

## **R-21**

January 19, 2021

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
City of Long Beach  
California

### RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file a report on the Hamilton Loop Vision Plan; and, accept Statutory Exemption SE-20-126. (District 9)

### DISCUSSION

On July 24, 2018, the Uptown Open Space Vision Plan was adopted by the City Council, which identifies new and innovative opportunities to fill the need for publicly-accessible open space and recreation facilities in Long Beach's Ninth City Council District. The Hamilton Loop project, a greenbelt connector and walking loop around the 91 Freeway, was prototyped as the final community celebration activity of the Uptown Open Space Vision Plan during the Color Block Walk. Since that time, the Hamilton Loop Vision Plan has further developed the concept for this project.

The Hamilton Loop is a greenbelt connector that will transform freeway embankments, streets, sidewalks, underpasses, and intersections in the Hamilton Neighborhood in North Long Beach, re-envisioning the freeway's infrastructure that has long divided and isolated this community. The Hamilton Loop proposes to use segments of land along the existing freeway embankment on both the north and south sides of the 91 Freeway from Atlantic Avenue to Cherry Avenue as a greenbelt with a walking path and small park amenities including seating, shade, fitness and play equipment, dog runs, and garden space. The existing freeway embankment is property owned by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

The Hamilton Loop Vision Plan (Vision Plan), included as Attachment A, serves as a visionary document to guide potential future development of Hamilton Loop. The Vision Plan includes an existing conditions analysis, examination of park opportunity tradeoffs, summary of the public outreach process, and community-driven vision and implementation strategies. The Vision Plan is a plan for future open space investment along the 91 Freeway, anticipated over a long-term horizon, which will be implemented incrementally over time as productive sponsorships or partnerships can be established or as capital, maintenance, and operating resources allow.

The Project Team coordinated with the Hamilton Neighborhood Association and the Ninth District City Council Office to host a series of community workshops and design charrettes over the course of nine months that empowered community members to examine and reimagine their seemingly limited park environment with creativity and imagination, while setting expectations in reality

through a series of forced-choice decision-making workshops. Given the large and diverse population, the public outreach targeted those who have been historically been left out of the planning process, including communities of color, Spanish primary speakers, and youth and families. This involved hosting public workshops at widely-accessible locations and platforms throughout the Hamilton Neighborhood, including schools and several park and neighborhood events that attract diverse populations, ensuring that materials were available in various languages, consistent with the City's Language Access Policy. The public outreach activities were highly visually engaging so that community members of all ages would gain an increased awareness of the open space, active transportation, and land use planning process.

The first workshop series involved analyzing the freeway embankment's existing conditions, gathering information from the community about their observations, and evaluating potential amenities and roadway configurations to potentially maximize the amount of area for the greenbelt open space. Information was collected through in-person surveys and a prioritization exercise on what guiding principles future improvements to the freeway embankment should reflect. The survey was made available in-person at public workshops and was promoted through social media and by flyers that were shared with the Hamilton Neighborhood. Participants also engaged in a forced-choice open space activity that allowed participants to evaluate the tradeoffs of different street configurations with additional park space, traffic patterns, bike lanes, and parking. The outcome of the first workshop series was a community-proposed roadway configuration that included extending open space into the roadway, adding a bike lane, keeping one lane of parking, and turning the street into a one-way road. The second workshop series focused on refining the landscape and urban design options of the proposed new open space through public design charettes. Through a Design Your Park activity, players broke out into small groups with an illustrative map of the proposed Hamilton Loop project and within a limited budget and games pieces that depicted park amenities, matched desired amenities to areas where they could physically fit. The final design concept was presented at a design reveal celebration event at Michelle Obama Library.

After the design reveal celebration, a final draft of the final Hamilton Loop Vision Plan was prepared and presented to staff at Caltrans, as the proposed project would require permitted use of the freeway embankment, which they own. Caltrans was concurrently planning for a freeway widening project in the same area proposed for the Hamilton Loop, and after several meetings and negotiation, Caltrans has agreed to incorporate changes to the freeway and associated retaining walls so that the Hamilton Loop project can fit on the embankment land as proposed. City staff will be pursuing a use permit from Caltrans for the area so work can continue on the Hamilton Loop project concurrent with the Metro freeway widening project. Staff will return to the City Council for any City Council-required action at such time the use permit has been authorized by Caltrans.

The Vision Plan is designed to provide a complete picture for why, where, when, and how to improve publicly-accessible open space in the Hamilton Neighborhood. It is grounded by case studies, best practices, park data and statistics, considerable community input, and adopted policy, ensuring that the projects, programs, and policies proposed in the Vision Plan contain significant value. The Vision Plan also helps address the 0.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

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in North Long Beach versus the 5.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents citywide by identifying amenities, more effectively lays out the park to effectively maximize open space programming and is an important step in seeking future grant funding opportunities.

The Hamilton Loop Vision Plan was produced in partnership with the Health and Human Services Department, the Parks, Recreation and Marine Department, the Ninth City Council District, and the Hamilton Neighborhood Association. The total cost of the Vision Plan was \$50,000 and was funded by the Department of Health and Human Services through a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Zone grant from Kaiser Permanente. On November 19, 2020, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved the Vision Plan (Attachment B).

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Arturo D. Sanchez on December 14, 2020 and by Revenue Management Officer Geraldine Alejo on December 17, 2020.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on January 19, 2021, to allow for the City to continue pursuing a use permit with Caltrans for use of the Interstate 91 Freeway embankment.

SUSTAINABILITY

While the Vision Plan has no immediate sustainability impact, the Hamilton Loop project developed through the implementation of the Vision Plan supports the City's existing pedestrian, bike, and park plans. These plans provide for safe connectivity between neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and parks, and create additional improvements to acres of open space in an underserved part of Long Beach. Future projects are anticipated to incorporate sustainable elements and materials, wherever possible, and comply with the City's green building and water efficiency policies.

