

GREEN ZONES WORKING GROUP ACTION PLAN

Introduction

In September 2013 the Commerce Green Zones Working Group presented its final recommendations to the City Council. The recommendations included a set of guiding principles and strategies to address issues related to harmful affects from industry. The City Council directed the Green Zones Working Group to prioritize the recommendations and further advise on next steps to realizing the goals and priorities of the Working Group. The following Action Plan describes the key steps to implement the recommendations developed by the Commerce Green Zones Working Group. The Plan is organized by goal, strategy, action steps, the lead entity responsible for implementation, and the timeline for completion.

GOAL B Reduction

Provide separation of harmful uses from sensitive receptors

Strategy B1: Establish a voluntary business retrofit program for existing and new businesses

- i. Provide technical and financial assistance for existing businesses to implement measures that reduce pollution, reduce cost and increase profit
- ii. Assist new businesses in identifying and applying for programs that help pay for any pollution-reducing actions that have start-up cost implications
- iii. Provide technical and financial assistance for existing businesses to apply for programs that improve worker health and performance that results in improved work productivity for an increased bottom line for business
- iv. Provide energy efficiency audits and trainings
- v. Provide retrofit audits and trainings

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Use the framework developed by the Green Zone Working Group to create the voluntary retrofit program description and criteria for a participating business	Public Works and Development Services (PW&DS)	Beginning of First Year
b	Identify initial funding for voluntary retrofit program as outlined in Strategy B2	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
c	Establish an initial number of businesses to include in pilot test of voluntary retrofit program, based on criteria and initial funding	PW&DS	Middle of First Year

d	Evaluate pilot program to assess success and make appropriate adjustments	PW&DS	End of First Year
e	Implement retrofit program city-wide	PW&DS	End of First Year

Strategy B2: Seek grant funding opportunities to implement business retrofit program

i.	Apply for regional, state and federal grants (i.e. SB353, AB 118, etc.) to fund program
ii.	Partner with private entities to provide monetary and/or in kind contributions

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Develop and implement a grant application model to effectively apply for available grant funding	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Second Year
b	Establish a list of potential projects to be funded by non-profits, regional, state, and federal grants	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Second Year, Ongoing
c	Complete first round of grant applications	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Second Year
d	Identify alternative funding sources	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
e	Evaluate success of grant program and adjust the application process to meet current needs	Business Liaison/Office	End of Third Year

Strategy B3: Ensure adequate resources to implement pollution reduction strategies

i.	Create a designated office in the City to manage the business retrofit program and other programs
ii.	Provide adequate staff to expeditiously process permits

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Solicit input from Industrial Council, League of Cities and others to establish a budget for the Business Liaison position/office	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year

b	Review job description to confirm budget required to fund Business Liaison position (see Strategy C1)	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
c	Evaluate a variety of staffing options including staff, current staff, or a consultant	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
d	Develop resource plan to identify funding options for Business Liaison position	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
e	Evaluate and assess performance of business liaison to process permits and implement retrofit program	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
f	Identify gaps and make recommendations for additional staff	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year

Strategy B4: Develop a business outreach program to promote the voluntary business retrofit program and other technical assistance

- i. Highlight business retrofit program participants
- ii. Create a packet of materials that includes collateral materials about the retrofit program and other resource documents such as the Commerce Guide to Green

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Identify model businesses which have successfully completed the business retrofit program (see Strategy B1) to be included in outreach materials	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
b	Create business marketing and outreach campaign that includes an award (plaque, trophy, etc.)	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
c	Include highlights of successful businesses in Report to the People and other similar publications	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
d	Create an information guide both online and hardcopy to include collateral materials about the retrofit program and other resource documents such as Commerce Guide to Green or U.S. Department of Energy: Advanced Energy Retrofit Guide	Business Liaison/Office	End of Third Year
e	Develop a page on the City's website to provide any additional technical information or outreach materials	Business Liaison/Office	End of Third Year

Strategy B5: Create capital improvement program to resolve issues of environmental pollution

