

THE REVITALIZATION OF PARAMOUNT

How One City Turned Itself Around



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The Revitalization of Paramount

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The Revitalization of Paramount

HOW ONE CITY TURNED ITSELF AROUND

In the years following World War II, as the landscape of Los Angeles County shifted from primarily farming to manufacturing, an “industrial belt” developed in the southeastern part of the county, stretching from the train yards of Commerce to the harbor at San Pedro. Here were found the factories and warehouses that propelled the economy of the Southland and, in many cases, the Western United States.

These communities, though, were not merely industrial tracts. They also featured residential neighborhoods and shopping districts, parks and other public spaces. They were, in short, cities.

But time was not kind to the L.A. industrial belt. An absence of urban planning, lax code enforcement, and the proliferation of bunker-style architecture slowly eroded the environment, turning this industrial belt into a rust belt.

Architecture and infrastructure can define a city’s spirit. When buildings are barren boxes and public spaces are ugly or in disrepair, a sense of dread, even fear, can seep into a community’s consciousness and control how residents, businesses, and shoppers regard their surroundings.

To this day, many areas of Southeast Los Angeles County are considered rough and tumble wastelands. In some cases, this perception is unfair, in others it is entirely appropriate. But it is a perception that can, and should, be met head on.

Take, for instance, the City of Paramount. Originally a major agriculture center known for

its dairies and hay markets, the City’s fields and feedlots were overtaken during the 1960s and ‘70s by concrete and asphalt. County planners early on pegged Paramount as an industrial town suited for low-tech uses like auto repair and salvage. Urban blight resulted and the Rand Corporation, in a study of suburbs across America, labeled the City a “disaster” area.

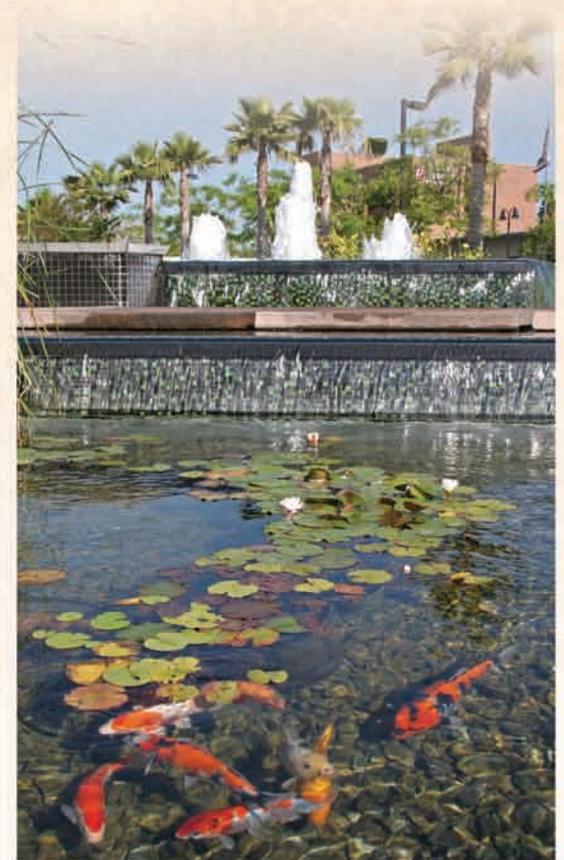
This indictment served to galvanize the community to turn itself around. Led by an activist government of councilmembers and administrators, the City faced its demons and decided to take control of its own destiny.

Minding the “Broken Window” theory of urban planning – which suggests that decay left untended will only spread – and with public safety as the engine driving it all, Paramount embarked on a strategy to create a state of excellence rather than give into a state of despair.

A concerted effort was launched to make physical improvements everywhere in town. By using aggressive municipal tools like zoning ordinances, planning regulations, design guidelines, redevelopment and economic incentives, the City hoped to inspire residents and business owners to become engaged in the process of bettering the community.

The effort is ongoing, but the municipal turnaround has been nothing short of phenomenal, and has gained national, even worldwide attention. Stories have appeared in the Los Angeles Times, on PBS television, in the New York

Times and in the newsletter of the International Economic Council. Innovative thinking, hard work, and creative vision – going the extra mile beyond simply maintaining city services – have brought luster to a once tarnished image as reflected in the attitudes of residents and businesses. This, then, is Paramount today.