The Vision Plan was reviewed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and was issued Statutory Exemption SE-20-126 (Attachment C).

FISCAL IMPACT

The total cost of the Vision Plan was \$50,000, and was funded by the Health and Human Services Department through a Healthy Eating Active Living Zone grant from Kaiser Permanente. The Vision Plan is intended to be the framework for future investment and provides initial cost estimates for project elements. Funding for all project elements has not yet been identified and further detailed cost estimates will be determined as implementation resources are identified. The Vision Plan is long-term and intended to be phased in over time, as projects, operations, and maintenance funding becomes available, or as greater stewardship from community and corporate partners is identified. This recommendation has no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with the existing City Council priorities. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
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SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



BRENT DENNIS  
DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND MARINE

Attachments: A – Hamilton Loop Vision Plan  
B - Parks and Recreation Commission Approval  
C - Statutory Exemption SE-20-126

APPROVED:



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THOMAS B. MODICA  
CITY MANAGER

# HAMILTON LOOP VISION PLAN

LONG BEACH PARKS COMMISSION  
DECEMBER 15 2020

CITY OF  
LONG BEACH



COUNCIL MEMBER  
**REX**  
RICHARDSON



**About the Vision Plan**

**Existing Conditions**

**Community Engagement**

**Vision Plan Concepts**

**Next Steps**



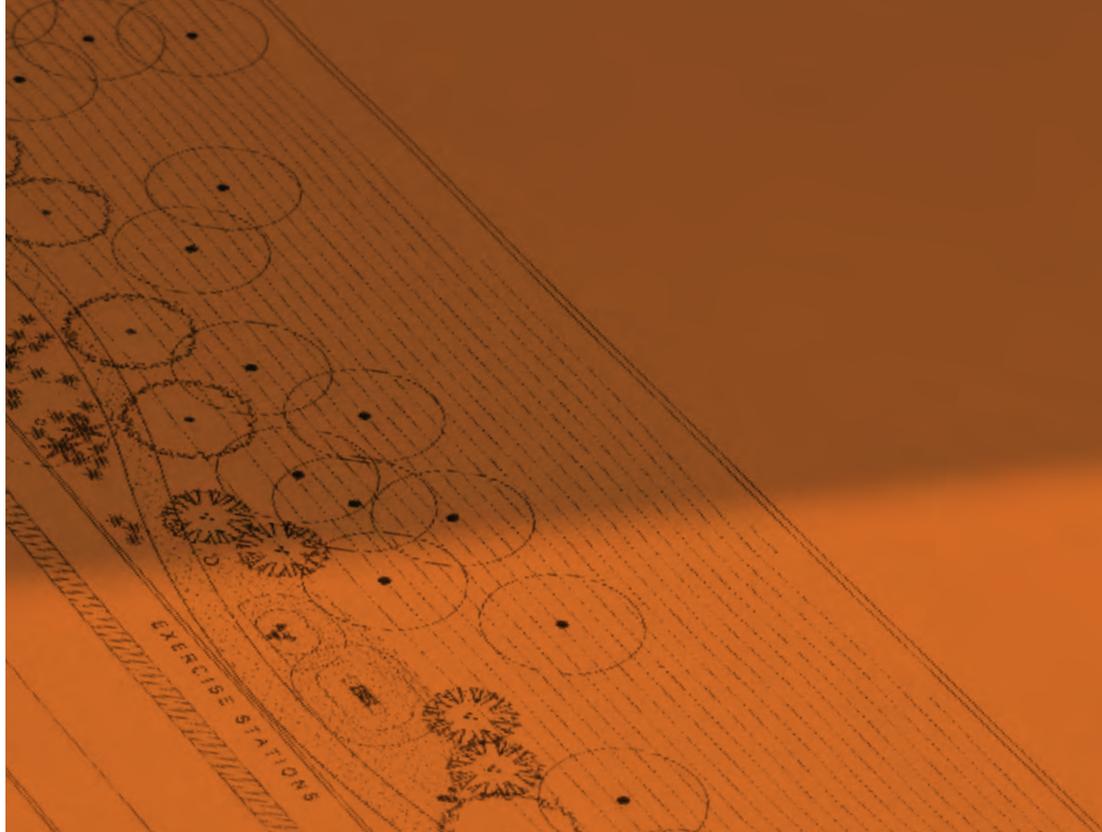
An aerial photograph of a city street grid, overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A prominent yellow text box is centered in the lower half of the image, containing bold black text. The text describes the Hamilton Loop as a greenway connector in North Long Beach.

**THE HAMILTON LOOP  
IS A GREENWAY CONNECTOR  
THAT WILL TRANSFORM FREEWAY  
EMBANKMENTS, STREETS, SIDEWALKS,  
UNDERPASSES, AND INTERSECTIONS  
IN THE HAMILTON NEIGHBORHOOD  
OF NORTH LONG BEACH.**