- i. Assess funding needs
- ii. Explore funding sources and mechanisms

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Establish an environmental pollution capital improvement program list	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year

b	Assign business liaison to research short list	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
c	Initiate interdepartmental meetings or committee to review list of priority projects	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
d	Identify available funding sources	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
e	Seek grant and other intergovernmental assistance as additional funding mechanisms	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
f	Utilize grant funding to solicit funding from identified sources	Business Liaison/Office	End of Third Year
g	Apply for capital improvement funds	Business Liaison/Office	End of Third Year

Strategy B7: Provide non-financial incentives to shift from polluting to non-polluting industrial processes

i.	Create an award program that recognizes businesses that have successfully participated in the retrofit program (use the Guide to Green as a foundation)
ii.	Create an information and education program to demonstrate cost savings associated with retrofitting

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Identify businesses that have successfully participated in the retrofit program (see Strategy B1)	Business Liaison/Office	End of First Year
b	Utilize the business outreach program to recognize businesses that participated in the retrofit program (see Strategy B4)	PW&DS, Public Information Office (PIO)	End of First Year
c	Develop Celebrate Commerce Green Report to market and highlight retrofit program businesses, Green Businesses (such as the Electrical Training Institute's retrofitted facility), environmental programs, air quality updates, cost saving information such as energy or water savings by business or sector, and any additional relevant business information	PW&DS, PIO, Commerce Green Council	Beginning of First Year

GOAL C Revitalization

Create opportunities that contribute to a healthy green economy

Strategy C1: Create an office staffed by one or more City staff or consultant to provide support services to new and existing businesses – Business Liaison

- i. Provide support with expediting permit process for new and existing businesses
- ii. Develop ongoing relationship with utility companies and regulatory agencies to facilitate the permit process
- iii. Ensure flexibility for the Business Liaison to manage the business retrofit program as needed (see Strategy B1)

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Use the framework developed by the Green Zone Working Group to create a position title and job description, including the staff/office's ability to perform grant writing, permit processing, marketing outreach, and establish relationships with utility companies	PW&DS	Beginning First Year
b	When funding is secured, initiate a campaign to recruit a staff Business Liaison or contract consultant (see Strategy B3)	PW&DS	Beginning First Year
c	Include in selection process relationships with utility companies and regulatory agencies as a critical requirement for position	PW&DS	Beginning First Year
d	Hire/contract Business Liaison	PW&DS	Beginning First Year
e	Utilize business liaison to assist with business retrofit program as needed	PW&DS	Beginning First Year
f	Evaluate and assess performance of business liaison and adjust position responsibilities as needed	PW&DS	End of First Year

Strategy C2: Identify appropriate business types to attract to the City of Commerce through an economic analysis

- i. Consult with business and brokerage community to identify business type(s) and characteristics – start with artisanal business described by the Green Zones Working Group and inform with food production, processing and distribution research and data from USC and other academic research
- ii. Review the City's tax and fee structure to identify taxes or fees that deter business attraction and expansion
- iii. Initiate a survey that gauges existing business' reason for locating in Commerce, needs of potential new business for relocating to Commerce and businesses that are located outside of Commerce
- vii. Identify potential tax incentives – reduction in fees, reductions in taxes, forgiveness of selected taxes such as sales tax on materials purchase
- viii. Review City's tax and fee structure to identify taxes or fees that deter business attraction and expansion
- ix. Prioritize the areas identified by the Green Zone Working Group (see Opportunity Areas Map)

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Develop a request for proposal (RFP) to conduct a market analysis that includes an inventory of existing business types and characteristics as well as retention strategies, taxes or fees that deter business attraction and expansion, business trends and forecasts, broker interviews, and any other relevant information	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
b	Publish the RFP and select a consultant to initiate economic study	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
c	Use the market analysis to identify a short list of core businesses to be targeted for attraction and retention	PW&DS	Middle of First year