A New Downtown

Hynes-Clearwater was a five-square-mile chunk of Southeast Los Angeles County that, at its peak, was one of the nation's largest dairy producers and the world's biggest receiving point of hay. Home to more than 25,000 cows, the community did \$1 million worth of business a month – \$150,000 from cream alone.

The business district of this agricultural center was found along Paramount Boulevard, the street that later provided a name for the incorporated city Hynes-Clearwater became in 1957. As the dairies thrived, so did the banks, grocery stores, pharmacies and restaurants downtown.

But the 1960s and '70s became a time of transition for many towns in Los Angeles County. In Paramount, the transformation presented a number of problems. The dairies were moving out to rural areas, taking large portions of the local workforce (and local consumers) with them. Meanwhile, nearby cities were building suburban housing developments and regional shopping malls. The small merchants of Paramount Boulevard suffered from the competition badly; many closed or left.

In addition, many of the uses replacing the dairy lots, such as auto wreckage yards and construction-related enterprises were prone to blight. The combination-related enterprises

were prone to blight. The combination of merchant flight and industrial sprawl created a city on the verge of – and in some cases over the edge of – urban decay.

City leaders knew that action was required to keep Paramount from falling beyond repair. A redevelopment Agency was formed in 1973 to create financing options for the revitalization of neglected sections of town like the downtown district.

When focusing on downtown, the City faced a daunting decision: Do you refurbish what's there or start over from scratch. In this case,

Continued on Page 5



A NEW DOWNTOWN



1950s

Between the post-war years and the 1960s, Paramount was a thriving town that evolved from a major agricultural center to a suburb with an industrial, commercial and residential base.



1980s

But, as with many Los Angeles-area "rust belt" cities, by the 1980s blight, flight and other social ills had ravaged Paramount, leaving a deteriorated downtown corridor and causing the federal government to declare the City a "disaster suburb."



TODAY

The City moved forward with innovative planning, hard work and redevelopment efforts, and by the 1990s, Paramount's downtown (as seen today) had come to reflect the transformation that was taking place across the entire community.

The REVITALIZATION OF PARAMOUNT

BEFORE



NORTHWEST CORNER OF
PARAMOUNT BOULEVARD
AND JACKSON STREET

SOUTHWEST CORNER OF
PARAMOUNT BOULEVARD
AND JACKSON STREET



BEFORE

AFTER



AFTER

A NEW DOWNTOWN

AFTER



BEFORE



NORTHEAST CORNER OF
PARAMOUNT BOULEVARD
AND JACKSON STREET



PARAMOUNT BOULEVARD
NORTH OF JACKSON STREET



BEFORE

AFTER

The REVITALIZATION OF PARAMOUNT

Continued from Page 1

the existing building stock was unattractive and run-down. Also, at the time, popular retailers usually were looking for new construction. So with one mighty swoop, the old district of three city blocks was torn down. Continuing its sensitivity to merchants and property owners, the City proved very generous when buying properties or relocating businesses. All affected parties were either willing sellers or opted to stay and participate in the new development of the City.

By the mid-1980s, Town Centers East and West had opened, and downtown Paramount was on its way again to becoming a vibrant business district serving local residents and workers. And its positive influence has spilled over to many other parts of the City, with tangible results: the 1990s saw retail sales soar by 49%. During that same period, the sales increase for all of Los Angeles County was only 24%.



BEFORE



AFTER

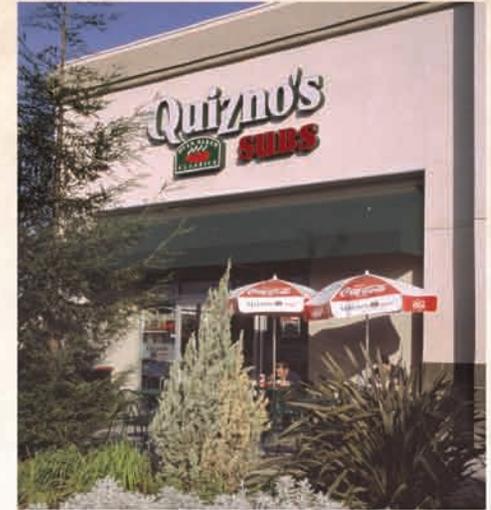




The Paramount Pond

The Paramount Pond was a creative solution to two thorny problems in the City's downtown – the lack of a true public plaza and the existence of a vacant lot that resisted years of development efforts. By making the first move and creating a “there” there, the City not only provided a unique, relaxing and artistic space for the community, but also attracted three new, successful restaurants, which subsequently have made the Pond an even more popular place for the community.

