and marina facilities. Another Class A restaurant is in discussion with the City to move into a Harbor Leasehold. Another businessman has proposed turning the vacant octagonal building on the pier into an aquarium. All these investment activities happened without the major upzoning defined by the City Planning Staff.

## Comparison Analysis - Another Vision for the Harbor

BBR is not the only group of Redondo citizens who feel that the City's Harbor & Pier proposal is bloated and uses faulty data to craft it's vision for this area.

Long-time resident and financial land analysis specialist, Gary Ohst, took on this challenge and his analysis of the Redondo harbor led to a strikingly different vision than the City's. Gary took existing facility floor space for each leasehold in the harbor, and then overlaid what he felt was reasonable development based on open space in each leasehold. Gary's analysis resulted in the ability to accommodate about 325,000 square feet of additional

commercial development, not the proposed 750,000 sq ft the City wants to pack into our waterfront. Gary's proposal argues that providing business incentives and financial flexibility to attract investment does not mean we have to over-develop our waterfront.

*(Sources: City Response to Public Records Request, Kosmont Study, Gary Obst Analysis)*

## What We Recommend

The City of Redondo's vision for our Harbor and Pier area is a bloated and unrealistic proposal using faulty data. This level of development should go to a public vote, furthermore, the City should not be promoting this costly plan without environmental, traffic or economic studies which would make this level of large-scale development on our waterfront a success.

### Recommendation #1:

The City should provide a more reasonable level of zoning to be established in the City's zoning ordinance and the General Plan to bring these documents into compliance. The zoning for this area is broken and contradictory - it needs to be fixed and only the City Council can do this.

### Recommendation #2:

Provide accurate assessment of the largest rezoning the City has proposed since Heart of the City making the process honest and open to the community. The City's impact analysis is full of inaccuracies and misinformation.

-- **We need a new impact analysis** using accurate information and applying that information correctly to standard, accepted assessment techniques and tools.

-- **We need a new EIR to assess the impacts of that level of development.**

-- **We need to have a City Council willing to hold it's Staff to the highest levels of transparency and accuracy.** BBR finds that City Staff's repeated delay in delivery of public records and information for months at a time, coupled with a general misrepresentations of facts and inaccurate analyses continue to be tolerated by our City Council despite having been brought to their attention numerous times. We appeal to the City Council to take positive action to end these practices.

**After careful analysis, the City should present a proposal based on Community-based priorities as well as Harbor and Pier financial stability, keeping development at a minimum and finally, offer the plan for a public vote.**

## What you can do to help

We can begin by calling or writing our local Redondo elected officials and letting them know what we think about their proposal, highlighting the above recommendations.



District 1 - [steve.aspel@redondo.org](mailto:steve.aspel@redondo.org)

District 2 - [chris.cagle@redondo.org](mailto:chris.cagle@redondo.org)

District 3 - [pat.aust@redondo.org](mailto:pat.aust@redondo.org)

District 4 - [steven.diels@redondo.org](mailto:steven.diels@redondo.org)

District 5 - [matt.kilroy@redondo.org](mailto:matt.kilroy@redondo.org)

Write the local newspapers a letter

Tell your friends and neighbors

Share this information to organizations you participate in

Speak at the Council/Planning Meeting where this will be discussed - Next Mtg: April 8

Join BBR and help us get out the Vote for the Initiative in November! ☒

Building a Better Redondo (BBR) continues to be pro-business and pro-investment in our harbor and pier. As long-time Redondo residents, we have all seen the history of over-development in our town and harbor area, and we are concerned about repeating past failures. We understand that the harbor and pier retail and public areas are critical to the success of the City as a whole and we look forward to working on a community-driven plan which will be based on current and factual environmental impact, traffic analysis and economic studies for this area, before it eventually goes up for a public vote.

Building a Better Redondo is a non-profit all-volunteer Political Action Committee.  
Learn more about us and the Land Use Initiative at: [www.buildingabetterredondo.org](http://www.buildingabetterredondo.org)  
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