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## Local Breaking News

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### City adopts renewal plan for Westside

BY JANINE ZÚÑIGA, UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER  
TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2010 AT 11:18 P.M.

**NATIONAL CITY** — An unhealthy mix of single-family homes and auto-repair and paint shops that has been allowed to coexist for decades in National City's dense Westside will soon be coming to an end.

After years of refining a proposal to restore the once-quiet neighborhood, the City Council adopted a land-use document Tuesday night that it says will correct decades of inconsistent planning and guide development in a 100-acre area bounded by West Plaza Boulevard, Interstate 5, Mile of Cars Way and Roosevelt Avenue.

The action isn't coming soon enough for locals who have lived next to polluting businesses their whole lives. One, Maria Villanueva, said her youngest daughter is constantly sick. Speaker after speaker at a meeting Tuesday urged approval.

"Clearly there is a connection between health and place," said resident Dana Richardson.

Although not everyone is completely satisfied with the plan, including some local business owners, the blueprint was hammered out over five years by people on both sides of the issue. The city held four community meetings and has discussed the plan at two previous council meetings.



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City officials say the document will preserve the residential character of the area and allow for new development compatible with the neighborhood. Higher-density development will be permitted along busier community corridors. The plan will allow a mix of uses, but ones that complement Westside homes with goods and services, recreation and public transit.

The city proposes to slowly relocate polluting industrial businesses away from the Westside, its homes, churches and schools. Part of the plan includes elements to revitalize Paradise Creek, which flows through the community.

The Westside evolved in the early 1900s as a community of Victorian homes on tiny lots built for those with waterfront and railroad jobs. By the 1940s, city leaders wanted to create an industrial district in what is also known as Old Town. But no one could easily piece together enough land to attract large companies. Over the years, auto-repair shops opened next to early-20th-century homes.

In 2008, residents and activists with the Environmental Health Coalition balked when a group of property and business owners — Old Town National City Smart Growth Coalition — asked the city to allow "clean light industrial/manufacturing" in the Westside. Until then, the city said it would work to relocate all industrial uses, many to a proposed business park west of Interstate 5.

Coalition members claimed the plan wasn't fair to nonpolluters and opposed a proposal to remove all industry. Members urged the council to include a "grandfather clause" to exempt longtime lawful operators.

The city formed a committee of environmentalists, business owners and city officials who agreed to allow a business to change its use to clean light industrial/manufacturing if it wanted to remain.

Businesses whose uses are no longer legal as a result of the proposed zoning changes may continue to operate but are subject to eventually being phased out.

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