

Torrance, California

People and Place

Location

Torrance covers 20.5 square miles of land in the southwest corner of Los Angeles County in the South Bay area. The community is located 4 miles east of Redondo Beach, approximately 20 miles south of Los Angeles, and 118 miles north of San Diego. The geographic coordinates of Torrance, California are 33°50'09"N and 118°20'23"W.

Demographic Profile

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the population of Torrance was 137,946, a 3.2% increase from the 1990 U.S. Census. In 2000 the gender structure was evenly divided with slightly more females (51.4%) than males (48.6%). The median age of the population in 2000 was 38.7, which is comparable to the national median of 35.3 for the same year.

For the population 18 years and over, 89.9% had a high school education or higher, 34.2% had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, and 10.7% earned a graduate or professional degree. The highest level of educational attainment was a high school diploma or equivalency for 20.6% of the population. In 2000, 83.0% of the population lived in family households.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that the racial composition was predominantly White, (59.2%), followed by Asian (28.6%), and Black or African American (2.2%). American Indian/Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander each constituted less than one percent of the population (0.4% and 0.3% respectively). Overall, 4.6% of residents classified themselves as belonging to some other race and 4.7% of the population identified with two or more races. A total of 12.8% identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, and 27.6% of the population was foreign-born. Of the foreign-born residents, 16.7% were born in Korea, 14.0% were born in Japan, and 12.7% were born in China.

History

Native peoples first inhabited the California coast about 13,000 years ago. The Los Angeles County area was home to the Chumash, whose territory spanned the length of California coast from Malibu to Paso Robles.¹ The Chumash subsisted via hunting and gathering, and relied heavily on maritime resources, including clams, mussels, abalone and hundreds of fish species. They developed sophisticated technologies for harvesting marine resources, established large coastal villages, and traded extensively within their territory. Between 200 and 500 years ago, Tongva Indians migrated from the Mojave Desert region, establishing 25 villages throughout what is today the L.A. County area and becoming similarly depending on marine resources.² Today the Gabrieleno/Tongva tribe is headquartered within the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area in San Gabriel, where it is engaged in a political struggle for federal recognition and tribal fishing rights.

In 1784, the Torrance area became part of a 75,000-acre land grant given to Juan Jose Dominguez by the Spanish government in recognition of his military service. The land grant, which extended from the L.A. River on the east to the Pacific Ocean on the west, became known as the Rancho San Pedro (and later the Dominguez Ranch). The

contemporary communities of Torrance, Carson, Redondo Beach, and the L.A. Harbor all lie within the territory formerly encompassed by the Dominguez Land Grant.³ Dominguez and his descendants were very active in local politics and business enterprises, and many contemporary streets, businesses, water bodies, and other notable public structures in the South Bay bear the Dominguez name. Until the early 20th century, most of the land surrounding the Torrance area was used for agricultural purposes, mainly cattle grazing.

In the early 1900s, the Dominguez Land Company, under leadership of Company President Jarred Sidney Torrance, purchased a portion of the original Rancho San Pedro from the Dominguez family to develop the West's first planned industrial city.⁴ Renowned city planner, Frederick Law Olmstead designed the city's initial layout with a balanced mix of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses in mind.⁵ Members of Dominguez Land Company's Board of Directors chose the name Torrance (after the Company President) for the community in 1912, and the city was officially incorporated in 1921. The community's early growth was driven by the discovery of oil in the area in the 1920s, and Torrance continues to support a number of oil refineries. After World War II, the area experienced a second boom as wartime production facilities were converted to aerospace and related industries.⁶ Most of the city's housing was constructed during these post-war years. During the 1970s, Torrance city officials emphasized the further development of recreational, retail, and service sectors to meet the needs of a growing population.

Today, the community of Torrance remains a powerful industrial center, strategically located between the Los Angeles International Airport and the Long Beach Airport and between Los Angeles and Orange Counties. The community hosts the corporate headquarters of a number of prominent companies, including Honda, Toyota, Epson, and the Kubota Tractor Corporation. The aerospace and oil industries are also of continued importance to the local economy.

