

# Growing Whittier

Planning the Future, Preserving the Past

An Economic Development Newsletter Published by the City of Whittier

## Revitalizing Whittier with Redevelopment Funds

For the past 40 years, the Whittier Redevelopment Agency (WRA) has worked to eliminate blight and rehabilitate areas by encouraging new residential, commercial, and industrial development. The WRA currently encompasses 14.6% of the City's area and has four redevelopment project areas. The project areas cover the City's commercial areas and include the Whittwood Town Center, The Quad, the Whittier Marketplace, the Fred C. Nelles site, Whittier Boulevard, and Uptown Whittier.

A portion of the property taxes generated by the properties in the project areas is reinvested into new projects. These funds enable the WRA to help finance future projects such as the development at Nelles, a new parking structure in Uptown, Boulevard beautification projects, expansion of the Whittwood (Branch) Library, and new affordable housing projects.



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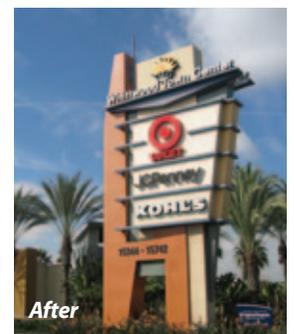


As part of its economic revitalization work, the WRA funds Whittier's Local Economic Stimulus and Business Development programs. The programs include: Commercial Façade Loan Program, Etching Shield Program grants, a Business Seminar Series, and a 50% subsidy in Zoning Entitlement and Building Permit fees.

In recent years, the WRA has used its resources to invest in public assets and infrastructure like the Whittier Police Headquarters (\$4.5 million) and street lights on east Whittier Boulevard (\$500,000). It also funded the Uptown Parking Management Plan study and development of Specific Plans for Uptown and Whittier Boulevard (\$1.25 million). Additionally, the WRA has used its funds to create the Affordable Home Ownership Program (AHOP) to provide silent second home loans for moderate-income families at the new Gables Townhomes.

Prior to 2001, the WRA assisted with land acquisition and development financing for close to 20 commercial projects throughout the four project areas, including The Quad, Marketplace, Whittwood, and Hilton (Radisson) Hotel. In addition to commercial projects, the WRA has funded the development of three parks, a parking lot, and a number of streetscape improvements along Greenleaf Avenue and Whittier Boulevard.

The Agency's project areas have several more decades of life left and the Agency plans to continue to use its resources and expertise to eliminate blight and encourage high quality development projects in Whittier.



# Moving Right Along

## Whittier Boulevard Specific Plan Update

The Whittier Boulevard Specific Plan (WBSP), the City's guideline for future development on the Boulevard since 2005, is being updated to address unanticipated changes to business patterns on the Boulevard. For example, due to the slow economy and resulting shifts in the automobile industry, expansion of the new car sales segment between College Avenue and Catalina Avenue, is no longer feasible. Modifications to the WBSP are



Former Saturn Site at Whittier Boulevard and Michigan Avenue

required to address land use, development, and administrative issues to facilitate the redevelopment of the vacant car dealer lots and other commercial buildings in the segment. The proposed changes will coincide with the original vision and goals of the document because those will not be changed. Consultants are working closely with City staff in developing the document revisions. A Supplemental Program Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR) has been prepared for the project which discusses the environmental impacts of the proposed revisions. The Draft SPEIR public comment period ended earlier this year. The proposed WBSP revisions and the SPEIR have already been



Example of New Development on Whittier Boulevard

considered by the Planning Commission on May 2 and May 16, 2011. Their recommendations and findings will be forwarded to the City Council for final consideration at a subsequent public hearing in June. Please visit the City's website at [www.cityofwhittier.org](http://www.cityofwhittier.org) for more information and updates.

## Mineral Extraction Study

The City of Whittier continues to actively research ways in which our assets can best be utilized for the betterment of our residents. The City has leased its excess water rights to generate additional revenue along with maximizing the economic base in an effort to maintain public services during these difficult economic times. In looking at other options, the City awarded a mineral lease to Matrix Oil Corporation in 2008 to extract water, natural gas, and oil from the sub-surface formations beneath 1,290 acres of City owned land. The lease was recently extended for an additional three years. The City is currently processing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), in conjunction with the amended Conditional Use Permit application, which was submitted on April 5, 2011.

Matrix has submitted a revised project application based upon the environmentally superior alternative, as identified in the first EIR, as the project proposal. Under the new timeline, the revised EIR is anticipated to be released for public review in June 2011, with a public workshop slated for later that month. Using the current schedule, the project could be presented to the Planning Commission sometime in September 2011 and the City Council in October 2011. To find out more about the Mineral Extraction Project in the Whittier Hills and to view the EIR go to [www.cityofwhittier.org/depts/cd/mineralinfo/default.asp](http://www.cityofwhittier.org/depts/cd/mineralinfo/default.asp).

