

## ABOUT THE CITY OF CARSON

### History

Carson was part of a Spanish Land Grant known as Rancho San Pedro that was deeded to Juan Jose Dominguez over 200 years ago. During the incorporation process, the community chose the name of "Carson" in honor of George Henry Carson, a member of the Dominguez family. The name "Dominguez," also considered as a name for the newly incorporated city, is found often in the city, labeling a street, a park, and, most notably, a California State University. Incorporated as a general law city on February 20, 1968, the city adopted the motto "Future Unlimited." Its strategic location and vacant land was part of the reason for that statement of unbridled optimism.

### General Profile

Carson, located less than 20 miles south of downtown Los Angeles, is part of the South Bay section of Los Angeles County. Carson is a culturally diverse community that has a population that grew from 66,000 in 1968 to 98,159 in 2009. Three annexations have increased the city's size to 19.2 square miles. Carson is an attractive city to live and work in, having mild temperatures year round, and being naturally air-conditioned by westerly ocean breezes.

Carson is strategically located that is accessible by air, rail, and freeway. The MTA Blue Line stops in Carson on its route between Los Angeles and Long Beach. The city's own bus system, the Carson Circuit, provides convenient bus transportation within the city. Carson is close to the Los Angeles International Airport, the Long Beach Airport, the Port of Los Angeles, and the Port of Long Beach. Four freeways are adjacent to or run through the city. They are the Harbor (110), the San Diego (405), the Artesia (91), and the Long Beach (710). There is no other city in the Los Angeles-Orange County region that can match Carson's inventory of available space and ease of accessibility.

Carson has the lowest utility users tax rate among surrounding cities like Lakewood, Gardena, Redondo Beach, Torrance, Los Angeles, and Culver City. It has the lowest business license fee, development and planning fees among selected Southbay cities like Torrance, El Segundo, Compton and Long Beach. This has contributed to the marketability of Carson to businesses. There are large modern petro-chemical facilities (e.g. Arco, Tosco Refining, Shell), electronics manufacturers (e.g. Sony, Kenwood, Pioneer, KIA, Sansui), automobile dealers (e.g. Cormier Chevrolet, Toyota, Honda, KIA), aerospace companies (e.g. In-Eros Corporation, Northrop), trucking companies (e.g. Southwest Trails, Proceed USA, USC Intermodal Services Inc.), retail stores (e.g. IKEA, JCPenny, Target, Home Depot, Old Navy, Children's Place and Staples) and restaurants (e.g. Chili's, Panera Bread, Tony Romas) within the city. Many have stayed for years and expanded (e.g. Pioneer Video, Leiner Products). The city has an active Chamber of Commerce working with it to retain and attract business. The City Council's emphasis on quality developments - both commercial and residential - along with a citywide beautification effort, have had a positive impact on the city. In recent years, well-known builders have chosen Carson as a location for their projects. In the area of residential developments, we have the following on-going projects:

1. 8 Residential Condominium Units- 440 E. Sepulveda Blvd
2. 20 Condominium Units- 18501-18701 S. Figueroa Street
3. 8 Condominium conversions- 175 W. 223<sup>rd</sup> Street
4. 8 Condominium Conversions- 157 W. 223<sup>rd</sup> Street
5. 6 detached condominiums - 325-327-329 W. Fiat Street
6. 4 detached condominiums - 235 W. 220<sup>th</sup> Street

## ABOUT THE CITY OF CARSON (CONT.)

Carson continues to sustain the demand for commercial development. The Carson Redevelopment Agency has been involved in purchasing land and facilitating development that increases the general fund, creates shopping opportunities for residents, adds to the existing housing stock and removes blighting influences caused prior to the city's incorporation. Blight elimination activities include the resolution of contaminated sites known as Brownfields. Agency and city accomplishments toward that goal are described below.

The Boulevard of South Bay, formerly known as the Carson Marketplace/Avalon at South Bay, is a 168-acre landfill property soon to be a potential mix of 2 million square feet of commercial, residential, restaurant and entertainment venues with a big box retail store, a 300-room hotel and up to 1150 residential units. An environmental impact report, specific plan, a General Plan Amendment, and a development agreement have all been approved for the development of this landfill. Remediation is currently underway and the city is actively working to move forward with this project which is expected to open in 2012.

The city invested over \$10 million to acquire parcels along Carson Street to significantly enhance the anticipated development of the Carson Street Corridor. The city completed the Carson Street Visualization Study used as the spring board for the development of the Carson Street Master Plan. Today the city has embarked upon the Carson Street Mixed Used District Master Plan. This plan focuses on a 1.75 mile section of Carson Street between the I-405 San Diego Freeway and the I-110 Harbor Freeway. The plan is intended to help the community share their vision with those participating in development efforts along Carson Street. The plan will be used as a guide by the City Council, Redevelopment Agency, Planning Commission and other commissions for review of public improvements such as streetscape and environmental graphics as well as private development and related improvements.

Another Agency acquisition on Carson Street is a 9-acre former mobile home park adjacent to an outdated shopping center anchored by Ralph's Market. The Agency is currently negotiating to expand and modernize the Ralph's store. In addition, the city is actively working with a developer for a mixed use development with 150 workforce condominiums over about 25,000 square feet of commercial retail space with at grade and underground parking, 86 affordable senior residential units on the southeast corner of Avalon and Carson streets. All businesses have been relocated and plans are being processed for development.