The Pond is located one block from the ice skating rink built by Frank Zamboni in 1940, where he later invented the world famous Zamboni Ice Resurfacing Machine. The Pond has become an integral part of the downtown and the City – a celebration of Paramount's rich ice skating history that will serve as an asset long into the future.





Civic Center Gardens

Paramount's "civic center" was a patchwork that had developed over a number of years. City Hall was built in 1963, the county library in '68 and the community hospital three years later. These three entities pretty much stood independently of each other, had no connective tissue, save for a large, unattractive parking lot.

All this changed in 2004 when the Civic Center was "unified." It is now a beautiful botanical garden spread over an acre with a system of walking paths that traverse an intricate design of native Californian drought-resistant plants, flowers and shrubs. A visitor to City Hall, entering on the new Civic Center Drive, passes an elegant row of Canary Island date palms and is brought to a dramatic

Continued on Page 8



Continued from Page 7

fountain cascading into a pond full of koi and blooming lilies. Spread throughout the colonnade of the plaza itself – which is lined with Mexican fan palms, crape myrtles and tipu trees – are groups of benches, and the visitor, choosing to stroll or sit and relax, is serenaded by recordings featuring a soothing musical style. A second fountain, with dancing waters choreographed by computer, bookends the plaza.

Now, the heart of the city symbolizes the creative energy that defines the character of Paramount. It's also an attractive asset used and enjoyed by residents every day.



“Hay Tree” Named State Historical Landmark

The entire block that contains the Civic Center and hospital played an important role in the City’s history as a dairy and hay leader. Back in the days when Paramount was known as Hynes-Clearwater, huge trucks loaded with hay drove into town every morning, and dairy farmers from far and wide would come to buy the feed for their herds. This area was the largest receiving point for hay in the country.

One of the biggest hay dealers in the state, Western Consumers Feed Company, had its headquarters in a brick building that still stands adjacent to the Civic Center. Next to Western Consumers was a 50-foot-high, 120-year-old camphor tree that’s been called the “Hay Tree” for as long as anyone can remember. Each day the hay dealers in town would gather under its branches and set the commodity’s price, which was then sent to the markets in New York, and consequently quoted all around the world.

As an important vestige of the region’s past, the Paramount Hay Tree was recognized by California as State Historical Landmark No. 1038. The site is graced by metal cow cutouts and stacks of hay to affectionately recall the scene, and is planted with rows of wheat-like flax.



Blight Takes a Hike

- STREET & SIDEWALKS
- POCKET PARKS
- A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
- UTILITY & RAILROAD CORRIDORS

Cities with large industrial sectors sometimes allow themselves to become defined by this aspect of their composition. Too often, the image that develops is one of neglect, as the streets and public spaces begin to mirror the harsher elements of heavy industry.

Finding itself on just such a path, Paramount acted to halt the slide, believing that even an urban manufacturing center could contain the finer elements of a suburban planned community. By making a conscious decision to improve the City's appearance, city officials hoped to raise the bar and spur similar actions elsewhere. By redeveloping its own public

facilities and spaces first, the City was providing an example for private developers to follow.

Over time, a variety of carefully devised programs were put into place to re-shape the town's look. From installing 15 acres of landscaped traffic medians throughout the City to "hiding" unsightly properties with decorative walls, these innovative planning ideas were grouped as an award-winning program called "Paramount Impressions." The components of the "Paramount Impressions" program are highlighted on the following pages.



BLIGHT TAKES A HIKE



Every major boulevard in the City has been enlivened with landscaped traffic medians, one of the design tools that have transformed Paramount's appearance.



Over \$2.5 million of private and public improvements accompanied the construction of the Home Depot, inspiring the creation of a new business corridor.



Streets & Sidewalks

A primary job of any city is to maintain the public right-of-way such as streets, sidewalks, and parks. But when a city goes the extra mile – when it installs landscaped traffic medians on every major boulevard, has an extensive tree planting program, enhances entrypoints with distinctive signage and other decorative touches – when it pays close attention to improving its image and its own backyard, then the development community will be much more apt to follow. That's exactly what has happened in Paramount.

- ❑ 10 MILES OF LANDSCAPED MEDIANS
- ❑ 13 ENTRY POINT MONUMENTS
- ❑ 10,000 PUBLIC TREES



AFTER



Pocket Parks

BEFORE



AFTER

There are few sights – or sites – as disheartening to look upon as the trash-strewn symbol of economic stagnation, the vacant lot. But what some view as a pariah, Paramount seized as an opportunity. In an imaginative approach, the City enters into no-cost leasing agreements with the property owners to landscape the lots for use as small parks, accepting liability while the land is in the public domain. The owner retains the right to sell and is relieved of on-going maintenance headaches.