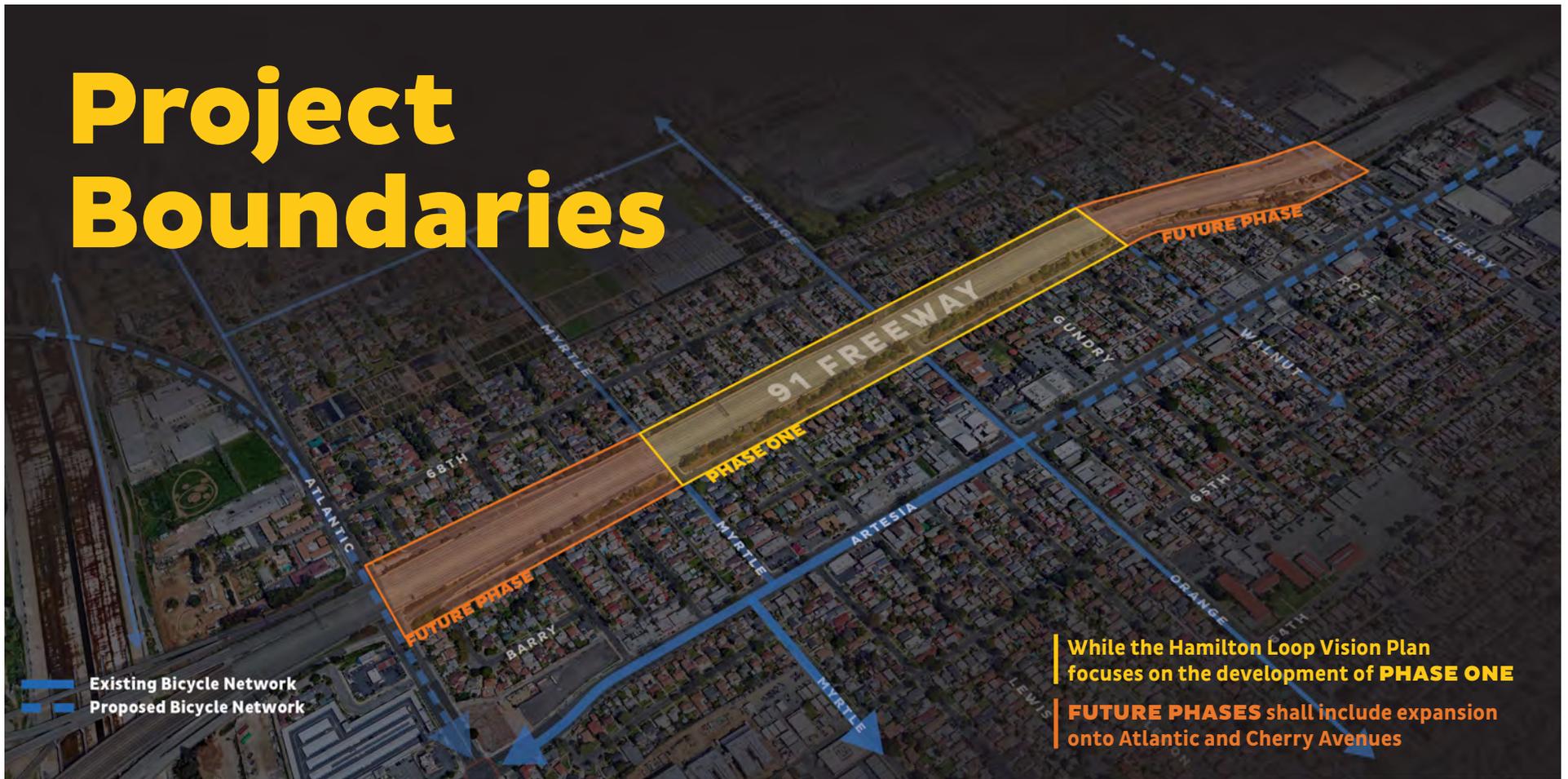
**ABOUT THE HAMILTON LOOP VISION PLAN**

**THIS COMMUNITY-DRIVEN EFFORT IS A CREATIVE ATTEMPT TO USE LANDSCAPE DESIGN TO RE-ENVISION THE VERY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT HAS LONG DIVIDED AND ISOLATED THESE COMMUNITIES.**

**ABOUT THE HAMILTON LOOP VISION PLAN**



# Project Boundaries



## UPTOWN OPEN SPACE NETWORK

The City of Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine recently completed a planning effort, the Uptown Open Space Vision Plan, studying the potential for new open spaces in North Long Beach. The project that received the greatest amount of community support was the Hamilton Loop, with the intention of promoting healthy activity, social interaction, and pedestrian connectivity.

# Existing Conditions



# Opportunities & Constraints

## OPPORTUNITIES

- High levels of **community involvement and support** [top priority project as part of the City Council-approved Uptown Open Space Vision Plan [2018].
- **Capture developable open space** by regrading the freeway embankment and constricting a retaining wall.
- **Expand developable open space** by reconfiguring the roadway and coupling the streets.
- **Calm traffic speeds** of fast-moving vehicles and improve the walkability of the freeway underpasses.
- Expand and connect to the larger **bicycle network**.
- Hamilton Neighborhood Association has a contract with the California Department of Transportation [CalTrans] to **maintain and clean up** the freeway embankment area.

## CONSTRAINTS

- Freeway and embankment land are **owned by the California Department of Transportation** [CalTrans] and will require negotiation and agreement.
- CalTrans is considering an **expansion/widening of the 91 Freeway**.
- Even after regrading the embankment and building retaining walls, **developable space is still limited** and does not allow for larger types of open space amenities.
- **Need more space on 67th Street** to allow for larger types of open space amenities.
- **Limited resources** to dedicate for maintenance and upkeep.