Infrastructure

Current Economy

Torrance is a regional business and industrial center with many employment opportunities. Major employers include Honda, Toyota, Epson, Kubota Tractor, Mobil Oil, and Hughes Aircraft. Employment is also available in a number of light manufacturing industries (including electronics, aluminum, and plastics), healthcare, education, and a growing number of retail stores (including many up-scale shopping complexes and restaurants). Because Torrance lies between recreational marina facilities at Redondo Beach (5 miles) and commercial facilities at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro (10 miles), some residents may also commute to jobs in the sport and commercial fishing industries.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 61.6% of the potential labor force was employed and there was a 3.9% unemployment rate (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force). A total of 35.9% of the population over the age of 16 were not in the labor force. Approximately 17.8% of the employed population worked in "Educational, health and social services," another 17.5% worked in "Manufacturing," and 11.4% worked in "Retail trade." The local, state, or federal government employed a total of 12.7% of the employed civilian population. However,

none were reported as working for the government in the “Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining” industries. Only 0.2% of the employed civilian population over the age of 16 was involved in the “Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting” sector.

The per capita income in Torrance was about \$28,144 in 1999, compared to a national per capita income of \$21,587 for the same year. In 1999 the median household income in Torrance was about \$56,489, compared to a national median household income of \$41,994. Approximately 6.4% of residents were living below the poverty level in 1999, a value that compared favorably to the national poverty level of 12.4%.

In 2000 there were 55,967 housing units in Torrance, 97.5% of which were occupied and 2.5% of which were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, 56.0% were owner occupied and 44.0% were renter occupied. Of the vacant housing units, 42.0% were for rent and 20.7% were for sale.

Governance

Torrance was officially incorporated in 1921 and is now a charter city featuring a Council/Manager form of city government.⁷ The majority of California cities are general law cities that closely follow state statutes, but charter cities develop and follow statutes set forth in their own city charters. City government consists of a Mayor, six City Council members, a City Clerk, and a City Treasurer. The City of Torrance levies an 8.25% sales tax. Torrance is located within Los Angeles County, which levies a 12.0% transient lodging tax rate that earned \$10,202,899 in revenue during the 2000-2001 fiscal year.⁸

California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels are assessed at 4% of their full cash value.⁹ Vessels registered in California with either the Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) are assessed property taxes by the county tax collector where it is moored.¹⁰ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.¹¹ California levies a fuel tax of \$0.18 per gallon, a portion of which goes toward marine safety and education programs and boating facility administration and development.¹²

The State of California levies landing taxes that must be paid by fishermen and fish processors involved in the retail sale of fish products. These taxes vary by species and range between \$.0013 and \$.0125 per pound of fish.¹³ The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.¹⁴

The nearest California Department of Fish and Game Marine Region Field Office is located approximately 20 driving miles from Torrance in Los Alamitos. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Southwest Regional office is located in Long Beach (15 miles). Eight U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) vessels are stationed at the USCG Marine Safety Office/Group Los Angeles – Long Beach, which is located in San Pedro (10 miles). Delmar and San Diego, approximately 118 miles away, are the nearest cities that hold Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings. There is a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services District Office located in Los Angeles (20 miles).

Facilities

Torrance lies 20 driving miles from the City of Los Angeles. The main thoroughfare connecting Torrance to the greater metropolitan area is Interstate 10, which runs north into Los Angeles. The city lies midway between the Los Angeles International Airport (10 miles), LAX, and the Long Beach Airport (15) miles. The smaller Torrance Municipal Airport provides two paved public access runways.

Torrance is located in the Torrance Unified School District, which supports 17 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, 6 high schools, 4 adult education centers, and the South California Regional Occupational Center (a vocational education facility). Torrance is also home to several private schools, most of which are non-denominational. Higher education centers in Torrance include El Camino Community College and branches of ITT Technical Institute and Bryman College.

The City of Torrance Public Works Department provides water and sewer services to the community. Pacific Gas and Electric and other private power companies provide electricity to area resident. The City of Torrance Police and Fire Departments administer law enforcement and emergency services. Nearby hospitals include the Torrance Memorial Medical Center and the Harbor-University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Medical Center.