- PARKS ADDED: 10
- ACQUISITION COST: FREE
- TOTAL DEVELOPMENT COST \$142,000

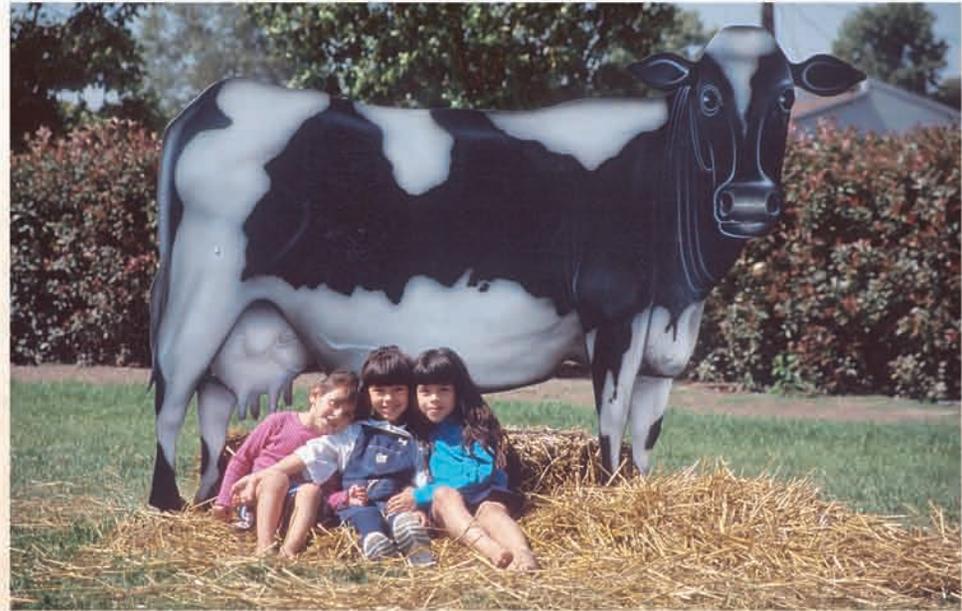
A Little Bit Country

BEFORE



On vacant lots where the mini-park concept is inappropriate, the City installs polyurethane, Kentucky-style fences, which lend the lots a rural, country meadow feel. Then, in a salute to Paramount's days as the hay and dairy capital of America (using a touch inspired by Chicago's popular "Cows on Parade"), the lots are accented with life-size cutouts of farm animals, creating playful urban spaces along city thoroughfares.

AFTER



AFTER

AFTER



AFTER

Utility & Railroad Corridors

BEFORE



Utility and railroad corridors crisscrossing a city present a special opportunity for blighted conditions to fester. These open scars of dirt and weeds often receive only sporadic maintenance and are fenced off from the street with chain link. In Paramount, that wasn't acceptable. Working with Southern California Edison, the L.A. Department of Water and Power, and the railroads, the City secured 15-foot setbacks at these rights-of-way, built berms, decorative fencing and hardscape, and landscaped with flowers and shrubs to hide the blight.

17 UTILITY/RAILROAD SETBACK IMPROVEMENTS

- 6 EDISON
- 4 RAILROAD
- 7 L.A. DEPT. OF WATER & POWER

Smart Investments

- DESIGN GUIDELINES
- COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION
- CODE ENFORCEMENT

In many cities with large, aging industrial sectors, time has led to a slow, almost imperceptible deterioration. This kind of decline is not rare, but great efforts must be taken to avoid it. Sadly, in many cases, not enough is done. Buildings fall into disrepair. Windows remain broken and fresh coats of paint never get applied. Often, crime rates are higher in these areas because the environment almost encourages anti-social behavior.

Before you know it, the “bunker mentality” has set in, which taints even new construction. Developers eschew such touches as landscap-

ing, since it takes up lot coverage and requires maintenance, and “nobody cares about trees and grass here anyway.” Windows – to keep from being broken – are eliminated. Architectural flourishes are frowned upon as graffiti magnets.

The type of downward spiral had begun in Paramount. But with the same resolve it displayed improving public spaces, the City focused on three areas to revitalize its business sector: design guidelines, commercial rehabilitation, and code enforcement.