# Timeline

UPTOWN  
OPEN SPACE  
PLAN ADOPTION



JUL

SITE  
ANALYSIS



DEC

WORKSHOP  
SERIES TWO



MAR

FINAL  
VISION PLAN



JUL

PARKS COMMISSION  
CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL



DEC



NOV

PROJECT  
KICKOFF



Kick-Off  
Workshop:  
01/12/19

JAN

WORKSHOP  
SERIES TWO



MAY

WORKSHOP  
SERIES THREE



JAN

CALTRANS/METRO  
NEGOTIATION

Includes Outreach to:  
local residents, students,  
community organizations,  
businesses, government  
officials

# Existing Conditions Analysis

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DATA

CalEnviroScreen 3.0  
LA County Public Health

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

US Census

## PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

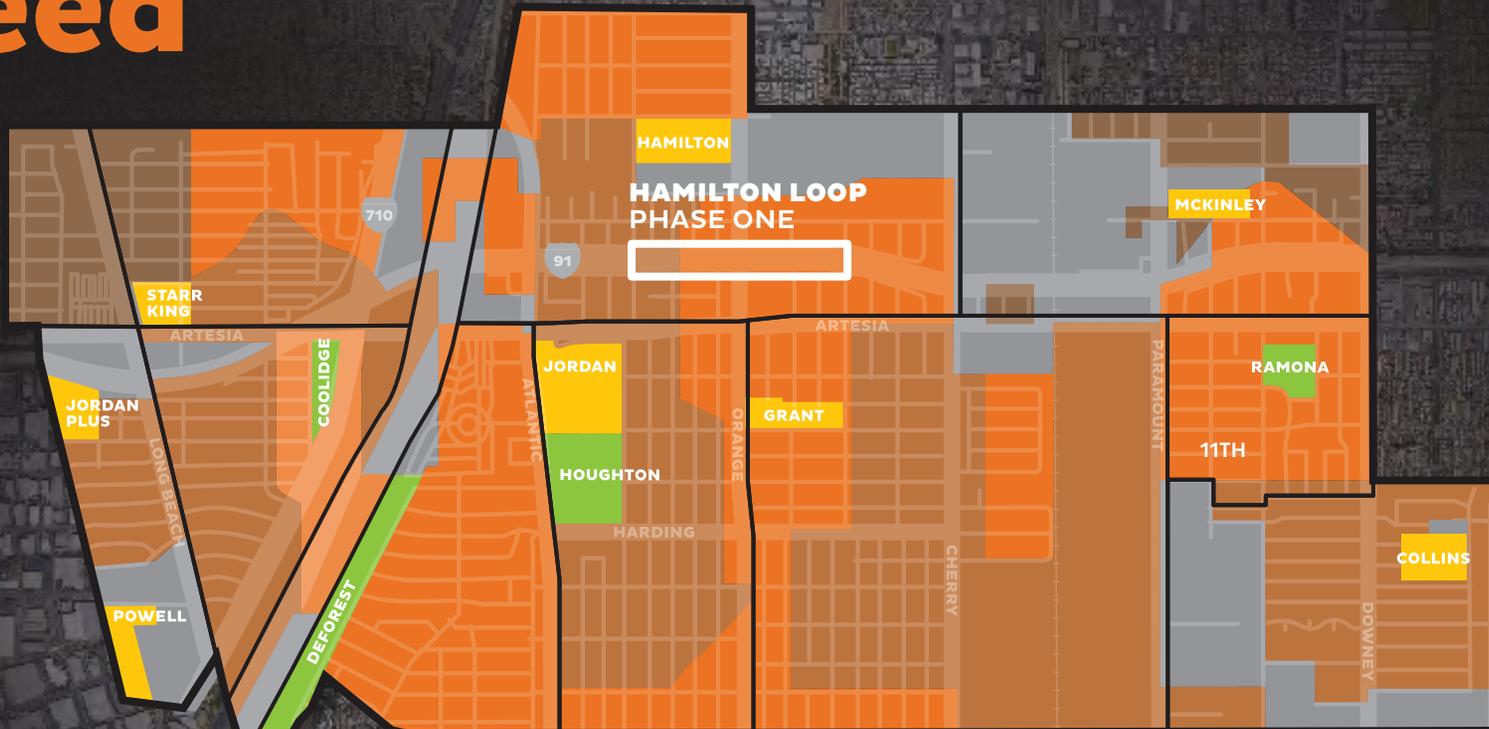
LA County Needs Assessment  
Park Score + Walk Score

## RELEVANT PLANNING EFFORTS

Uptown Open Space Vision Plan  
Open Space Element  
PRM Strategic Plan  
Mobility Element  
Bicycle Master Plan  
CalTrans 91 Freeway Expansion

