

What's Important To Me

By Barry Waite

Some of my thoughts

- Improve the city's **infrastructure**. The condition of our streets and water system particularly are not good. Resurfacing streets that need a full reconstruction or replacing water means only as they break are penny wise and pound foolish measures. My worry is that the city does not have the money to do much in these areas. Lomita operates very frugally, which is a tribute to city councils over several years and to city management. Only one city in the South Bay spends fewer general fund dollars per person overall than Lomita. (Somewhat surprisingly, that city is Rancho Palos Verdes, which suffers from a lack of commercial properties to provide sales tax. Most of the sales tax generators on the peninsula are in Rolling Hills Estates.)
- **Traffic safety** is a serious problem. Some of our residential streets are designed in a way that encourages people to drive faster than is safe. Eshelman Avenue is a great example. Speed bumps are a popular response, but they are both expensive and interfere with emergency vehicles. Adding stop signs where they are not otherwise warranted encourages people to ignore them. Crosswalks create a false sense of security for pedestrians. There are many other options to consider for redesigning the infrastructure to be inherently safer. Check out [these ideas](#) from the Institute of Transportation Engineers.
- Focus on **economic development** to provide goods and services while generating sales tax to fund necessary services. We can create a more walkable community where we don't have to go to other communities for everything! The improvements to the Lomita downtown core are a good start. The local brewpubs have been a great addition and made the area more interesting and inviting. We need to improve the business district along Narbonne to 250th Street to build on that success.
- Support our **sheriff's deputies and firefighters**. Over the years, I have worked on many projects with public safety officials

including disaster response planning, developing a system for fire department hydrant maintenance, and coordinating with the sheriff's department for conducting homeless counts. As a member of the LA County County Commission on Local Governmental Services Commission, I have been working on a training program for sheriff's deputies to help them deal with people with autism and other disorders. That program has already saved lives in helping deputies deescalate incidents, and participants rated the training as very useful. We are now trying to expand that program to all sheriff's stations in the county.

- Seek **regional solutions** to regional problems such as traffic, education and regional infrastructure. Lomita is not an island. We are a part of a large metropolitan community. I have been active with the [South Bay Cities Council of Governments](#) (COG) for many years in policy, economic development and geographic services. The COG consists of fifteen cities working together to solve shared problems. Because of my previous council experience and work with the COG, I have strong relationships with elected officials in surrounding communities.
- Enhance the [Lomita Railroad Museum](#), making it the centerpiece for revitalizing Narbonne Avenue and showcasing Lomita's small-town heritage. My wife and I have been financial supporters of the museum for years. There is nothing else like it closer than Griffith Park (and our displays are in much better condition). Did you know that only a small part of the collection at our museum is on display? The museum has its own board that operates it and a foundation that raises money for it. They have done a great job of getting things going to **expand the museum**. Keep an eye out for good things happening there.
- Support the city's **recreation** programs. The staff at our parks is wonderful. My sons participated in a number of sports at Lomita park and always had caring and dedicated coaches who taught them so much. We also have programs for seniors at the park, and I'd like to see more. We need to encourage people to be more active at all stages of life.
- We need to ensure **high-speed broadband** is available throughout the city. You may think that is already the case, but it

is not. There are many places where there are few or only one choice, and the speed is not sufficient for working or learning from home. Access to high speed is not a luxury in modern society but a necessity. The South Bay Cities Council of Governments has been working on a broadband initiative to address the issue. That will not happen quickly, but it is certainly worthy of further study.