Continued on Page 17





The Bianchi Theatres eleven screen multiplex was a leading player in Paramount's economic rejuvenation. Using the City's architectural design guidelines, the development incorporated such touches as fountains, decorative walls and landscaping along the adjacent boulevard.

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DESIGN GUIDELINES

Specific architectural design guidelines were developed that aim for the upscale look of “higher end” communities. These, along with a Design Review Board that enforces the guidelines during the planning stage, counter perceptions that an “old rust belt town” will accept just about anything. In Paramount, substandard projects don’t get built.

Walmart, for instance, opened its first Southeast Los Angeles County store in Paramount. The company left behind its standard utilitarian building design and followed the City’s design guidelines, thus tying the business into the “Paramount look.”

The most recent development in town, The Home Depot, opened in February 2002. The site – another City gateway –

Continued on Page 18



Working closely with developers, the City lays out a clear set of design guidelines that include features like large setbacks, generous landscaping, public art displays and architectural flourishes. These result in projects like the one shown above, which is primarily warehousing space built to resemble a quality office building.



The City encourages unique, attractive architecture for new developments, as with the Jack in the Box and El Pollo Loco that opened recently along a reinvigorated Alondra Boulevard on the west end of town near The Home Depot.



In response to the City's robust economic scene, WalMart opened its first Southeast Los Angeles County outlet in Paramount in 1994. The chain also built the store following the City's design guidelines to adhere to the "Paramount look."



Named by Fortune magazine as one of the Top 10 most admired companies in America, The Home Depot opened in Paramount in 2002. Lush landscaping enhances the large development.

Continued from Page 17

was formerly home to an industrial operation, which the City helped relocate to a more appropriate part of town. The City adorned the area around the store with stately date palms, river-rock-accented traffic medians and other touches such as public art, totaling over \$1.5 million of public improvements. Not only has this enhanced the consumer experience, but the work also inspired the construction of new businesses and housing nearby. A thriving economic corridor has sprung to life where vacant lots and creeping blight had taken hold.

COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION

The Commercial Rehabilitation Program is perhaps the most compelling instrument to achieve the City's urban landscape goals. It is aimed at revitalizing commercial and industrial properties. Upgrades can include fresh stucco, new roofs and renovated signage on a rundown structure, or decorative walls and lush landscaping installed to mask an unappealing industrial vista. The exterior rehabs go hand in hand with the design guidelines, which strive to provide a clean, identifiable and unified look throughout town. What makes the program especially attractive to businesses is that, in addition to offering design assistance, the City pays 75% of the total costs.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

The bedrock, however, of improving the look and feel of a City is vigorous enforcement of municipal codes. In Paramount, where the number of officers for this job was doubled to four, code enforcement is where the opportunities for design upgrades are discovered. Code enforcement officers work with property owners to explore the City's improvement programs. Strong code enforcement helps establish an inviting atmosphere, which in turn draws new economic development and prosperity.

El Compa Restaurant

BEFORE



COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION

- PROJECTS SINCE 1985: 260
- PUBLIC INVESTMENT: \$7 MILLION
- PRIVATE INVESTMENT: \$2.5 MILLION



BEFORE

Pacific Bell

AFTER



AFTER

AFTER



Paramount Bike Shop

BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE

Big Ben Car Wash

AFTER

A-1 Storage

BEFORE



BEFORE

Ace Auto Wrecking



AFTER

AFTER



Castillo Office Building

BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE

Iceland

Curb Appeal

- RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION
- WHITE PICKET FENCES

The industry-heavy communities of South-eastern Los Angeles County do not exist in a vacuum. These are cities, after all, with dense residential neighborhoods. For all its factories and warehouses, Paramount is home to almost 56,000 residents.

The city's "outside-the-box" planning style has not been confined to public and business

spaces alone. As population in Southern California swelled, it was inevitable that Paramount – a built-out urban community – would need to find creative ways to increase housing. Progressive efforts have been made to provide new residential possibilities and to engage existing homeowners in charting their own course to excellence.

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Continued from Page 23

In addition to standard urban infill projects, tearing down old homes to build new ones, the City has taken advantage of industrial sites that have either closed down or moved. With the City's help, for instance, old petroleum businesses were replaced by an attractive condominium complex. Across the street, what had been a desolate pipe yard is now a tract of single-family homes built by Kaufman and Broad, one of the country's largest residential developers. And so it has been with many similar parcels throughout Paramount. Architectural design guidelines for these new projects help ensure stylistic compatibility.