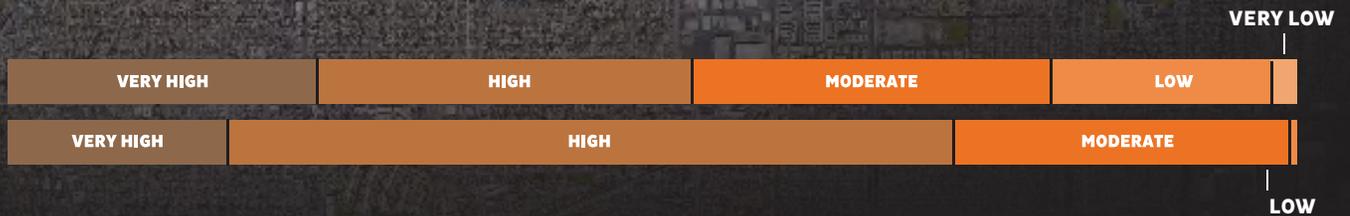


# Park Need



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

**NORTH LONG BEACH**



<b>PARK NEED</b>	VERY HIGH	LOW
	HIGH	VERY LOW
	MODERATE	NO DATA

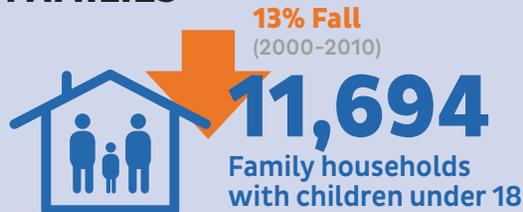
# Demographic Study

Sources:  
US Census 2010 & 2000  
& CalEnviroScreen 3.0

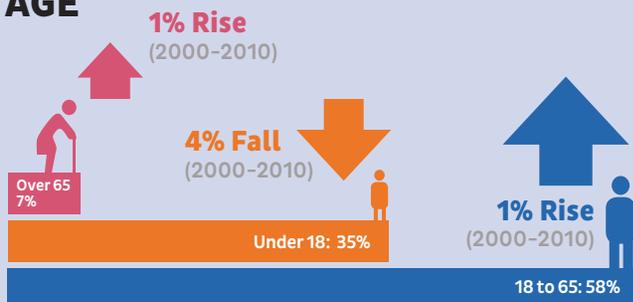
## POPULATION



## FAMILIES



## AGE

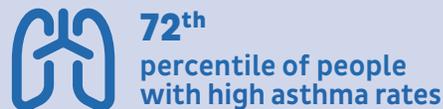


## EMISSIONS



**44.36 kg/day**  
Diesel Particulate Matter &  
**12.20 ug/m3**  
Particulate Matter 2.5  
Risk of heart & lung disease, irregular heartbeat, asthma decreased lung function, and other serious issues

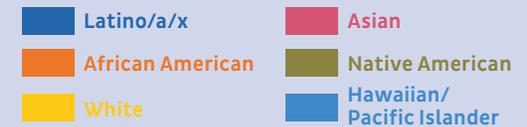
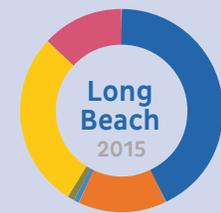
## ASTHMA RATES



## VEHICLE ACCESS



## DIVERSITY



## FOREIGN BORN

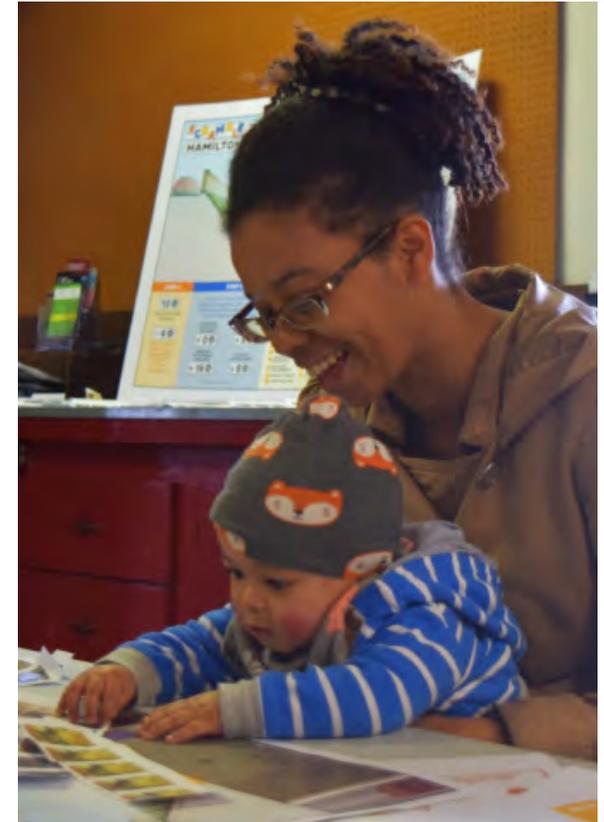
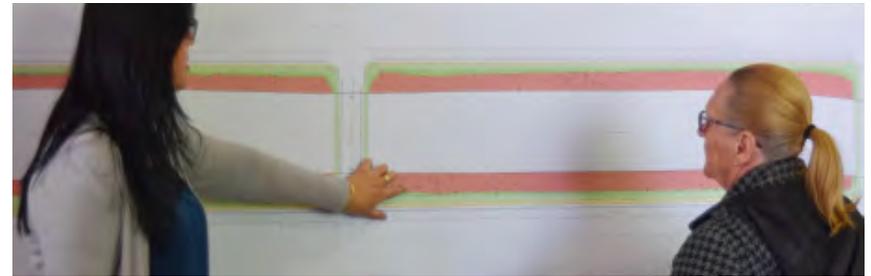
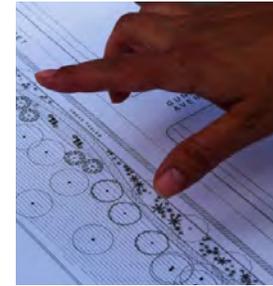


## LANGUAGE ISOLATION



# Community Engagement

 **8** Public Workshops & Stakeholder Meetings
   
 + 
   
 **62** Community Surveys
   
 = 
   
 **12** Community Identified Park Elements



# The Color Block Walk



## PURPOSE

- Celebrate the collaborative efforts of the community.
- Inform residents about the Plan and solicit feedback.
- Prototype top vote-getting idea.

## METHODOLOGY

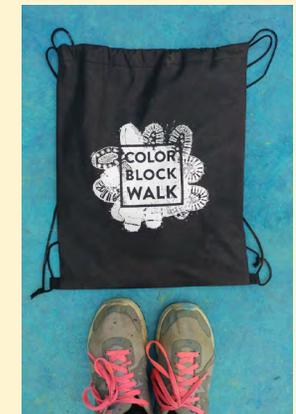
Host a community block party/walking event by prototyping the Hamilton Loop, and soliciting community feedback in the process.

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

250

## OUTCOMES

- Refine priority open space projects
- Share the Plan with wider audience
- Prototype the most popular idea
- Greater community ownership of the Plan



# Community Survey



## PURPOSE

Understand the types of improvements and amenities community members want for the Hamilton Loop.

