



## CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Date:** March 2, 2010  
**To:** Honorable Mayor & City Council  
**From:** Peter Noonan, AICP, Associate Planner *PW*  
Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Director of Community Development *SHK*  
**Subject:** GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS – NEXT STEPS  
**Attachments:**

1. Ad Hoc Meeting Notes – February 3, 2010
2. Map of 2010 Proposed Study Areas
3. Map of 2008 Draft Community Districts
4. Map of the City Owned Properties East of City Hall

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### INTRODUCTION

Staff is seeking direction from the City Council on how to proceed with the next steps in the General Plan update.

Last year the City Council divided the General Plan update into two steps. Step One was adopted in January and included goals and policies that were broadly supported by the community.

Step Two involves consideration of possible land use changes in the City. However, prior to initiating that further study, the City Council requested additional information on possible traffic models or studies that could help inform decisions related to increased growth or density.

In February the General Plan Ad Hoc Committee met to discuss Step Two and future traffic studies (Attachment 1). The Committee recommends that the city limit explorations of alternative land use options to the areas around the future subway entrances and the city-owned properties located east of City Hall in the area also known as the Entertainment Business District (Attachment 2). The Committee further recommends no traffic demand model be pursued in advance of this limited study, but suggests other strategies to evaluate potential traffic impacts.

Staff will provide a comprehensive oral presentation during the Study Session on traffic, and short- and long-term transportation goals that can be employed to better manage traffic congestion citywide.

At this time, staff is seeking generalized guidance for studying potential future land use changes in the City. A future discussion will be scheduled to discuss the matter in greater detail based on Council's guidance.

Meeting Date: March 2, 2010

## **BACKGROUND**

Prior to dividing the General Plan update into steps, all of the commercial areas in the City were proposed to be divided into "community [commercial] districts". 15 districts had been proposed in all (Attachment 3). Establishing community districts was proposed as a means of fostering a vibrant business community that would provide local neighborhood services for the community and also, in appropriate areas, maintain the City's world-class status as a high-end vacation and shopping destination.

By separating the planning process into two phases, the City was able to adopt the goals, policies and implementation programs that were broadly supported by the community (Step One) while allowing further discussion on potential changes to land use to continue (Step Two). The City can now evaluate the extent to which potential land use changes should be explored. As an alternative to the prior commercial districting approach, the General Plan Ad Hoc Committee suggested that the City explore alternative land use options in select areas of the City.

## **DISCUSSION**

The General Plan Ad Hoc Committee supported going forward with limited land use studies at this time for the following reasons:

1. To ensure that the city is taking proactive steps to plan for the future subway development through Beverly Hills, and
2. To ensure the City is well positioned to take advantage of any future public/private partnerships, or development opportunities that may arise for the City-owned properties east of City Hall in the Entertainment Business District (EBD).

### **Subway Station Area Planning (Wilshire / La Cienega and Wilshire / Beverly-Rodeo).**

On August 4, 2009, the City Council adopted a resolution formally endorsing construction of the Westside Subway Extension (Subway to the Sea) through Beverly Hills. As part of the City's support for the project, it is important to study pedestrian, circulation and land use patterns around the subway stations to:

- Anticipate and encourage capital improvements and development that will:
  - 1) enhance the functionality at and around the subway entrances
  - 2) facilitate ridership on the line
- Support the regional subway planning effort by maintaining our region's chances of securing Federal funds necessary in order to build the line. Ideally, to remain competitive for Federal funding, land use alternatives would be identified by July of 2011.
- Take advantage of outside funding sources (Proposition A and C funds) to conduct pedestrian, circulation and land use studies in the subway station areas.

Land use decisions in areas surrounding the subway stations are in the City's purview. Beverly Hills is a built-out city and most new development in the City occurs through the replacement or renovation of existing structures. It is anticipated that buildings in the subway station areas will continue to change over time, at pace with development throughout the City as a whole and that there will not be major changes around the stations occurring all at once. However, change will continue to occur.

Meeting Date: March 2, 2010

The subway is not expected to be operational for many years, however, it is important for the City to develop a plan now for future development around the subway stations so that any future development on properties near the subway stations does not prevent future subway development. These plans would explore necessary roadway and pedestrian improvements, alternative zoning and development standards, and potentially may include provisions for additional building height in return for the provision of public amenities and benefits in the station areas.

