

# Costa Mesa Land Use Element - Proposed Draft Land Use Alternative

## Descriptions and Intent

*January 28, 2014*

### Introduction

The following Land Use Alternatives are based on the comments gathered from the Great Reach community workshops, and events. A wide range of opinions about land use were received as a result of that community engagement process. A number of participants said that they do not want to see increases in neighborhood densities, particularly in the single-family neighborhoods. In recognition of this sentiment, The Land Use alternative being discussed today do not affect the majority of Costa Mesa's established residential neighborhoods and most commercial districts. In fact no land use changes are anticipated in over 85% of Costa Mesa's land area. The land use alternatives being considered do not propose any changes to these neighborhoods and the existing General Plan designations will continue to apply to those areas.

### Land Use Alternatives

Land use changes are being proposed for seven strategic focus areas (Areas A to G) of the City. These focus area affect less than 15-percent of the entire city. Presented for consideration by the community, City Council, and Planning Commission are a variety of Land Use Alternative options for the seven focus area. These alternatives propose a variety of residential densities, nonresidential intensities, and a variety of building heights. In Some cases the alternatives propose changing or adding new land use opportunities. The propose Land Use Alternatives discussed below are a starting points or initial concepts to begin the conversation. Ultimately the community, City Council, and Planning Commission may endorse ideas included in one or more of the alternatives for each focus area. Alternatively, the City Council and Planning Commission may choose to modify or suggest new alternatives for the focus areas or suggest modification to the boundaries for the focus areas.

## Area A: North Costa Mesa Regional Commercial

### Land Use Alternative: Change Land Use Designation from Industrial Park to Regional Commercial

**Intent.** Alternative A proposes to change the land use designation on the South Coast Collection (SOCO) and the neighboring properties from *Industrial Park* to *Regional Commercial* (a land use designation currently available in the General Plan) to better reflect current and desired developments. Alternative A also explores changing the properties adjacent to SOCO to the *Regional Commercial* designation to take advantage of freeway visibility and proximity to other commercial centers, thus maximizing potential. However, Whittier Law School and the 180,000 square-foot, three-story office building along South Coast Drive—which recently was sold—are considered unlikely to convert to a retail commercial use.

#### *Regional-serving commercial uses*



## Area B: North Costa Mesa Mixed Use

### Land Use Alternative: Create and Apply New Land Use Designation, North Costa Mesa Mixed Use

**Intent.** The current land use designation, *Industrial Park*, does not permit residential uses. The intent of the proposed *North Costa Mesa Mixed Use* designation is to introduce residential uses within the business park setting in North Costa Mesa. It is thought that permitting a modest amount of residential use in this area could help create a 24-hour environment that many young workers increasingly prefer, while providing local amenities for surrounding businesses. The City has learned of interest in developing residential uses on the vacant property located at Hyland Avenue and MacArther Boulevard. A disadvantage of introducing residential use into a business park area is the potential loss of employment-generating businesses.

**North Costa Mesa Mixed Use Designation.** The proposed *North Costa Mesa Mixed Use* designation would accommodate stand alone residential, mixed-use (residential and commercial), and the uses currently permitted by the Industrial Park designation. Those uses include small-scale commercial/retail, professional office development, major employment centers, and business park. Low-scale creative industrial workspace areas would be permitted, provided that noise, dust, and vibration impacts are confined or limited.

Two alternatives for the *North Costa Mesa Mixed Use* Designation are proposed for consideration, the allowable uses in each alternative are the same but the development intensity varies as shown below.

Alternative 1: This alternative considers changing the land use designation to *North Costa Mesa Mixed Use*. In this alternative, the proposed *North Costa Mesa Mixed Use* designation will have a higher residential density, higher floor-area ratio (FAR), and a higher building height maximum than Alternative 2 and the existing General Plan designation.

Alternative 2: This alternative considers changing the land use designation to *North Costa Mesa Mixed Use*. In this alternative, the proposed *North Costa Mesa Mixed Use* designation will have a lower residential density, FAR, and building height maximum in comparison to Alternative 1 but still higher than the existing Industrial Park designation.

