

Artesia and Aviation Corridors Area Plan Public Input and Recommendations from General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and Redondo Beach Planning Commission

In addition to the technical land use, parking, and development feasibility analyses conducted to inform the AACAP, the opportunities and recommendations in this Area Plan also build on the work of prior and concurrent planning efforts. Over the years, focused efforts and appointed committees have tackled the discussion about how to prompt activity and promote revitalization along Artesia and Aviation Boulevards. Those efforts included:

- Artesia Vitalization Strategy (2013)
- Artesia-Aviation Revitalization Committee (2018–2019)
- General Plan Update and Advisory Committee (2017–expected completion in 2021)

A review of the findings and recommendations from all these efforts found that several previously-recommended items are still relevant (for example, establishing a Business Improvement District). The AACAP includes many of the common themes seen in these previous efforts. Additionally, the Area Plan identifies any observed obstacles that have prevented previous recommendations from moving forward and includes suggestions to eliminate barriers and to promote prompt implementation.

As a part of the general plan update work program, the City Council authorized the GPAC to provide support and input for the preparation of the Artesia and Aviation Corridors Area Plan to provide more focused policy and placemaking guidance to two of the City's most prominent and traveled corridors. The Draft AACAP document is a result of GPAC's efforts.

The GPAC's preference for the types of uses was a blend of commercial and office uses throughout the AACAP area (no residential or mixed use that also allows residential). However, they felt the existing mixed use could remain and should not be considered nonconforming.

The GPAC carefully considered the findings of the 2017 citywide market study, which identified a need for new and improved office facilities, as well as the 2019 development feasibility study, which concluded that residential development with three or fewer stories was not financially feasible in the near term. Based on these findings, GPAC preferred to allow the area to evolve "organically" over time instead of creating significant changes to (or increases in) the area's development capacity to prompt immediate change. Additionally, GPAC determined that the land use focus of the Corridors should be primarily restaurant and office, with some general retail and service commercial, thus catering to and creating connectivity with the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The GPAC provided additional policy and/or implementation measures focused on:

- A pedestrian-focused environment.

- Not emphasizing or supporting the “commuter” service, i.e. drive throughs.
- A bike lane and multimodal access and facilities along Artesia.
- Enhanced physical connections to the adjacent community, commercial businesses, and nearby residential neighborhoods.
- Alternative streetscape and street section design options.
- Opportunities to create temporary or permanent gathering spaces along the Corridors (streetlet/parklet in part of a cross-street to the Artesia Corridor). Spaces could be tried out temporarily, then permanently installed if they are actively used by the community and funding could be secured to install and maintain.

The Draft AACAP document is a result of GPAC’s efforts, including multiple GPAC meetings specifically designated for developing the AACAP, as well as public meetings and public surveys to present the Area Plan and collect public feedback on the Draft AACAP.

The City’s Planning Commission recently conducted three (3) public meetings/hearings in consideration of the AACAP. The following is brief summary of the each of their meetings and concludes with a list of their recommendations for City Council consideration.

At their July 16, 2020 Virtual Planning Commission Meeting, City Staff made a formal and comprehensive presentation introducing the Draft AACAP to the Planning Commission. Similar to this City Council Administrative Report, the initial Planning Commission Administrative Report included a technical summary of Chapter 3. Placemaking, Chapter 4. Mobility, and Chapter 6. Implementation. City Staff’s comprehensive presentation provided relevant background information summarizing the AACAP’s development process, the historical development patterns and existing land use mix along the “Corridors”, a summary of the multiple technical studies conducted that informed the Area Plan and provided a sense of the rigorous analysis, and a robust public engagement process that has occurred over the past three (3) years in the development of this Draft Area Plan. Following the City Staff presentation, the Planning Commission initiated their discussions, took public testimony, asked questions and provided input, and continued the discussion to a public hearing at their meeting on August 20, 2020.

At their second public hearing on August 20, 2020, City Staff presented a summary of the information provided at their July 16, 2020 public hearing and primarily focused the meeting on addressing issues and questions raised by each of the Planning Commissioners at their prior public meeting. The following is brief summary of the Planning Commission topics raised and the City Staff responses provided at the public hearing on August 20, 2020:

- **Grants**
 - Some general comments regarding opportunities for funding some of the strategies and initiatives included in the AACAP through grants were raised.
 - It was mentioned that there may now be additional grant opportunities related to the current “pandemic”.

City Staff has recently brought in the support of a volunteer intern to research grant opportunities, and application requirements are under review for any opportunities related to the implementation of the AACAP and any of the programs included in the document. Additionally, the City's intern is working with the Waterfront and Economic Development Department (WED), researching opportunities for grants as they relate to the formation and/or support of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). WED Staff was available to provide additional information on this subject.

- **Preferred Uses**

- Some general concern was raised with respect to the use of the term "preferred uses". The indication was that some existing uses that aren't identified as a "preferred use" were not beneficial to support going forward. Additionally, it could be received by some existing businesses as a negative connotation and that the City may not value their contribution to the City.