The nearest noncommercial marine facilities are located only 4 miles west of Torrance at King Harbor and the Municipal Pier in nearby Redondo Beach. King Harbor includes four marinas, with boast hoists and over 1000 slips.¹⁵ A number of sportfishing, charter boat, and whale watching vessels are based at this harbor complex. Torrance Beach, a small section of open waterfront popular with longboard surfers, also provides marine recreation opportunities.¹⁶

The nearest commercial marine facilities are located at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro Bay (10 miles). This port complex, which is outfitted for both commercial and recreational purposes, stretches along 43 miles of waterfront and occupies 7500 acres, 3300 of which are water.¹⁷ The port falls under the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles and is under the direction of a 5-member Board of Harbor Commissioners appointed by the City Mayor.¹⁸ The port has 29 state-of-the-art cargo facilities and five intermodal railyards.¹⁹ The complex also includes the Cabrillo Marina, which provides slips for 1100 pleasure crafts, Cabrillo Beach (popular with swimmers), three museums, the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium, and the S.S. Lane Victory (a national historic landmark). There are also a number of harbor cruise and whalewatching tours offered.²⁰ The Port of Los Angeles' World Cruise Center is the primary cruise passenger complex on the West Coast, with the ability to handle the world's largest cruise ships.²¹ In 1997 the 47-acre terminal island transfer facility was completed allowing the direct transfer of containers from ships to trains.²²

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

No vessels delivered landings to Torrance in 2000. However, there were six commercial vessels owned by Torrance residents, four of which participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by Torrance residents in 2000 that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/1), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory

species (NA/0/NA), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (0/0/2).²³ According to available data, there were no seafood processors in Torrance in 2000.

In 2000, no federal groundfish permits were held by community members. In the same year, recorded data indicates that the number of Torrance residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/2), groundfish (0/0/3), highly migratory species (NA/0/3), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/0/16).²⁴

According to available data, there were at least 43 commercial fishing permits, all state registered, held by Torrance residents in 2000. Recorded data indicates that the number of state permits held by Torrance residents in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/6), groundfish (0/0/4), highly migratory species (NA/0/5), shellfish (0/0/NA), and other species (0/0/28).²⁵

Sportfishing

A number of charter vessels operate out of Torrance targeting albacore tuna, rock cod, salmon, and other species. In 2002, at least three charter businesses serviced sport fishermen and tourists in Torrance. There are five license agents selling sportfishing licenses in Torrance. In 2000 Los Angeles County residents purchased: 76,385 resident sportfishing licenses, 59 non-resident sportfishing licenses, 164 sport salmon punch cards, and 174 abalone report cards. The nearest commercial passenger fishing vessels port complex consists of Seal Beach, Long Beach, and San Pedro. In this port complex in 2000, 54 commercial passenger fishing vessels served 148,977 anglers. These vessels reported 883,806 landings composed of more than two-dozen species. Seabass (various species), barracuda, flatfishes (unspecified), and rockfishes (unspecified) accounted for 47.6%, 14.1%, 10.4%, and 9.2% of the landings respectively.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members might be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Torrance area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing in Torrance is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term “recreational” to refer to fishermen that do not earn revenue from their catch but rather fish for pleasure and/or to provide food for personal consumption. Therefore information on subsistence fishing in California is captured, to some degree, within the above sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, three community members worked as crewmembers aboard vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries.

Sportfishing

While the majority of the charter boats in Torrance target West Coast fisheries, 194 Torrance community members purchased Alaska sportfishing licenses in 2000.

¹ The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. 2002. Chumash Indian Life, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.sbnature.org/research/anthro/chumash/index.htm> (access date - July 2004)

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- ¹⁶ Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors. No Date. Torrance, [Online]. Available: URL: <Hhttp://beaches.co.la.ca.us/BandH/Beaches/Torrance.htm> (access date - March 2005).
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²³ 'NA' refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.

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