#### Development Standards

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Existing General Plan Designation: Industrial Park
▪ Maximum residential density:	60 du/acre	40 du/acre	Not permitted
▪ Maximum commercial intensity:	1.5 FAR	1.0 FAR	0.20 to 0.75 FAR
▪ Maximum height:	6 stories	4 stories	3 stories

*Mixed-use buildings and multi-family residential uses*



## Areas C: Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use

### Land Use Alternative: Create and Apply New Land Use Designation, *Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use*

**Intent.** The current land use designation, *General Commercial*, does not permit residential uses. The intent of the *Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use* designation is to introduce limited residential development opportunity along Harbor Boulevard and increase development opportunities for underutilized commercial sites and motel properties. The proposed residential use would complement the commercial corridor by introducing new housing within walking distance of commercial services and retail uses along portions of Harbor Boulevard. New buildings must be designed with sensitivity to surrounding low-density residential neighborhoods with features such as increased setbacks, stepped-down rear building facades, and landscaped buffers.

**Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use Designation.** The new proposed *Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use* designation would accommodate moderate-scale residential and commercial mixed-use developments that are appropriately scaled along the City's key commercial corridor. This designation would allow a mix of uses that support transit, bicycling, and pedestrian activity. Development approaches would include both horizontal and vertical mixed use. Ground-floor retail/service storefronts and signature architectural elements at designated focal locations, will be required. Design considerations would include sensitivity to the adjacent lower-intensity residential neighborhoods, inclusion of public and private amenities, and inclusion of transit accessibility features. Buildings may be up to four or six stories, provided privacy concerns of established neighborhoods are adequately addressed through the setbacks of upper stories or other design approaches. Structured parking would be allowed, provided no parking levels face directly onto Harbor Boulevard or the parking structure is wrapped with commercial storefronts.

Two alternatives for the *Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use* Designation are proposed for consideration, the allowable uses in each alternative are the same but the development intensity varies as shown below.

Alternative 1: This alternative considers changing the current land use designation to *Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use*. In Alternative 1, the proposed *Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use* designation will have a higher residential density, higher floor-area ratio (FAR), and a higher building height maximum than Alternative 2 and the existing General Plan designation.

Alternative 2: This alternative considers changing the land use designation to *Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use*. In this alternative, the proposed *Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use* designation will have a lower residential density, FAR, and building height in comparison to Alternative 1 but still be higher than the existing *General Commercial* designation.

#### Development Standards

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Existing General Plan Designation: General Commercial
▪ Maximum residential density:	60 du/acre	40 du/acre	Not permitted
▪ Maximum commercial intensity:	1.5 FAR	1.0 FAR	0.20 to 0.75 FAR
▪ Maximum height:	6 stories*	4 stories*	2 stories

\* New development must apply massing standards (e.g., height "step down") adjacent to MDR and LDR uses.

*Four-Story Pedestrian-Friendly Commercial and Residential Use*



*Six-Story Pedestrian-Friendly Commercial and Residential Use*



## Area D: Newport Boulevard Mixed Use

### Land Use Alternative: Create and Apply New Land Use Designation, *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use*

**Intent.** The current land use designation, *Commercial – Residential*, permits both commercial and residential uses. However, the intent of the *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use* designation is to provide greater development capacity along Newport Boulevard to spur development activity along the corridor, at underutilized commercial sites, and underutilized motel properties. New buildings must be designed with sensitivity to surrounding low-density residential neighborhoods with such features as increased setbacks, stepped-down rear building facades, and landscaped buffers.

**Newport Boulevard Mixed Use Designation.** The *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use* designation is intended to allow residential, neighborhood-focused commercial and mixed use (residential and commercial) development along Newport Boulevard. Mixed use developments could be either horizontal or vertical mixed use. Design considerations must include sensitivity to adjacent lower-intensity residential neighborhoods. Structures may be up to three or four stories in height, provided privacy concerns of established neighborhoods are adequately addressed through the setbacks of upper stories or other design approaches. New restrictions would apply to residential development within 500 feet of the SR 55 freeway, including use of buffering, sound walls, landscaping, air filtration systems, and similar measures to reduce noise and air quality impacts.

