



**Memorandum**

**To:** Mayor and City Council

March 1, 2011

**From:** Robert Garcia, First District *RG*  
Suja Lowenthal, Second District *SL*  
Gary DeLong, Third District *GD*  
James Johnson, Seventh District *JJ*

**Subject:** Creating Livable Communities

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**REQUESTED ACTION:**

Request the City Manager conduct community meetings to discuss ways that residents can become involved in making Long Beach a more livable, mobile and desirable place to live.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Long Beach has made considerable progress over the last five years to implement its Bicycle Master Plan. What had been largely a staff initiative relegated to more modest projects received greater attention following a study session in 2006, and ensuing council motions calling for bolder infrastructure and programs setting a vision that would propel the City to the forefront of urban cycling. Projects such as green sharrow lanes, citywide wayfinding signage, bike racks, bike boulevards, bike corrals and the most recent development – separated bike lanes, all came to Long Beach with the award of approximately \$18 million in transportation grants fostered by political and community will and a cultural shift in City Hall.

Avid cyclists and progressive local urban planners knew all too well that Long Beach was the prime location for a bicycle makeover given its topography, weather and residents with active lifestyles interested in riding beyond the beach bike path and exploring the multitude of unique neighborhoods and destinations throughout the city. They also knew that cities that embraced bicycle and pedestrian centered planning experienced increases in their quality of life, home values, small business development and public safety. Early partnerships between our diverse bicycling community, council offices and city departments provided much-needed guidance to municipal projects from the perspective of the end-user. However, out of our success and much to everyone's delight there is a growing interest among residents who are occasional bike riders, pedestrians, skateboarders and even roller skaters to become involved in the next phase of planning or even help the City re-envision existing infrastructure for a broader group of users.

From its narrow streets to parks, beaches and even its business corridors, Long Beach is becoming a more active community. Different neighborhood districts are planning events, creating clubs and establishing new traditions around healthy lifestyles, which in turn are promoting greater civic involvement. Much like our bike racks, residents and businesses are realizing that more than one purpose can be served by infrastructure and programs promoting bicycling. These activities are also supportive to local small businesses and neighborhood safety as more residents get out of the house and into the public space. The result is a growing desire to be more involved in the planning of local projects that enhance community character and reflect a broader group of citizens' input.

#### DISCUSSION:

With this positive energy as our backdrop, I propose that the City Manager and staff engage this broader community in dialogue around our city's efforts to enhance and even move beyond our bicycle infrastructure to the creation of more mobile, sustainable and livable communities. This dialogue needs to go beyond the coastal communities to west, central and north Long Beach. The City is currently completing a citywide round of meetings in each Council district to gain feedback and input on the plan for future bicycle infrastructure improvements as part of the Bicycle Master Plan. The next phase calls for discussions of new policies, programs and initiatives that would promote an overall agenda of active living where bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can support redevelopment and revitalization of neighborhoods. From these discussions, we would expect to see the formation of an advisory committee providing community input on infrastructure and programs aimed at making Long Beach a healthier, more attractive city for current residents, businesses, visitors and for those we wish to inspire prospectively.

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The cost for these meetings is included in the existing budget for the Bicycle Master Plan update. There is no impact to the General Fund.