## METHODOLOGY

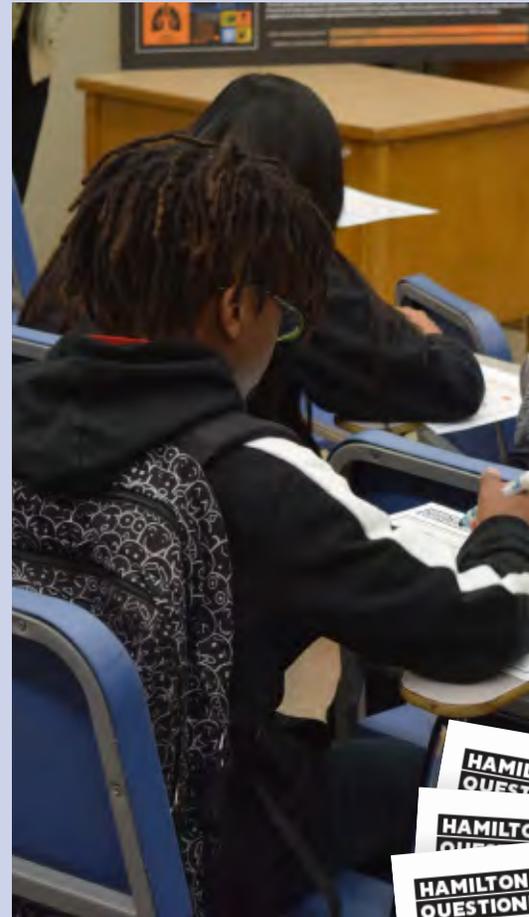
Distribute surveys in Spanish and English at public workshops, schools, organizations, and businesses.

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

62

## OUTCOMES

- Community-identified guiding principles
- Landscape design preferences
- Urban design improvements



# Community Survey

## 1. HOW SHOULD AMENITIES BE DISTRIBUTED?



## 2. WHAT KIND OF PATHWAY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?



## 3. WHAT TYPES OF TREES & LANDSCAPING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?



# Community Survey

## 4. WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY GOAL FOR IMPROVING THE FREEWAY UNDERPASS?



## 5. WHAT SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY GOAL FOR IMPROVING THE STREET INTERSECTIONS?



## 6. WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED LANE CONFIGURATION?



## SMALLER AMENITIES



Walking/  
Jogging Path



Pedestrian  
Lighting



Free  
Wi-Fi



Bicycle  
Pathway



Public  
Art



Bench



Waste/Recycle  
Receptacle



Charging  
Station



Hydration  
Station



Bioswale



Shade  
Structure



Tree



Dog Waste  
Dispenser



Wayfinding



Gateway  
Structure



Free Little  
Library

## LARGER AMENITIES



Outdoor  
Fitness Zone



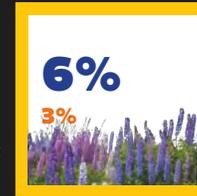
Dog  
Park



Playground



Picnic  
Area



Education/  
Sensory Garden



Stormwater  
Management



Habitat  
Preservation



Farmers  
Market



Community  
Garden



Performance  
Space



Climbing  
Wall



Commerical  
Areas

# Open Space Activity



## PURPOSE

- Identify potential amenities and roadway configurations.
- Educate community on real-life constraints such as equity, incompatible uses, and limited funding.

## METHODOLOGY

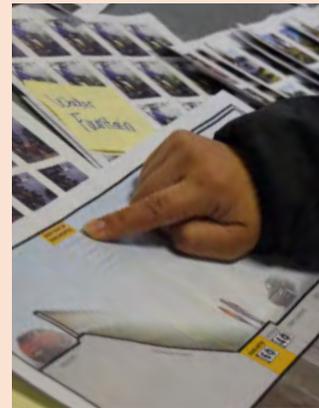
Community members play a game where they role-play as a park designer, under constraints.

## NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS

4 public and stakeholder workshops

## OUTCOMES

- Identified potential roadway configurations
- Identified park amenity needs
- Greater understanding of park planning



# Community-Proposed Roadway Configuration



**+6  
FEET**

The actual distance the embankment can be set back varies depending on the existing topography, but on average, approximately SIX FEET can be transformed into public open space.

**+4  
FEET**

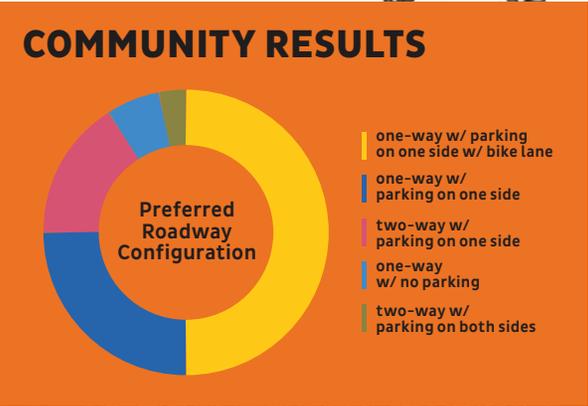
At least FOUR FEET must be dedicated for an ADA compliant sidewalk.

**+8  
FEET**

An overwhelming majority of workshop participants believed that transforming the parking lane into a public open space was a worthwhile tradeoff to accommodate for larger community amenities. Given the low volume of traffic, the City of Long Beach has allowed for a "community parking count" to study its feasibility.

**+8  
FEET**

Additionally, participants believed that transforming a travel lane into an EIGHT FOOT protected bicycle path that connects to the expanding Long Beach bicycle network was a worthwhile tradeoff. It was fully expressed that this would reconfigure the roadway to allow for one-way vehicular travel on 67th, Eleanor, and Penfold Streets with on-street parking.