Three alternatives for the *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use* Designation are proposed for consideration, the allowable uses in each alternative are the same but the development intensity varies as shown below.

**Alternative 1:** This alternative considers changing the current land use designation from *Commercial- Residential* to *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use*. In Alternative 1, the proposed *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use* designation will have a higher residential density, higher floor-area ratio (FAR), a higher building height maximum than Alternatives 2 and 3 and the existing *Commercial – Residential* designation.

**Alternative 2:** This alternative considers changing the current land use designation from *Commercial – Residential* to *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use*. In Alternative 2, the proposed *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use* designation will have the same residential density as Alternative 1 but a higher residential density than Alternative 3 and the current General Plan designation. This alternative has the same FAR as Alternative 3, but it is lower than Alternative 1 and higher than the current General Plan designation. Alternative 2 includes specific design standards, including building setbacks and minimizing building heights, to lessen the impact on established, low-density residential neighborhoods.

**Alternative 3:** This alternative considers changing the current land use designation from *Commercial – Residential* to *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use*. In this alternative, the proposed *Newport Boulevard Mixed Use* designation will have a lower residential density than Alternatives 1 and 2 but a higher residential density than the current General Plan designation. This alternative has the same FAR as Alternative 2, but it is lower than Alternative 1 and higher than the current General Plan designation. This alternative also has a lower maximum building height than the other two alternatives.

#### Development Standards

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	General Plan: Commercial-Residential
▪ Maximum residential density:	40 du/acre	40 du/acre	20 du/acre	17.4 du/ac
▪ Maximum commercial intensity:	0.75 FAR	0.50 FAR	0.50 FAR	0.20 to 0.40 FAR
▪ Maximum height:	4 stories	3-4 stories*	3 stories	

\* Four-story buildings allowed fronting Newport Boulevard; three-story buildings required fronting Elden Avenue or directly adjacent to low-density residential uses.

Four-story mixed uses



## Area E: Westside Mixed Use and Overlay

### Land Use Alternative 1: Create and Apply New Land Use Designation, *Westside Mixed Use* Land Use Alternative 1, 2, and 3: Create and Apply Westside Residential Overlay

**Intent.** The three alternatives for the Westside neighborhood intend to introduce a diverse mix of uses at higher densities than exist today, with the objective of creating a much more integrated, walkable, and complementary balance of creative industrial and office spaces, neighborhood-serving retail and commercial services, and residential uses. Established residential neighborhoods in the Westside would not be subject to a land use designation change. Zoning and other regulatory controls would be applied to provide compatibility between established and new uses. With regard to industrial uses, any new industrial use would be required to be low impact in terms of noise, traffic generation, and presence of hazardous materials.

**Westside Mixed Use Designation:** The *Westside Mixed Use* designation applies to Alternative 1 only. The *Westside Mixed Use* designation would replace the current *Light Industrial* designation. The *Westside Mixed Use* designation allows mixed use, stand-alone (or single use) multi-family residential, commercial, retail, and clean light industrial uses. This designation facilitates a creative mix of residences and low-intensity workplaces, while integrating neighborhood-serving commercial uses such as restaurants, cafes, and small shops and service businesses. Multi-family residential uses would be allowed, particularly developments that encourage ownership. The *Westside Mixed Use* designation would be ideal for live/work uses that combine residential occupancy with commercial activity on the ground floor in the same building space, with the resident using the nonresidential space for his or her business. Typical uses would include lofts, creative studio spaces, small offices, and similar low-intensity uses. The existing low-intensity and clean industrial uses would be allowed to remain and new similar uses accommodate, but heavy industries would be prohibited and existing uses slowly amortized. New creative industrial workspace would also be permitted, provided that activities limit or confine noise, dust, and vibration impacts. This designation also would provide affordable office space to small businesses and organizations which are engaged in innovative activities, including incubator businesses.