**City-Owned Property Planning.** About half of the City-owned properties in this area have recently been developed and the other half are currently been used for City operations (Attachment 4). Over time it is expected that all of the City-owned properties currently used for City operations will be developed. Establishing a plan for how these properties would be built out now will put the City in a favorable position to attract new business interests into the City in the future.

**Traffic Studies.** On May 27, 2009, when the City Council provided direction to divide the General Plan update into two steps, it also discussed developing a traffic model to estimate changes in traffic. Prior to reaching a decision on whether to develop a traffic model, the City Council asked for more information on traffic modeling techniques.

Traffic modeling was also discussed by the Ad Hoc Committee. The Committee expressed a need for the City to continue developing traffic management efforts, however the Committee felt that potential traffic impacts that could result from proposed land use alternatives in the selected areas could be best estimated with "area-specific" traffic studies that included the analysis of traffic patterns on residential streets, and without, or prior to, the development of a traffic model.

An oral presentation on traffic and short- and long-term transportation goals that can be employed to better manage traffic congestion citywide will be provided during the Study Session.

### **SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES**

To facilitate the discussion of proceeding with the General Plan update, the following options have been provided for consideration:

- A. Endorse the approach recommended by the General Plan Ad Hoc Committee and described in this report, which is to explore land use options around the future subway stations and for the City-owned properties east of City Hall using an "area-specific" traffic analysis that includes studies of traffic on residential streets to estimate potential traffic impacts.
- B. Continue the discussion of traffic models while proceeding with land use studies around the subway stations and for the City-owned properties east of City Hall.
- C. Develop a traffic model prior to exploring any land use alternatives.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

A majority of the work effort will be performed by City staff with assistance from experts in subway station area planning and traffic analysis among other specialty fields. With direction from the City Council to proceed, a work plan would be developed and cost estimates identified that would account for all project costs and specific consulting

Meeting Date: March 2, 2010

needs. It is anticipated that a portion of the costs associated with the suggested approach would be offset by existing funds and through Proposition A & C local return funds, and other regional transportation funding sources.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Consider the suggested alternatives for exploring land use options and provide direction for proceeding with the next steps in the General Plan update.

Susan Healy Keene, AICP,  
Community Development Director

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Approved By



General Plan – Next Steps  
March 2, 2010

Meeting Notes from the General Plan Ad Hoc Committee Meeting on February 3, 2010

Meeting Topic

Next Steps in the General Plan Update Process

Members Present

Nancy Krasne, Mayor  
Jimmy Delshad, Vice-Mayor  
Nan Cole, Planning Commission Chair  
Lili Bosse, Planning Commission Vice-Chair

Staff Members Present

Mahdi Aluzri, AICP, Assistant City Manager  
Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Community Development Director  
Aaron Kunz, AICP, Deputy Director of Transportation  
Peter Noonan, AICP, Associate Planner  
Michele McGrath, Senior Planner

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Meeting Notes

Susan Healy Keene, Community Development Director, opened the meeting and introduced Associate Planner Peter Noonan.

Peter Noonan, Associate Planner, provided a brief summary of the past recent General Plan update process and outlined options for considering land use alternatives. One option would be to proceed with consideration of changes throughout the City commercial areas, and the other option would be to consider alternatives in select areas only. The areas suggested included: the two subway station stops, the Entertainment Business District, Olympic Boulevard and Robertson Boulevard.

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee discussed the merits of exploring land use alternatives for all commercial areas in the City versus exploring alternatives in a select number of commercial areas. The Committee suggested that land use alternatives be studied in the following areas:

- Subway Station Area around Wilshire/ La Cienega
- Subway Station Area around Wilshire/ Beverly-Rodeo
- City-owned Properties East of City Hall

Susan Healy Keene and Aaron Kunz then opened a discussion on traffic analysis and travel demand modeling. Susan Healy Keene emphasized that it is important to understand what the desired outcome from developing a model is. There are many