- iv. Use zoning overlays or performance standards applied to attract uses that encourage better paying jobs and address issues with low employment per acre
- v. Create mixed use zones and implement programs to foster mixed use/mixed-income developments in strategic areas

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Use Specific Plan public process to inform strategies to address zoning overlays, performance standards, and mixed use zones (see Strategy C4)	PW&DS	Middle of Third Year

- vi. Provide preferential or streamlined permit processing for targeted businesses

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Incorporate into services provided by business liaison/office (see Strategy C1) for businesses located in a specific job cluster, zone, overlay, or adjacent to sensitive receptors	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year

Strategy C3: Create a marketing and outreach program to attract targeted new businesses

- i. Prepare a targeted marketing program outlining benefits to locating in the City of Commerce

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Identify model businesses to highlight in marketing program outlining benefits of operating a business within the City (see Strategy C2)	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Second Year
b	Develop set of marketing materials to promote the benefits of locating a business within City limits to be included in Celebrate Commerce Green Report (see Strategy B4 and B7)	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Third Year
c	Actively outreach to potential business clusters through targeted distribution	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Third Year
d	Evaluate success of business attraction and adjust marketing strategy as needed	Business Liaison/Office	End of Fourth Year

Strategy C4: Develop a Specific Plan in a designated area (or areas) to attract new business and revitalize economic development

- i. Create and implement mixed use and housing incentives in town center and other non-industrial growth areas

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Confirm Specific Plan area(s) as part of the scoping process, identified by the Green Zone Working Group, through the creation of a vision document based off outreach to businesses and community members	PW&DS	Middle of First Year
b	Identify and select areas to implement General Plan policies that promote mixed use	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year
c	Create RFP for Specific Plan in location(s) identified in Vision Document (see Strategy C4(a))	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year
d	Hire consultant to develop Specific Plan(s)	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year

Strategy C6: Identify building upgrade programs to make existing real estate more attractive and utility bills lower (weatherization, energy efficiency, water conservation, solar, etc.)

i. Use adaptive reuse to accommodate live/work and/or artisanal use opportunities ii. Apply performance standards based on use and business type			
	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Identify available local, state, and federal building upgrade or adaptive reuse programs	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Third Year
b	Establish list of potential at-risk buildings	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Third Year
c	Select and implement programs to at-risk buildings	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year
d	Evaluate success of building upgrade program and adjust the process to meet current real estate needs	Business Liaison/Office	End of Fourth Year

Strategy C7: Create workforce development opportunities to increase employability of local workers

i. Undertake research including business interviews to understand skill needs of workers in targeted industries iii. Provide incentives for persons with desired skills to live in Commerce			
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	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Develop study of existing workforce skill needs within each business sector through student projects from various research and academic organizations including USC, LA EDC, and others, including interviews with businesses and employees	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
b	Utilize student study to identify desired skills for workers to gain employment in the industries represented in the City and develop incentives to increase their numbers	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Third Year
c	Create marketing program to promote expertise and skills of Commerce workers to businesses considering relocation to the City (see Strategy C3)	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of Third Year

d	Share results of student project with workforce development, adult education, occupational training providers to inform curriculum to meet the needs of Commerce employers	Business Liaison/Office	End of Fourth Year
e	Inform employers of Commerce residents' benefits to attract existing workers to live in Commerce	Business Liaison/Office	Middle of third year

ii. Introduce incentives for mixed use development including residential and consider special incentives to create work force housing iv. Attract new desirable businesses with a particular focus on quality of jobs, pay scales, density of jobs, and how a base of such uses might become a way to attract additional businesses that are bigger City revenue generators or cost less in City services			
	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Use economic analysis, developed by economic consultant, (Strategy C2) to inform locations for mixed use development	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
b	Develop weblink on City's website showcasing job skills and available workforce to attract businesses based on market research (see Strategy C2)	PW&DS	Middle of First Year

ii. Partner with learning institutions to assess worker skill needs and provide job training (Montebello School District; LAUSD Occupational Center, Bell, LACAUSA; and other workforce development centers			
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	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Create factsheet that highlights desirable skill set businesses need, derived from student led research (see Strategy C7i.)	PW&DS, Employment & Business Development Center	End of First Year
b	Implement outreach to local educational and learning institutions to ensure teachers and professors are aware of the marketable skills to teach their students to gain employment within the City	PW&DS, Employment & Business Development Center (EBDC)	Middle of Second Year