## Pickering & Philadelphia Project



Pickering Avenue



Philadelphia Street

Earlier this year, the City Council approved a 21-unit affordable housing development at the southwest corner of Pickering Avenue and Philadelphia Street. This is great news for the community as the half-acre site has sat vacant for many years. The project, which will be developed by LINC Community Development Corporation, will

# News In-Brief

receive a combined loan from the City and Redevelopment Agency of up to \$5.1 million. The high-quality Mediterranean design will include a large elevated courtyard and housing units above a semi-subterranean 36-car parking garage. The City is hopeful that the project can secure the necessary federal tax credit financing and move forward to help improve the Philadelphia gateway into Uptown while also providing affordable housing units to the community.

## The Gables of Whittier Back on Track

The Gables of Whittier project, located on Whittier Boulevard near First Avenue, is back on track with new owners, Far West Gables, LLC. The developer recently purchased the project that includes plans for 17 buildings around a central community park. Far West anticipates building out the remaining 67 condominiums,



*The Gables of Whittier Townhome Project*

of which 16 will be moderate-income affordable units. To date, 29 units have already been built, with 8 of those being affordable units. Construction on the next phase of the development is anticipated to begin later this summer. For more information on the City's Affordable Home Ownership Program (AHOP) and to be placed on the interest list contact Community Development at (562) 567-9320. For sales information, go to [www.farwestindustries.com](http://www.farwestindustries.com). The City is excited to see the project get back on track with the new owner.



## Business Seminar Series

The Business Owners Seminar Series (B.O.S.S.), co-sponsored by the Whittier Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Whittier, will close out this year's series with internationally renowned business consultant Ms. Barbara Wold! Bring your business partner, business neighbor, and your staff to hear from this highly sought after speaker in the retail business sector. The June seminar, entitled "Effective Selling to Avoid the Summer Slump," will be held on June 16, 2011 at the Whittier Central Library, 7344 Washington Ave., from 8 to 9:30 AM. This seminar is guaranteed to fill up so make sure to reserve your seat by calling the City of Whittier Community Development Department at (562) 567-9320.

## Cupcakery Coming to Whittier!

Owners Julie Humphrey and Liz Vega will be opening a cupcakery on Greenleaf Avenue in Uptown Whittier. The main staple at Sugar Expressions will be cupcakes; however, the store will also offer custom cookies and cakes. Julie and Liz are committed to bringing you products baked from scratch with the finest ingredients using top secret recipes passed down from generation to generation and are proud of their motto: "If you can dream it, we can do it."



*Banana Split Cupcakes*



*Tuxedos (Chocolate Cake with Vanilla Buttercream)*

## Another Flame Broiler Opens

A second Flame Broiler restaurant opened in the City earlier this year. The first location is at the Home Depot Shopping Center located at Washington Blvd. and Lambert Rd. and the second location is at the Whittwood Town Center between Vons and Panera Bread.





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## City of Whittier Important Phone Numbers

- City Hall: (562) 567-9999
- Business License: (562) 567-9880
- Code Enforcement: (562) 567-9190
- Community Development: (562) 567-9320
- Community Services: (562) 567-9460
- **Graffiti Hotlines - within Whittier: (562) 567-9560**  
Unincorporated: (800) 675-4357 or (562) 946-6468
- Library: (562) 567-9900
- Police: (562) 567-9200
- Public Works: (562) 567-9540

For additional information on Economic Development in the City of Whittier, please contact Angelica Frausto, Business Development Manager at (562) 567-9320

[www.cityofwhittier.org](http://www.cityofwhittier.org) • [www.insidewhittier.com](http://www.insidewhittier.com)

## Spotlight on City Projects

### New Farmer's Market Comes to Uptown

Recently, the Whittier Uptown Association celebrated the grand opening of a new weekly Farmer's Market on Sundays in the historic business district. The new event was specifically created to be a Sunday event as it was believed there would be less of an impact on existing businesses.

Sunday was also selected for the weekly event in an effort to encourage families to visit Uptown on a day which is generally quieter than other days and the Association hopes to attract families that attend church services in the area.

The new Sunday Market Place event is in addition to the Certified Friday Farmer's Market located at the southwest corner of Philadelphia Street and Bright Avenue as well as the Wednesday Family Fair event. The Sunday event will consist of a variety of vendors including produce farmers, crafters, and artisans. The Sunday Market Place may also include local businesses and community groups selling their

wares or promoting their services. For more information on the Sunday Market Place, contact the Whittier Uptown Association at (562) 696-2662 or visit [www.whittieruptown.org](http://www.whittieruptown.org).