General Plan – Next Steps  
March 2, 2010

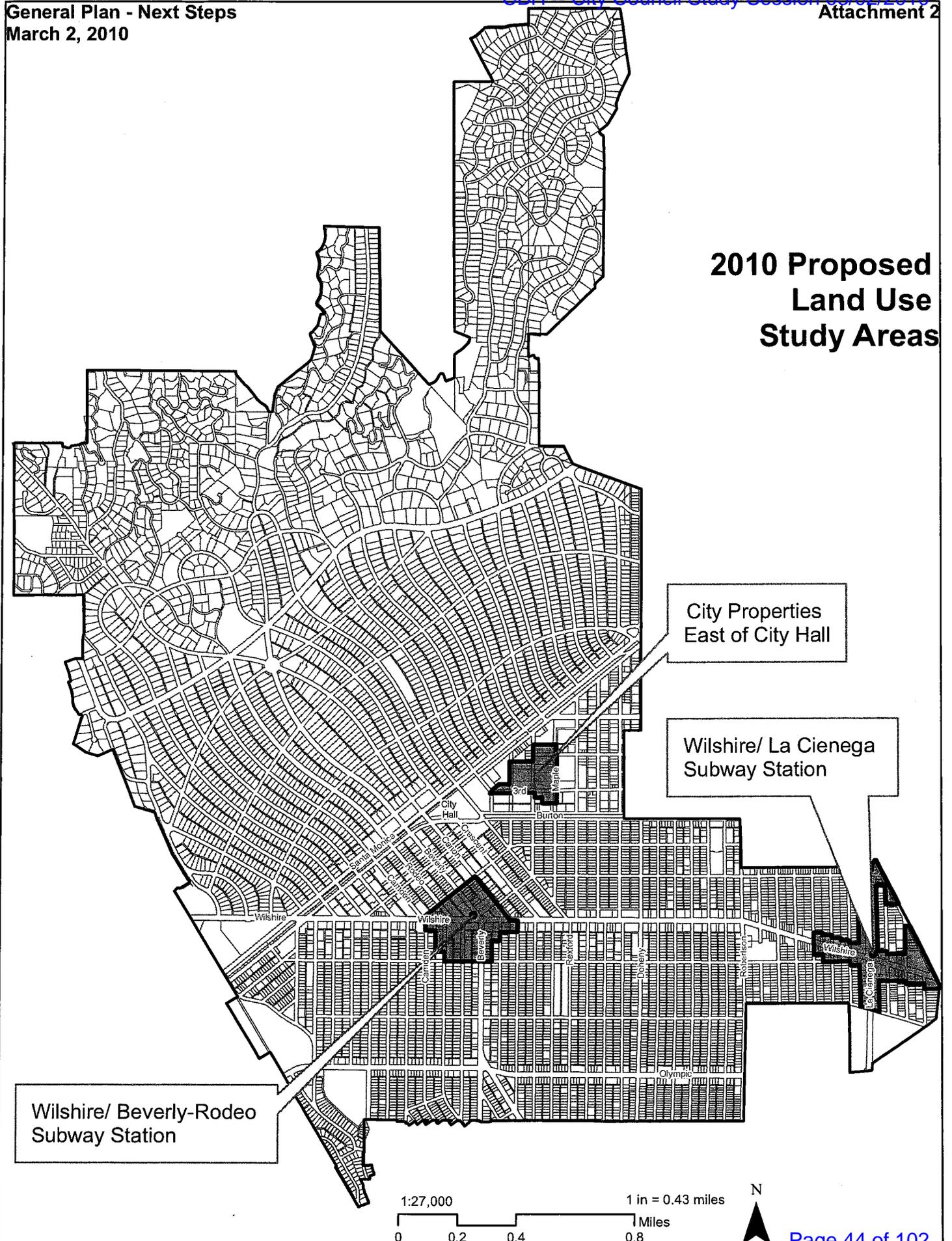
Meeting Notes from the General Plan Ad Hoc Committee Meeting on February 3, 2010

traffic management techniques available, if the overall goal would be to best manage traffic in the City to that traffic flows as smoothly as possible this would be a different style of tool. Aaron Kunz summarized that travel demand models will provide an estimation of traffic flow over large metropolitan areas. Whereas, “area-specific” traffic analysis that includes the study of traffic flows on nearby residential streets will provide a more accurate estimation of potential traffic impacts. “Area specific” traffic analysis is expected to yield better estimations of potential traffic impacts to residential streets near the selected areas because the potential land use alternatives would be well described and the study areas relatively small.

Members of the Ad Hoc committee discussed the traffic analysis options and suggested that “area-specific” traffic analysis that included a study of residential streets could be useful when exploring land use options in the suggested areas. The group also felt that development of a travel demand model for the City prior to considering land use alternatives in these areas may not be necessary given that the “area specific” traffic analysis would be conducted. The group also felt that the City’s current travel management techniques should continue to be refined and enhanced to improve traffic conditions throughout the City.