# Refining Ideas



## PURPOSE

- Refine the landscape design and urban design.
- Inform residents about the Plan.

## METHODOLOGY

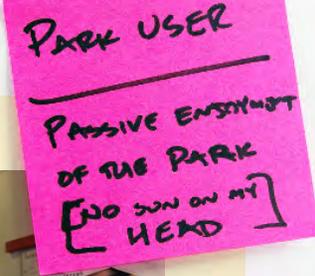
- Host a series of public design charrettes, including a design reveal celebration event.

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

58

## OUTCOMES

- Refine priority open space projects
- Share the Plan with wider audience
- Greater community ownership of the Plan



A black and white photograph of a residential street. In the foreground, there is a crosswalk with white stripes on a dark road. A dark metal fence runs across the middle ground. Behind the fence, there are several houses with gabled roofs and trees. The background shows more houses and trees, slightly out of focus. The overall scene is a typical suburban neighborhood.

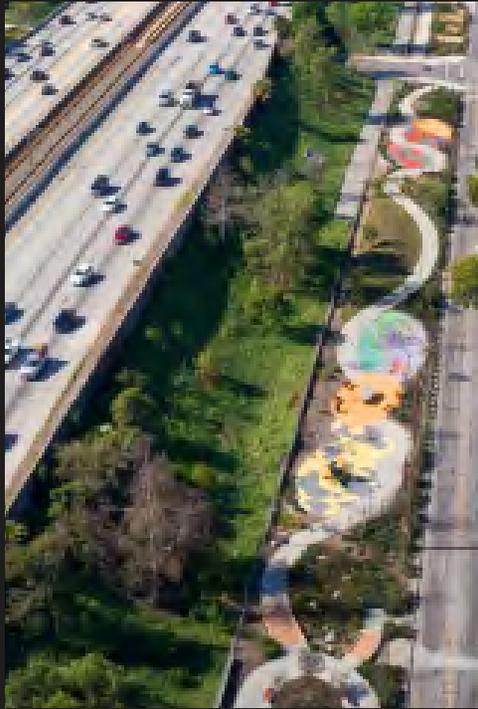
**I CAN NOTICE THERE'S  
BEEN A DIFFERENCE.  
THERE'S LESS TRASH AND  
MORE PEOPLE TAKING PRIDE  
IN UPKEEPING THEIR OWN SPACES.**