Strategy C8: Explore need for and feasibility of new legislation to create and implement economic zones such as a new or expanded enterprise zone

i.	Consider creation of local “enterprise zone”
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	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Identify available incentives and legislation at the local, regional, and state level including programs such as SB 628 Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD)	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year – Ongoing
b	Evaluate focus areas that would benefit from the designation of an economic or revitalization zone	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year – Ongoing
c	Implement legislation or incentives in identified focus areas	PW&DS	Middle of first Year
d	Create marketing and outreach program to inform current or potential businesses of available incentives (see Strategy C3)	PW&DS	Middle of First Year

Strategy C9: Establish a “Green Zone” geographic area to provide additional benefits to business participating in retrofit program and located in these zones

i.	Identify a geographic area to designate as a “Green Zone”
ii.	Provide façade improvement grants
iii.	Facilitate vendor preference for City contracts with businesses located in a Green Zone

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Establish criteria to designate an area as a “Green Zone” based off information gathered during economic analysis (see Strategy C2)	PW&DS	End of First Year
b	Develop façade improvement grant program, develop similar grant application process outlined in Strategy B2	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year
c	Initiate “Green Zones” geographic area designation based of established criteria	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year
d	Identify vendors located within “Green Zones” and establish	PW&DS	Middle of Third Year

	priority scoring for contract bid process		
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GOAL D Reinvestment

Provide adequate infrastructure to support future economic and community health

Strategy D1: Invest in adequate infrastructure

i.	Explore cost sharing between businesses and City
ii.	Consider creating infrastructure financing districts for specific system requirements (i.e. if City seeks to expand presence of food businesses and they need additional water supply)
iii.	Complete a needs assessment to determine improvement needs

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Conduct infrastructure needs assessment to evaluate existing condition of City infrastructure, including roadways and streets and any other City maintained and operated infrastructure	PW&DS	End of Second Year
b	Evaluate City's needs and determine whether additional partnerships or action is necessary	PW&DS	Beginning of Fifth Year

Strategy D2: Ensure safe and improved roadways and streets for workforce and local residents

i.	Improve major streets that connect workers to jobs in Commerce
ii.	Consider all modes of transit in street improvements
iii.	Implement urban design treatments to enhance the pedestrian experience on the corridors and other connectors
iv.	Provide adequate street lighting where it is insufficient
v.	Improve linkages throughout the City to restore connectivity between uses

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Conduct assessment of existing circulation needs	PW&DS	Beginning of Fifth Year
b	Implement General Plan policy to enhance connectivity between uses and improve linkages throughout the City	PW&DS	Beginning of Fifth Year

c	Identify major arterial and collector streets that maintain the highest concentration of commuters to jobs in the City	PW&DS	Beginning of Fifth Year
d	Implement targeted road improvements for identified arterial and collector streets, with all modes of transportation considered to enhance overall circulation	PW&DS	Middle of Fifth Year
e	Identify pedestrian infrastructure in need of enhancement	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year Five
f	Improve pedestrian infrastructure along major corridors and other connectors through urban design treatments to ensure a safe and accessible pedestrian experience	PW&DS	Middle of Third Year Five
g	Establish additional street lighting where gaps exist in current street lighting network	PW&DS	Middle of Fifth Year

Strategy D3: Ensure adequate water, sewage, natural gas, and broadband and electrical systems to retain existing and attract new business

i.	Assess current deficiencies in broadband
ii.	Develop and implement a prioritized list of improvements to broadband and fueling/charging stations