General Plan - Next Steps  
March 2, 2010

# 2010 Proposed Land Use Study Areas



City Properties  
East of City Hall

Wilshire/ La Cienega  
Subway Station

Wilshire/ Beverly-Rodeo  
Subway Station

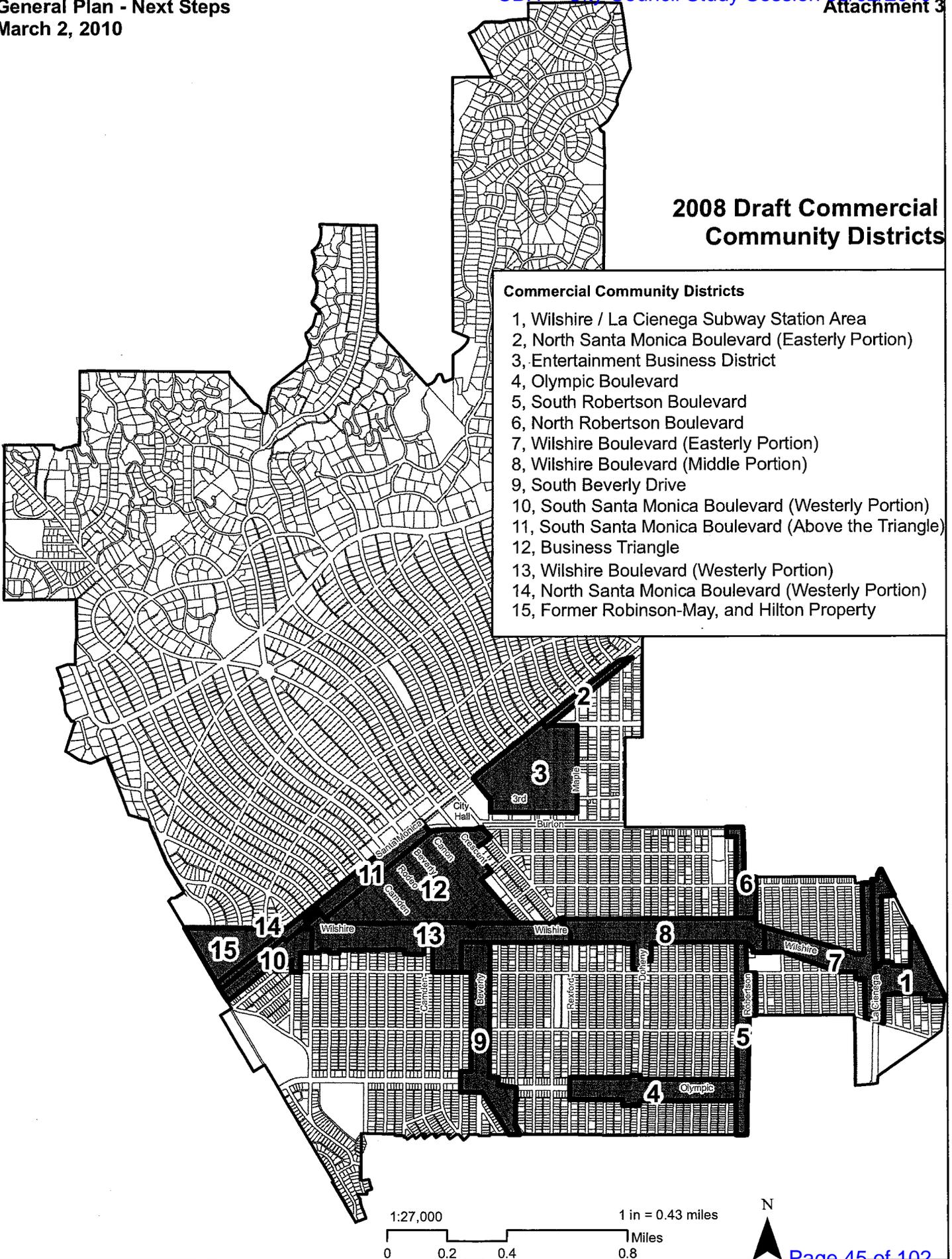
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### 2008 Draft Commercial Community Districts