**Westside Residential Overlay.** The *Westside Residential Overlay* assumes the underlying *General Commercial*, *Community Commercial*, and *Neighborhood Commercial* designations would remain. However, the *Westside Residential Overlay* would allow the introduction of residential uses within the current commercial land use designations. In addition, the *Westside Residential Overlay* increases the residential density for the underlying *Medium Density Residential* and *High Density Residential* designations. Thus, the *Westside Residential Overlay* designation allows the introduction of residential uses within the commercial and industrial base land use districts, including stand-alone residential projects and mixed-use projects. The existing low-intensity and clean industrial uses would be allowed to remain and new similar uses accommodate, but heavy industries would be prohibited and existing uses slowly amortized. New creative industrial workspace would also be permitted, provided that activities limit or confine noise, dust, and vibration impacts.

Three alternatives for the Westside neighborhood are proposed for consideration, the allowable uses are different for Alternative 1 than Alternatives 2 and 3. Furthermore, the development standards vary by alternative as shown below.

Alternative 1. This alternative includes both the *Westside Mixed Use* designation change and the creation of the *Westside Residential Overlay*. Currently, the Westside neighborhood is comprised of a number of General Plan land use designations. This is the only alternative in which a land use designation, specifically the *Light Industrial* designation, is proposed to be changed. As such and as discussed above, the *Westside Mixed Use* designation would allow for mixed use, stand alone multi-family residential, commercial, retail, and clean light industrial uses. In addition to the *Westside Mixed Use* land use designation change, Alternative 1 proposed to place the *Westside Residential Overlay* over the existing *General Commercial*,

*Community Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, Medium Density Residential, and High Density Residential* designations.

As a result of the Westside Mixed Use designation and the Westside Residential Overlay, the residential density, and the commercial intensity or FAR are higher for Alternative 1 than Alternatives 2 and 3. Alternative 1 proposes a maximum height equal to Alternative 2 but higher than Alternative 3.

Alternative 2: This alternative considers implementing the *Westside Residential Overlay*. The underlying General Plan designations will remain, but the Overlay will allow for the introduction of residential and mixed uses. In Alternative 2, the proposed *Westside Residential Overlay* will have a lower residential density than Alternative 1, but a higher density than Alternative 3. This alternative will also have a lower FAR than Alternative 1 but the same as Alternative 2. The maximum building heights in this Alternative is equal to that of Alternative 1 but higher than also Alternative 3.

Alternative 3: This alternative considers implementing the *Westside Residential Overlay*. The underlying General Plan designations will remain, but the Overlay will allow for the introduction of residential and mixed uses. In Alternative 3, the proposed *Westside Residential Overlay* will have a lower residential density and lower maximum building height than Alternatives 1 and 2. Alternative 3 will also have an FAR equal to Alternative 2 but lower than Alternative 1.

**Development Standards (Westside Mixed Use designation and Westside Overlay)**

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Westside Urban Plans
Maximum residential density:	40 du/acre	30 du/acre	20 du/acre	13 to 20 du/ac**
Maximum commercial intensity:	0.75 FAR	0.50 FAR	0.50 FAR	0.15 to 1.25 FAR
Maximum height:	4 stories*	4 stories*	3 stories*	To 4 stories

\* New development must apply massing standards (e.g., height “step down”) adjacent to MDR and LDR uses.

\*\* Maximum density is based on base district.

*Creative studio space*



*Live/work studios*



*Innovative commercial uses*



*Flexible studio spaces and offices*



*Clean light industrial uses*



*Neighborhood-serving uses*



*Four-story mixed uses*



## Area F: SoBECA Mixed Use

### Land Use Alternative: Create and Apply New Land Use Designation, SoBECA Mixed Use

**Intent.** The current land use designations, General Commercial and Industrial Park, would be replaced by the *SoBECA Mixed Use* designation. This designation is proposed to generate a thriving creative industrial cluster with a critical mass of artistic individuals, organizations, and businesses in the SoBECA area. The district is imagined as a balanced mix of eclectic commercial services and retail, live/work spaces, creative studios, and residential uses that build on the vibrancy of the established retail campuses of The Camp and The Lab. Although residential uses are encouraged, there is an emphasis on attracting new commercial development, especially local businesses that could extend the “creative vibe” into surrounding commercial uses.