**RENETTE MAZZA, HAMILTON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION LEADER**

# Community Amenities



# BASELINE ELEMENTS



Underpass Activation

Trash Receptacle

Hydration Station

Evergreen, Carbon-Sequestering Trees

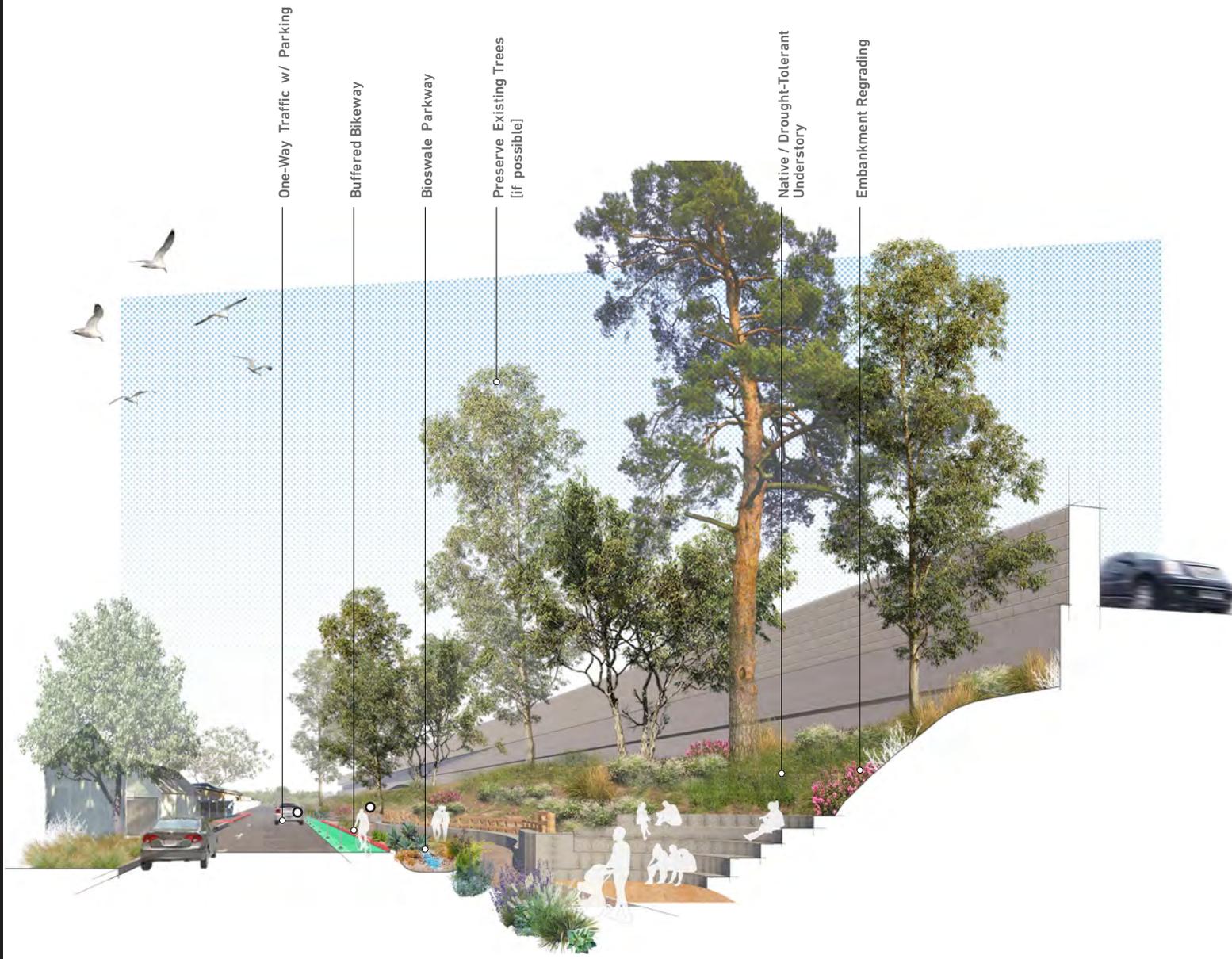
Pet Waste Bag Dispenser

Pedestrian Scale Lighting

High Visibility Crosswalks

Evergreen Street Trees

# BASELINE ELEMENTS



One-Way Traffic w/ Parking

Buffered Bikeway

Bioswale Parkway

Preserve Existing Trees  
[if possible]

Native / Drought-Tolerant  
Understory

Embankment Regrading

# Financing Breakdown

AMENITY	PENFOLD BLOCK	67 <sup>TH</sup> WEST BLOCK	ELEANOR BLOCK	67 <sup>TH</sup> EAST BLOCK
Baseline Elements	●	●	●	●
Exercise Station	●	●	●	●
Playground	○	●	●	○
Gathering Space with Wi-Fi	●	○	○	●
Passive Space	●	○	●	○
Chess Tables	●	○	●	○
Picnic Area + Shade Structure	○	●	●	●
Active Trail	○	●	●	●
Dog Park	○	●	●	○
Community Garden	○	●	○	●
Native Sensory Garden	○	○	○	●
<i>Project Management</i>	<b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Proposition 68</li> <li>· Measure A</li> <li>· CalTrans</li> <li>· Community Port Grant</li> <li>· Capital Improvement Fund</li> <li>· Measure W</li> <li>· Cultural Philanthropy &amp; Foundations</li> </ul>			
<i>20% Construction Contingency</i>				
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,396,562</b>			

# Next Steps



**CALTRANS  
PERMIT**

**FREEWAY EARLY  
ACTION PROGRAM**

**PROJECT  
FUNDING**

**ENGINEERING  
& DESIGN**

**CONSTRUCTION**



# Thank You!

CITY OF  
**LONG BEACH**



COUNCIL MEMBER  
**REX**  
RICHARDSON





# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION & MARINE



2760 N. Studebaker Road, Long Beach, CA 90815-1697  
 (562) 570-3100 • FAX (562) 570-3109  
[www.LBParks.org](http://www.LBParks.org)

selected  
**best in the nation**

November 19, 2020

MEMBERS OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
 City of Long Beach  
 California

## RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the Hamilton Loop Vision Plan (Council District 9).

## DISCUSSION:

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Parks and Recreation Commission approval is requested to allow the Vision Plan to be submitted to the City Manager and City Council for approval in a timely manner.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total cost of the Vision Plan was \$50,000, which was funded by a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Zone grant from Kaiser Permanente, funded through the Department of Health & Human Services. There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this recommendation as the Vision Plan is intended to be the framework for future investment. The Vision Plan provides initial cost estimates for the Hamilton Loop project phases, although funding for all phases have not yet been identified and further detailed cost estimates will need to be created when implementation resources are identified. The work done throughout the Vision Plan process will become the basis for future grant funding requests as the City seeks grants for these and other citywide priorities. As municipal resources for maintaining and programming existing park facilities are already strained, the Vision Plan is long-term, intended to be phased in over time, as projects, operations, and maintenance funding becomes available, or as greater stewardship from community and corporate partners is identified.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted,

GLADYS KAISER  
MANAGER  
COMMUNITY RECREATION SERVICES

HURLEY OWENS  
MANAGER  
MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

MEREDITH REYNOLDS  
MANAGER  
PARK PLANNING & PARTNERSHIPS

APPROVED:

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BRENT DENNIS  
DIRECTOR

**CEQA Notice of Exemption**

TO:  Office of Planning & Research  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121  
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: Department of Development Services  
411 W. Ocean Blvd, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Long Beach, CA 90802

L.A. County Clerk  
Environmental Fillings  
12400 E. Imperial Hwy., Room 1201  
Norwalk, CA 90650

Exemption Number: SE-20-126

Project Title (Application Number): Hamilton Loop Vision Plan

Project Location – Specific: Hamilton Loop - State Route- 91 freeway embankment (north and south) - Atlantic Ave to Cherry Ave

Project Location – City/County: **City of Long Beach, Los Angeles County, California**

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Hamilton Loop Vision Plan is a conceptual planning document that establishes goals for the future development of Hamilton Loop greenbelt connector based on community engagement.

Public Agency Approving Project: **City of Long Beach, California**

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Meredith Reynolds (City of Long Beach, Parks, Rec, and Marine Dept.)

Exempt Status: **(Check One)**

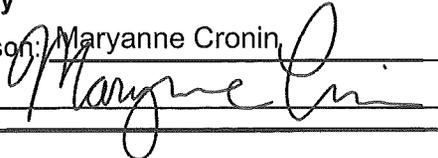
- Ministerial (Sec 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: \_\_\_\_\_
- Statutory Exemption. State code number: 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Reasons why project is exempt:

The vision plan is a planning study for possible future actions which the agency has not approved, adopted, or funded. Potential future development or funding of project requires subsequent project-level CEQA review.

**Lead Agency**

Contact Person: Maryanne Cronin Contact Phone: (562) 570-5683

Signature:  Date: 11/3/2020 Title: Planner