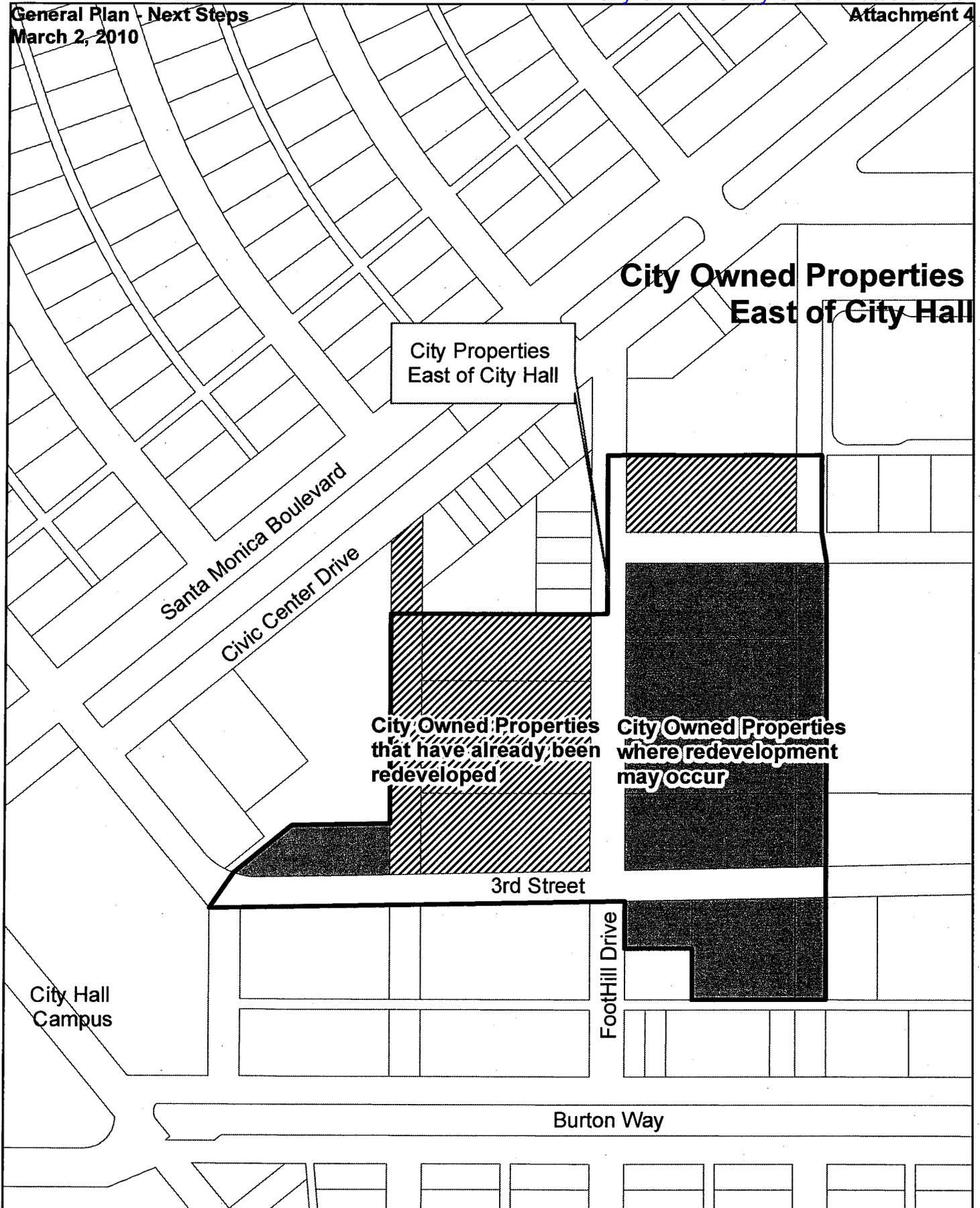
#### Commercial Community Districts

- 1, Wilshire / La Cienega Subway Station Area
- 2, North Santa Monica Boulevard (Easterly Portion)
- 3, Entertainment Business District
- 4, Olympic Boulevard
- 5, South Robertson Boulevard
- 6, North Robertson Boulevard
- 7, Wilshire Boulevard (Easterly Portion)
- 8, Wilshire Boulevard (Middle Portion)
- 9, South Beverly Drive
- 10, South Santa Monica Boulevard (Westerly Portion)
- 11, South Santa Monica Boulevard (Above the Triangle)
- 12, Business Triangle
- 13, Wilshire Boulevard (Westerly Portion)
- 14, North Santa Monica Boulevard (Westerly Portion)
- 15, Former Robinson-May, and Hilton Property



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