The Agency entered into an Exclusive Negotiating Agreement with Vimco Group on May 5, 2009 to develop a new mixed-use hotel project on 2403 E. 223<sup>rd</sup> Street. This site would be anchored by three hotel franchises and a restaurant along with other retail/commercial uses.

The City is currently in the process of putting up a Transit Center at SouthBay Pavilion. This modern facility, where bus riders can access the Carson Circuit system or transfer between any of its routes, will include a central covered island waiting area, space for 10 bus bays along the central island, scrolling real-time passenger information display and a small building housing a route supervisor's office and driver's restroom. This project is expected to be completed by May 2010.

The Alameda Corridor is the primary rail access route and a significant truck access route to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The city is working proactively with the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority (ACTA) to develop a strategy for mitigating noise and other impacts brought by continued growth in port activity along the Alameda Corridor. Studies are being made to determine the feasibility of a sound wall to mitigate noise and other impacts to the Alameda Corridor. On May 2, 2006, City Council has authorized \$200,000.00 to prioritize

## ABOUT THE CITY OF CARSON (CONT.)

community outreach and the completion of the study. Meetings with the Public Works and Planning Commissions, businesses, residents located on or near the Alameda Corridor, Caltrans and City Council are being scheduled to move forward with this project.

Finally, the city has the following major projects scheduled for FY 2009/10 that are either funded by the general fund, special revenue funds and/or the redevelopment agency funds:

<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1240	Annual Concrete Replacement Program-Citywide	\$500,000
1241	Annual Pavement Maintenance	\$1,000,000
1123	Wilmington Ave. street Improvements-Lomita Blvd. to Railroad crossing	\$50,000
847	163 <sup>rd</sup> Street, Ball Ave and Anelo Street Improvements	\$1,275,200
877	168 <sup>th</sup> Street Improvements	\$200,000
844	Gardena Blvd Storm Drain Main Street to Avalon Boulevard	\$1,316,000
875	Avalon Blvd. Storm Drain - Sepulveda Blvd. to Realty Street	\$300,000
1232	Median Irrigation System Upgrade Phase III	\$300,000
998	Community Center Improvements Phase II	\$5,230,000
1236	Carriage Crest Park Playground Equipment Replacement	\$302,500
1228	Stevenson Park Playground Equipment Replacement	\$125,000
1000	Dominguez Park Improvements Phase I	\$70,000
1243	Dominguez Park Improvements Phase II	\$75,000
1046	Hemingway Park Improvements Phase II	\$81,500

### **Community Facilities**

The city operates many community facilities. The two major facilities, City Hall and the Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center (CJMMCC), are located in the Civic Center Plaza. The City Hall is where most of city administration and operations are conducted. The Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center is a 73,000 square-foot facility used as a meeting center for community- and business-sponsored events. The CJMMCC houses both the Senior Technology Center which provides computer services for the senior populace and the improved Early Childhood Educational Center. Continuous improvement efforts are being done at the CJMMCC the latest of which is the replacement of the entire community center roof.

The Parks and Recreation division, located at 2400 East Dominguez Street, operates 12 parks, 2 swimming pools, 2 aquatic centers, 3 mini-parks, a boxing center, 2 indoor sports complex and a skate park. Park improvements for the year include the completion and the opening of the Hemingway Park Aquatic Center, the Del Amo Park building repair, kitchen remodeling, stadium seating and picnic shelter

## ABOUT THE CITY OF CARSON (CONT.)

improvements, state-of-the-art cardiovascular and weight training equipment at the Veterans SportsComplex, and the redesign of the standardized irrigation system for Hemingway Park. A significant park investment is the continuation of the Park Enforcement Team. This contingent of eight sheriff deputies and one sergeant patrols the city's park for added security and safety of Carson residents.

### Government and Administration

Carson was incorporated as a General Law city on February 20, 1968. The city operates under the Council-Manager form of government, with an elected Mayor, a Mayor Pro Tem, three Councilmembers, and a City Manager. The city has had a directly elected Mayor since April 1992. Carson residents, during a special election in March 2000, voted to lengthen the term of the mayor from two to four years. The four-year term for Mayor went into effect with the city's March 2001 general municipal elections. Councilmembers are elected to alternating four-year terms. Other elected city officials include the City Clerk and City Treasurer, both also serve four-year terms.

The city government is operated on a competitive system of appointments and promotions. The positions of City Manager and City Attorney are appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the City Council. The Work Group General Managers are appointed by, and serve at the will of, the City Manager. All other positions are filled by appointment, based on structured competitive examinations. Currently, the city has 395 authorized full-time positions, which provide a wide range of municipal services. The city has streamlined operations from 12 departments into ten distinct work groups namely City Council, City Attorney, City Clerk, City Treasurer, Non-departmental, City Manager, Administrative Services, Economic Development, Development Services and Public Services.

The significant investment in commercial, retail and residential development demonstrates the city's resolve to live up to a reputation as a business-friendly, well-managed and fiscally-sound city. Its financial position should sustain its strength, allowing the Council to invest in programs that will provide a high quality of life for its residents and a vibrant economy for its business community.