**SoBECA Mixed Use Designation.** The *SoBECA Mixed Use* designation would allow a mix of housing and retail/service commercial businesses, low-impact light industrial uses, creative studios, retail campuses, and entertainment and restaurant uses that attract local residents and visitors. Permitted development approaches would be mixed-use development that combines residential and commercial uses, as well as stand-alone uses. This designation would emphasize commercial uses and would aim to expand the established innovative, eclectic, and unique uses that demonstrate the importance of homegrown and incubator-type businesses to the local economy. The integration of innovative public spaces and hangout areas for special events would be highly encouraged. Restrictions would apply to new residential development within 500 feet of a freeway right-of-way, including use of buffering, sound walls, landscaping, filtration systems, and similar measures to reduce noise and air quality impacts.

Three alternatives for the *SoBECA Mixed Use* Designation are proposed for consideration, the allowable uses in each alternative are the same but the development intensity varies as shown below.

Alternative 1: This alternative considers changing the current land use designations from *General Commercial and Industrial Park* to *SoBECA Mixed Use*. In Alternative 1, the proposed *SoBECA Mixed Use* designation will have a higher residential density, higher floor-area ratio (FAR), a higher building height maximum than Alternatives 2 and 3. It has a lower and building height maximum than the SoBECA Urban Plan.

Alternative 2: Alternative 2 considers changing the current land use designations from *General Commercial and Industrial Park* to *SoBECA Mixed Use*. Alternative 2 has a lower density, FAR, and building height than Alternative 1 and the SoBECA Urban Plan, but the maximum building height is the same for the SoBECA Urban Plan.

Alternative 3: Alternative 3 considers changing the current land use designations from *General Commercial and Industrial Park* to *SoBECA Mixed Use*. Alternative 3 has a lower density than Alternatives 1 and 2 and the SoBECA Urban Plan, but the same FAR and building height as Alternative 2. Alternative 3 also has the same maximum building height as the SoBeca Urban Plan.

#### Development Standards

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	SoBECA Urban Plan
▪ Maximum residential density:	50 du/acre	40 du/acre	30 du/acre	13 to 20 du/ac*
▪ Maximum commercial intensity:	0.75 FAR	0.50 FAR	0.50 FAR	0.15 to 1.25 FAR
▪ Maximum height:	5 stories	4 stories	4 stories	2 to 4 stories

\* Maximum density is based on base district.

*Five-Story Mixed Use*



*Four-Story Residential*



## Area G: Airport Business Park Residential Overlay

### Land Use Alternative: Allow Residential Use in the Airport Business Park Residential Overlay

**Intent.** The intent of creating the *Airport Business Park Residential Overlay* for Area G is to introduce limited residential uses within a business park setting. While residential development currently is not permitted within the *Industrial Park* designation, permitting a modest amount could help create housing opportunities within walking and biking distance to employment-rich areas. The City understands there is developer interest for the residential use of a property located at Paularino Avenue and Pullman Street. As mentioned above, the disadvantage of introducing residential uses within a business park area is the potential loss of employment-generating businesses. Another issue of concern for Area G is the proximity to SR 55 and the associated noise and air quality impacts.

**Airport Business Park Residential Overlay Designation.** The current *Industrial Park* General Plan land use designation would remain. The uses currently permitted by the *Industrial Park* designation will continue to be allowed. The *Airport Business Park Residential Overlay* allows multi-family residential uses in addition to business park uses. Business park uses would be the focus of the district, with existing businesses allowed to remain and future business park uses fully supported. Stand-alone, multi-family residential uses would be permitted if they are designed in a manner that respects adjacent business park uses. Restrictions on new residential development would apply within 500 feet of the SR 55 freeway, including use of buffering, sound walls, landscaping, filtration systems, and similar measures to reduce noise and air quality impacts.

There is only one land use alternative for the Airport area.

#### Development Standards

▪ Maximum residential density:	60 du/acre	<b>General Plan:</b>
▪ Maximum commercial intensity:	0.75 FAR	<b>Industrial Park</b>
▪ Maximum height:	6 stories	Not permitted
▪ Industrial Park standards remain		0.20 to 0.75 FAR
		3 stories

#### *Six-Story Residential*