Continued on Page 27



The REVITALIZATION OF PARAMOUNT

BEFORE



RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION

- PROJECTS SINCE 1990: 346
- PUBLIC INVESTMENT: \$3.85 MILLION
- PRIVATE INVESTMENT: \$1.23 MILLION

BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER



CURB APPEAL

AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE

Continued from Page 24

RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION

For existing homes, the City has programs available to improve properties and increase values. The Residential Rehabilitation Program gives qualifying homeowners grants to make any number of structural and cosmetic improvements. A separate program offers re-bates for roof replacements. Since 1996, roof rebates worth nearly \$50,000 have been provided to homeowners throughout town.

WHITE PICKET FENCES

A rather novel approach to stopping urban blight in residential neighborhoods – specifically in the form of chain link – is Paramount’s White Picket Fence Program. Again, the City contributes a major portion of the purchase and installation cost to replace front yard chain link fences. The new, sturdy polyurethane fences are rust and graffiti resistant, don’t need painting, and serve not only to improve neighborhood appearance and property values, but community pride, as well.

- PROJECTS SINCE 1997: 325
- PUBLIC INVESTMENT: \$708,380
- PRIVATE INVESTMENT: \$257,126



CURB APPEAL

AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE

Art Around Town

- 3 L. A. RIVER MURALS
- 11 FOUNTAINS
- 29 SCULPTURES

To top off Paramount's efforts at transforming its physical environment and enhancing the standard of living for residents, the City has put a special emphasis on establishing a public art program. This has taken many forms, from the life-like bronze sculptures at the Paramount Pond to the construction of a series of fountains on street corners and entry points throughout town. Twenty-six

sculptures grace Paramount, and along the Los Angeles River three playful murals of aquatic creatures frolic on the levee, bidding welcome to motorists entering town.

With its calming influence and liberating effect on the human soul, art is not just an embellishment to the City's landscape; it becomes a fundamental component of the environment.





The "Paramount Welcome Wall," masks a bus maintenance yard and features a graceful, undulating design that creates a sense that the wall is waving as drivers pass by. It is a civic enhancement that serves a practical purpose, and offers a greeting at an entrance to the City.

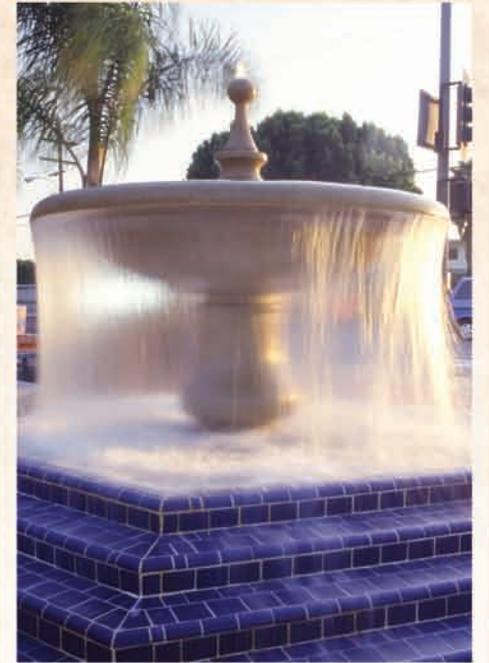
L.A. River Murals

As part of an ongoing effort to beautify the City's entry points, Paramount has painted three large murals on the levee of the Los Angeles River. A pod of whales frolic where eastbound Alondra Boulevard enters the City. A school of sharks, with a group of orange Garibaldi, traverse the eastern embankment for 300 feet at Somerset Boulevard. And at Rosecrans Avenue a group of sea turtles has joined the parade.

This project is also an example of the cooperative spirit between Paramount and other agencies on gateway improvements. The City worked with the Los Angeles County Public Works Department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to make these murals happen.



