

CAPSTONE PINE INC.

Land Use Planning & Entitlements

Senator Edward Vincent
California State Senate District 25
One Manchester Blvd. , Ste. 600
Inglewood, CA 90301

March 11, 2008

Dear Senator Vincent,

As a professional land use planner, with over 20 years experience in Southern California, I strongly endorse the efforts of From Lot to Spot, in creating open space opportunities in our community, and the following statement:

“As you are aware, From Lot to Spot, a non profit organization has been working to convert the vacant property on 118th and Doty Avenue in the City of Hawthorne owned by the California Department of Transportation, Caltrans, into a much needed parkspace. On February 12th, over 50 community members and youth from Environmental Charter High attended the City of Hawthorne Council meeting in support of this park project. Despite strong and overwhelming support from the local community, local elected officials and environmental groups in the Los Angeles area, Caltrans has refused to meet with representatives from FLTS to discuss a lease negotiation to develop the property into a park.

The lot went to public auction on February 19th and did not sell. The property was placed for a second public auction to take place April 9th, 2008 despite pleas from City of Hawthorne officials, environmental groups and the community. This is such a unique opportunity for both Caltrans and the community. It is a one-of-a-kind project, never done before in the City of Hawthorne and could set precedent for how community groups work together with governmental agencies in creating better, livable communities, and in turn, a better state. Your actions could positively rewrite the course of an entire community.

We thank you in advance for your efforts and for championing for the environment. Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions related to this project.”

I would add that, historically CalTrans still bears an on-going responsibility for restoring the communities disrupted by the construction of the 105 freeway. That state agency does NOT have a mandate to operate as an independent real estate speculator when divesting itself of excess property, to line its program coffers or act as a cash generator for the state's general fund. Indeed, its first obligation should be to return these marginal rights-of-way properties to the communities as buffering community uses, such as bike trails, or in this case, a public park area, from which this neighborhood was cut off. At the very least, if, in your view as a state representative, there should be a cash flow back to the general fund, it should be as a lease-to-own arrangement, so that the community can retain title over time.

Please feel free to contact me regarding any questions related to this project.
Sincerely,

Christopher A. Pine, AICP