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Identify network deficiencies in broadband service	PW&DS	End of Second Year
b	Establish list of prioritized improvements	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year
c	Improve infrastructure deficiencies based on prioritized list	PW&DS	Middle of Third Year
d	Identify additional infrastructure needs based on economic analysis (see Strategy C2) to attract targeted industry clusters and to ensure long-term businesses viability	PW&DS	End of Second Year

Strategy D4: Create façade improvement programs in commercial areas

- i. Provide technical and design assistance, management of design and construction resources
- ii. Secure funding sources and partnerships to assist businesses with financing

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Identify commercial areas in need of façade improvements	Business Liaison/Office	End of Third Year
b	Assess funding opportunities through grant programs or other funding mechanisms such as Measure AA	Business Liaison/Office	End of Third Year
c	Establish a façade improvement guide to assist commercial businesses along with staff support and technical assistance as needed	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Fourth Year
d	Evaluate feasibility of façade improvement program integration into Strategy B1	Business Liaison/Office	End of Fourth Year
e	Establish business outreach program to market available assistance to existing businesses (see Strategy B4)	Business Liaison/Office	End of Third Year

Strategy D5: Improve the City's image to retain existing business and attract new business

- i. Develop a branding and formal marketing campaign for Commerce to establish a City Identity
- ii. Collaborate with private property owners to improve issues of blight with their vacant properties
- iii. Enforce existing ordinance to address issues of blight/vacant properties
- iv. Implement a citywide aesthetic improvement program

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Hire Consultant to create a marketing and branding campaign for the City as a strategy	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Third Year
b	Develop partnerships with property owners to remove blight from their vacant properties	Business Liaison/Office	Beginning of Third Year

c	Establish citywide aesthetic improvement program through partnerships with the Keep Commerce Beautiful Committee as an initiative to remove blight and improve the City's image in order to retain and attract new business	Business Liaison/Office	End of Fourth Year
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Strategy D6: Improve access and connectivity to foster all modes of transportation

i.	Improve mobility by accommodating all modes of transit to connect with the regional network and transit system and to increase access to hubs and destinations within the City of Commerce
ii.	Assess existing transit mode options to identify transit related issues
iii.	Increase opportunities to maximize the use of Metrolink such as shuttle services from the Metrolink stations to jobs in Commerce
v.	Consider the area around the Commerce/Montebello Metrolink station to maximize future opportunities

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Collaborate with commerce transportation department to review LA County Metro Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and other data to assess current ridership and future needs	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
b	In collaboration with Commerce Transportation Department develop transit survey to assess current user needs, transit related issues, and community mobility	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
c	Create a list of mobility issues and need priorities based on feedback from survey and other data	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
d	Review the Gateway Cities COG Strategic Transportation Plan (STP) to identify strategies and projects relevant to Commerce	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
e	Establish a partnership with the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) to implement initial mobility projects	PW&DS	Beginning of Second Year
f	Evaluate improvements and adjust for changes in user patterns	PW&DS	Middle of Third Year
g	Assess user base of Commerce Shuttle through an outreach survey	Transportation Department	Beginning of First Year

h	Explore the opportunity to add additional stops to the Commerce Shuttle based off user need determined in outreach survey	Transportation Department	End of First Year
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iv. Identify opportunities to create pedestrian and biking trails/paths for residents and workers (i.e. Rails to Trails program and Safe Routes to Schools)

	action steps	lead	timeline
a	Conduct walking or bicycling audit (partner with East Yards Community for Environmental Justice ,the California Endowment, and/or others)	PW&DS	Beginning of First Year
b	Establish priority list of pedestrian and bicycle improvements based on data collected through audit	PW&DS	End of First Year
c	Secure funding for pedestrian and bicycle improvements through Measure AA	PW&DS	Middle of Second Year - Ongoing
d	Implement first round of pedestrian and bicycle improvements	PW&DS	Beginning of Third Year – Ongoing
e	Evaluate improvements and adjust to meet future user needs and demand	PW&DS	End of Fourth Year - Ongoing