Fountains

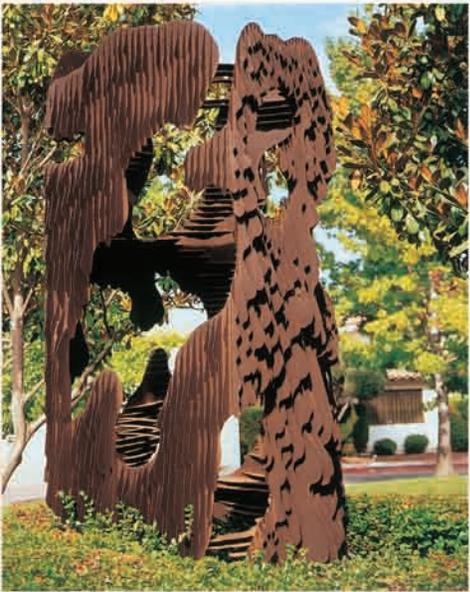


The REVITALIZATION OF PARAMOUNT

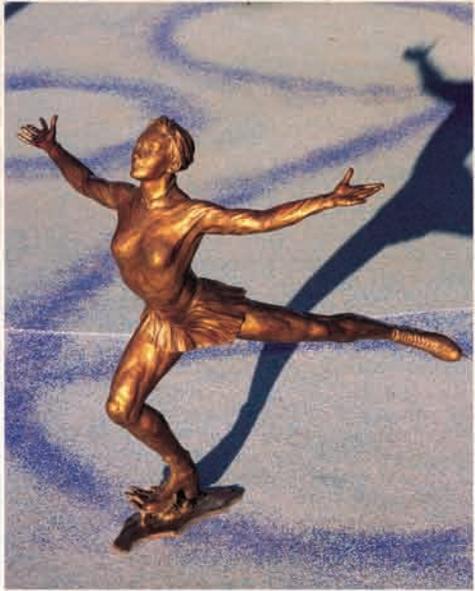
SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN



FLUID



*Stylish
Sculptures*



POLISHED PERFORMANCE



KAI KOO VII



ORIGAMI PONY



SOLAR SAILS

SUSTENANCE



CRACK THE WHIP

Stylish Sculptures



PASSAGE

Blueprint for Turning a City Around

PROGRAM	PURPOSE OF PROGRAM	HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM
Streets and Sidewalks	To upgrade public spaces, such as streets and parks, improve the look of the community, instill resident pride, and also “raise the bar” for design elements required of private developers.	Constructing beautifully landscaped traffic medians on major boulevards makes a significant and instant improvement. Use decorative concrete or pavers at intersections. Plant trees wherever possible. Enhance city entry points with distinctive signage and other decorative touches.
Pocket Parks	To transform blighted vacant lots into mini-parks. To increase park space in built-out urban cities at very low cost. Involves no acquisition.	Enter into no-cost lease agreements with lot owners to utilize the lot as public space while it is on the market. Stress that owner will be relieved of all maintenance headaches for the lot. Usually requires city to assume liability for lot while it is in public domain.
A Little Bit Country	To provide other aesthetic enhancements to mitigate the blighted appearance of vacant lots where the mini-park concept doesn’t work (due to space limitations, contamination issues, etc.). Decorative touches are very inexpensive and add character and a purpose to the lot.	Remove any chain link and install polyurethane, Kentucky-style or picket fencing around lot. Lot immediately takes on a rural feel. Artistic touches, such as animal statues or cutouts, hay bales, etc. can be used to make the lot look like a pasture or meadow.
Utility and Railroad Corridors	To “disguise” ugly utility and railroad corridors on major boulevards. Utility companies usually lease their easement areas to farming or storage uses and have few, if any, development standards. Since the easements are oftentimes very wide swaths of land, these unsightly uses can have a major negative impact on the adjoining streetscape.	Work with appropriate utility to lease, obtain an easement, or otherwise secure 15-foot setbacks at these rights-of-way. Install landscaped berms, decorative fencing and hardscape. Landscape with flowers and shrubs to hide the uses in the utility easements.
Design Guidelines	To establish strict, specific architectural design guidelines that aim for the upscale look of higher-end communities. To ensure high quality new development. To work against the tendency of developers to offer the least expensive and most uninspired designs based on low expectations from the community.	A consultant is helpful here. With community input, if necessary, develop design guidelines for new commercial, and if desired, residential development. Guidelines should be flexible and allow for changes and new ideas. The main goal is just to ensure that enhanced architectural elements become a part of the design requirements. For example, dimensional roof material, or window banding and other pop outs to provide interest to an otherwise flat façade.
Commercial Rehabilitation	To remodel and revitalize existing commercial and industrial properties on major boulevards. To provide design consistency and keep major city corridors looking clean, attractive and up-to-date.	A Redevelopment Agency is helpful here. Create a rebate or loan program to offer incentives to older businesses along major corridors to remodel. Use an architect to draw a rendering or do a photo enhancement showing the property owner what the finished product could look like. Make personal visits to businesses to pitch the program. Advertise through the Chamber of Commerce.