City Staff requested that the Planning Commission discuss this further, and if there was consensus, City Staff would add some additional language addressing this issue that notes the value of all existing businesses along the Corridors that are permitted. Consensus was not achieved on this concern and therefore the existing language identifies certain uses as "preferred uses" remains in the Draft AACAP.

- **Environment – Sustainability**

- A comment was made noting a desire to specifically add language and/or a program or design guideline that would encourage more "greening" of the Corridors.

City Staff requested that the Planning Commission discuss this further, and if there was consensus, City Staff would add some additional language to address this issue that noted the value of additional green spaces and to identify development incentives for providing additional landscaping and green spaces. Although there was no consensus reached on this specific matter, City Staff cited the Draft AACAP's inclusion of numerous public open space and landscape screening of parking area requirements, and the Planning Commission generally determined these elements were satisfactory in addressing a desire for additional "greening" of the Corridors.

- **Business Improvement District- (BID) – Funding**

- Of the initial topics raised, BIDs and their potential to create opportunities and revitalization along the Corridors garnered the most discussion. Below are some of the ideas/comments.
 - It may be beneficial to segment any future BIDs. Possibly target certain stretches of the Corridors and/or create a separate BID for Aviation vs. Artesia.
 - Why hasn't a BID already been formed for the Corridor(s)?
- Many comments cited the success of the Riviera Village BID and the positive impacts it has achieved.

- Funding of improvements in general, either through a BID or otherwise, is a priority for realizing any changes along the Corridor(s).

Below are excerpts from the AACAP Chapter 5. Funding Mechanisms and Chapter 6. Implementation that were presented to the Planning Commission that specifically address the potential of a Business Improvement District and funding improvements more generally.

Chapter 5. Funding Mechanisms

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a common type of Special Assessment District that assesses business and/or property owners to fund maintenance, marketing, and other public services or improvements. If such a district were to be formed in Redondo Beach along Aviation and/or Artesia, funding could be used to improve the streetscape and pedestrian experience.

By law, assessments in these districts are not taxes for the general benefit of the city, but for improvements, services, and programs that will directly benefit the assessed facilities within the district. A district can be established and an advisory board appointed as long as it is not protested by a majority of property owners.”

Chapter 6. Implementation

Funding Actions	Implementation Action	Potential Funding Source	Timeframe	Responsible Department & Other Partnerships	Relative Cost	Related Strategies
FU.01	Establish a public-facing outreach effort as part of the establishment of each new grant, incentive, or other City-led initiative revitalization to ensure that businesses, property owners, and residents are aware of new opportunities for funding become available to visually enhance existing projects and businesses.	Same source as City-led initiative	Midterm	Waterfront and Economic Development / BID	\$\$	Business Signage, Driveway Access Points, Sidewalks; Storefronts, Open Space

FU.02	Release an annual report documenting progress toward and impediments to achieving the prioritized AACAP action items. Include an evaluation of all City-funded grant and incentive programs launched as part of the AACAP implementation including an analysis of the impact each City-funded initiative has had on the community.	General fund, Staff time	On-going	Planning; Waterfront and Economic Development / BID	\$-\$\$	Business Signage, Driveway Access Points, Sidewalks; Storefronts, Open Space
FU.03	Assess the fiscal efficiency and sustainability of implementing each proposed action.	Staff time	Short Term/ Midterm/ Long Term	Same as action	\$	All Strategies
FU.04	Make a concerted effort to reach out to the community to gain their input regarding the implementation of various aspects of future efforts, strategies or planning actions along the Corridors.	General fund	Short Term	Planning	\$	All Actions

As a concluding remark concerning funding in general, City Staff reminded the Planning Commission that substantial development impact fees will be assessed upon the Galleria project that are to provide additional funds specific to beautification and identity development along the Artesia Corridor. More generally, regarding “Development Impact and In-Lieu Fees”, there is additional language and opportunities for implementation outlined in “Chapter 5.” that have a very real potential to generate funding that can support significant changes and the overall revitalization and economic growth of the Corridors going forward.

- **Unintended Consequences of Successful Revitalization and Implementation of AACAP – Traffic**
 - The point raised in discussions noted the potential for future unintended impacts to surrounding neighborhoods, particularly with respect to possible increases in traffic, that could occur with the evolution of the Corridor(s), namely Artesia Boulevard into a more “pedestrian destination” rather than continue as a

“commuter corridor”, upon adjacent parallel roadways, i.e. Mathews Avenue, Vanderbilt Lane, and specifically Grant Avenue.

City Staff revisited this potential with key members of the City’s Public Works Department including the City’s Traffic Engineer. The following remarks summarize the general assessments of the AACAP with respect to future impacts on adjacent roadways related to traffic.