Blueprint for Turning a City Around

PROGRAM	PURPOSE OF PROGRAM	HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM
Code Enforcement	To create an expectation in the community that a minimum level of property maintenance is required and expected. To prevent a slow slide into blight or decay. To maintain the appearance of the city.	Hire Code Enforcement Officers to enforce property maintenance codes. Officers should be well informed of other city programs that might be able to help homeowner or business owner with maintenance issues. A strong commitment by the City Council and buy-in from the community, as well as flexible, mature Code Enforcement Officers who can exercise discretion in the field, are necessary for a successful code enforcement program.
Residential Rehabilitation; Roof Rebates	To remodel older homes that are an eyesore in the neighborhood. To assist low-income residents with property improvements. To provide an incentive for homeowners to use high quality, dimensional roofing materials instead of flat, 20-year. asphalt shingle.	Offer loans or grants to homeowners to fix up dilapidated houses. Focus improvements on “curb appeal” items such as paint, stucco, roofs, landscaping. Funding sources may dictate this program can only be offered to low-to-moderate income residents. Grant programs tend to be more successful than loan programs, and, in the end, less work for the city. Offer rebates to homeowners who are reroofing, conditioned upon their using 30 or 40 year dimensional roofing material, or tile.
White Picket Fences	To replace chain-link fences in residential front yards with sturdy, attractive white picket fences. To improve the look of residential neighborhoods at very little cost.	Provide an economic incentive, such as a grant, to homeowners to remove front yard chain link fencing and replace it with an attractive white polyurethane picket fence. This program works best when the city targets an entire neighborhood and has fences installed on the majority of homes on a street. Instantly changes the look of the entire neighborhood. Tends to soften the look and distract the eye away from less-than-manicured homes.
Public Art Program	To enhance the look of the city. To soften “concrete jungle” look of built-out city. To give residents something pleasant to view and enjoy. To create a sense of culture in the community.	If possible, establish an art fee for major developments. These fees are found in many cities. Use the funds to purchase art pieces such as sculptures or fountains, and place in strategic locations throughout community. Depending on the community, art programs can be easy or hard. Our advice is to keep the selection process as simple as possible. You’ll soon learn that everyone is an art critic.
Downtown Plaza	To provide a public space “anchor” to the downtown and create a unique environment in the downtown area to help attract key tenants.	Requires a conscious decision to forego some potential retail space in exchange for a development that will create a “paseo” type atmosphere, drawing people into the downtown who may not otherwise come. Hopefully, they will shop.

The Reviews Are In

“There is much this little city can teach its neighbors about personal responsibility, respect for others, optimism, enthusiasm, risk-taking, trust and generosity of spirit.”

*Long Beach Press-Telegram,
“Lessons from a Little City,”
March 31, 1997*

“In this once rundown and gang-ridden outpost south of Los Angeles, the new white picket fences bordering front yards on street after street are just one sign of a citywide makeover that is as pervasive as the plummeting crime rate.”

*New York Times,
“A City Climbs Out of the Doldrums,”
March 26, 2002*

“The city has gone from danger and decay to flower beds and Starbucks.”

*KCET Channel 28, “Life and Times,”
April 8, 2002*

“Just as impressive as the news accounts, and in some ways more so, was a booklet put together by the city describing improvements . . . You have to see them to appreciate the changes in Paramount, either by paying a visit or browsing through photos of ‘before’ and ‘after.’”

*Long Beach Press-Telegram,
“Package from Paramount: A Success Story
Worth Retelling,” May 6, 2002*

“The Los Angeles River’s concrete-lined channels can summon bleak images . . . But the southeast Los Angeles city of Paramount is offering a different perspective with a rainbow of three murals painted on the river’s levees . . .”

*Los Angeles Times Magazine, “River of Dreams:
The City of Paramount Has a Vision Thing,”
October 27, 2002*

“Today, Paramount is known for pocket parks and picket fences . . . no longer a model of suburban blight . . .”

*Los Angeles Times, Editorial,
April 26, 2004*

“Take the Paramount Boulevard exit north from the 91 Freeway one of these days and you’ll see what we mean. At first the boulevard is dingy and sorry-looking, but when you cross the border into the city of Paramount you’ll be struck by the difference: trees, landscaping, nice looking buildings, a newly reconstructed civic center, white picket fences in the residential areas, pocket parks, and some whimsical cardboard cows propped up on a vacant lot.”

*Long Beach Press-Telegram,
“A City with Attitude; Paramount, Success
Comes from a Non-simplistic Approach,”
October 19, 2003*