Concerning Traffic:

- All the options for potential future changes contemplated in the roadway/lane configurations of Artesia Boulevard (see Chapter 4. Mobility pages 95-97) maintain the existing traffic capacity of Artesia Boulevard.
- The AACAP does not include any changes in land use designations or significant changes in development standards that would have an appreciable change in traffic volumes generated by the businesses within the Area Plan.
- The AACAP component with the greatest potential for future localized traffic impacts would be the proposed “Streetlets” at the intersections of Green Lane (south) and MacKay Lane (north) with Artesia Boulevard. As both of these locations are signalized intersections, some alternative routes would be required for travelers seeking to make east and westbound turn movements onto Artesia Boulevard from both Green Lane and MacKay Lane, as these movements would be blocked with the implementation of the proposed “Streetlets” program within the AACAP. It is important to note that prior to the implementation of this program a focused traffic analysis would need to be conducted for each of these intersections, or any alternative intersections considered, prior to any future implementation of this program. Additionally, those residents most impacted would be noticed during the planning and design phase of such a program.

Concerning Parking:

- Although not specifically discussed by the Planning Commission at the July 16, 2020 meeting, the issue of parking has been identified as a critical issue since the initiation of the AACAP development process. A comprehensive and detailed parking utilization analysis of the entire length of the AACAP area, including all on-street and off-street parking (private property parking lots), was conducted early on in the process (see Appendix A Artesia-Aviation Area Plan Parking Study (Parking Study)). The general finding of the Parking Study determined that the majority of the AACAP area had available parking in proximity to adjacent businesses and was generally “underutilized” as compared to more “healthy” commercial business districts. As a result, the AACAP calls out numerous strategies for leveraging parking (see Chapter 4. Mobility Section 4.5.1 The Driving and Parking Experience) to incentivize future development of more targeted uses (i.e. restaurants with outdoor dining and professional offices), as rigorous parking requirements can be an impediment to future development. It is anticipated that any future relaxation of parking requirements for the targeted uses could be absorbed due to the underutilized conditions. It is important to note that before any incentives would be available with respect to changed parking standards, an

amendment to the zoning ordinance would need to be processed and some additional focused parking study would need to be conducted as part of that effort to better understand any potential impacts.

- In addition to the private parking related incentives noted above, the AACAP also offers a reconfigured option of Artesia Boulevard that removes street parking in lieu of expanded sidewalks and a separate bike lane. Any reconfiguration of Artesia Boulevard would be accompanied by technical studies that would thoroughly vet the impacts related to parking for businesses and adjacent neighborhoods. Additionally, a more extreme design change of this magnitude would need to be accompanied by multiple other programs that would ensure some nearby public parking facility would also be provided simultaneous with the redesign or ahead of such a change. The AACAP includes a thorough discussion of the comprehensive programs and potential funding mechanisms for moving ahead with various changes to parking within the Area Plan.

At the end of their August 20, 2020 public hearing the Planning Commission determined to continue their meeting to an additional public hearing to be held on September 17, 2020 to allow the community an additional opportunity to provide input and allow for the Planning Commissioners to submit their individual comments for circulation and consideration by the entire Planning Commission before confirming any edits and comments to forward to the City Council with their recommendation.

At the final public hearing on September 17, 2020, each Planning Commissioner presented their individual comments and Chairman Elder led discussions and deliberations in consideration of the Draft Area Plan and specifically each Planning Commissioner's Comments as presented. A roll call vote was conducted on each considered comment/edit/proposed change and the following were the proposed comments/edits/changes that the Planning Commission reached consensus on and these proposed comments/edits/changes have been incorporated into the Resolution for the City Council's consideration.

- Consider restoring the name of Artesia Blvd to Redondo Beach Blvd to help in rebranding the area.
- Consider the FAR increase from 0.5 to something higher than the recommended 0.6 FAR suggested in the AACAP.
- Focus on Matthews and Vanderbilt or other parallel streets for bike traffic (both in short and potentially the long term) to make as safe for bicyclists as possible. Significant infrastructure changes are needed for Artesia to be safe and usable for more bicycle traffic.
- Consider eliminating Artesia on-street parking in the blocks at the nodes at first.
- After establishing shared parking among lots and/or building parking structure(s), then reduce the parking requirements to encourage development, focusing on preferred uses.
- Add rooftop restaurant dining to the sidewalk dining idea along Artesia.
- Avoid the identified streetlets locations at signalized lights. Find other streetlet locations near the nodes.

- Consider an “empty storefront” and or blight fee for owners who choose to leave sites empty after some time period to encourage development (after 12 months, 18 months, etc.).
- Add a prioritization for timeline of the implementation items. There is an implementation list at the end of the Plan, but it would be helpful to have a standard linear timeline with milestones to get a feel of the possible roll out.
- Include a pie chart or other visual aid showing projected possible amounts from different funding sources. This would allow some approximation of what is possible.
- Potential AACAP changes may result from the Pandemic. Make sure this plan has flexibility to adapt to a post-Pandemic environment.
- Consider regulations that encourage local businesses in favor of larger national chains.