

Principles for

# Active Living and Complete Streets

For Long Beach General Plan Update -- Long Beach 2030

DRAFT



City of Long Beach  
Department of Development Services | Planning Bureau  
June 2011

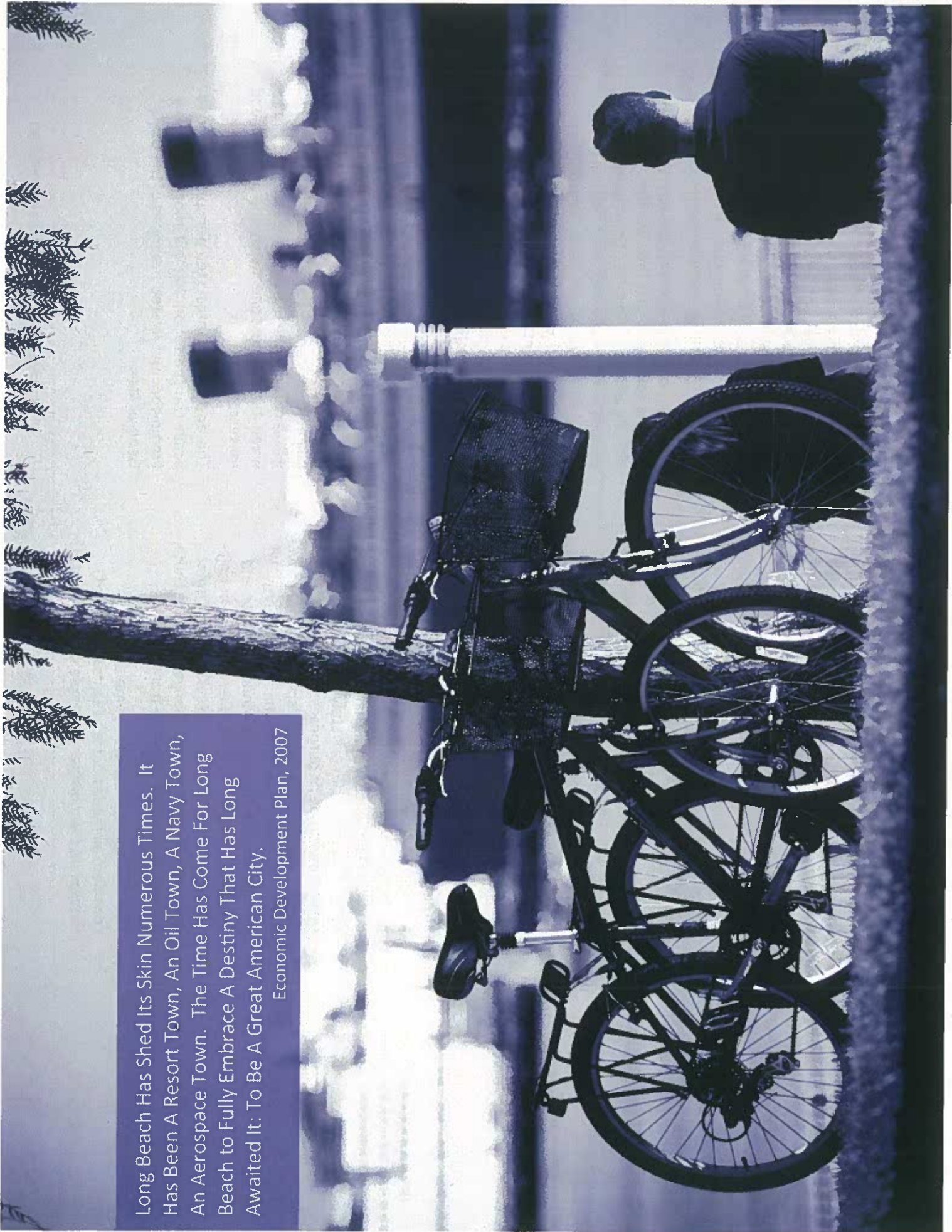
Exhibit A

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Long Beach Has Shed Its Skin Numerous Times. It Has Been A Resort Town, An Oil Town, A Navy Town, An Aerospace Town. The Time Has Come For Long Beach to Fully Embrace A Destiny That Has Long Awaited It: To Be A Great American City.

Economic Development Plan, 2007



# Introduction

Long Beach is a remarkable city. As one of the most diverse cities in the world, Long Beach is accustomed to change while retaining the essence of its character. The City has experienced multiple waves of development since it was first incorporated back in 1888. Yet strongly defined “Long Beach characteristics” have been retained. The physical form of the City reveals a very fine texture, one with genuine distinctive neighborhoods and business districts dispersed throughout, surprising residents and visitors alike with their unique character and vibrancy.

Long Beach is fortunate to have a regular grid pattern and gentle topography that makes moving through the City fairly easy. There is no longer room or a desire to continue to widen our streets, so making the most of the streets we have is essential.

Streets make up approximately 20 percent of the total land area of the City. The streets, along with parks and natural open spaces, are the public domain - the space we all share. This is our public room. Different from privately held lands, streets serve a multitude of purposes. Although streets convey vehicles with people and goods and provide a place to park - they do so much more. They intrigue us with storefront window displays and provide a place for people to rendezvous, people-watch and sidewalk dine. Streets have different characteristics which may change along the route, along with the buildings that front on them.

This new approach called “complete streets” considers all modes of travel in its design and **focuses on the number of people moving through**

**a corridor, not the number of vehicles.** In the complete streets concept, the movement of people is the primary goal, and all modes of travels are considered equally. When a street cannot accommodate all modes of travel adequately, parallel streets are identified for other modes of travel, for example bike boulevards. Together, these streets form a “complete corridor.”

Relatedly, over the past two decades there is a growing consensus that **how we plan our cities directly affects our health.** Commuting for long periods of time in our cars isn’t optimal for our mental and physical well being. A sedentary lifestyle and lack of physical exercise is a risk factor for many preventable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. Active Living is an approach that integrates physical activity into daily routines, like walking to the store or biking to work.

**The ideal city for active living provides a variety of choices for walking, biking and other physical activity through better design of our streets and land use patterns.** As expressed by the principles in this document, complete neighborhoods are connected to goods and services in a walkable, bikeable environment. Taken together, these goals will encourage the use of active transportation when it is the most effective mode of travel, and for recreation.

This document contains ten principles related to active transportation that will inform the Policy Framework and related programs of the City’s General Plan.

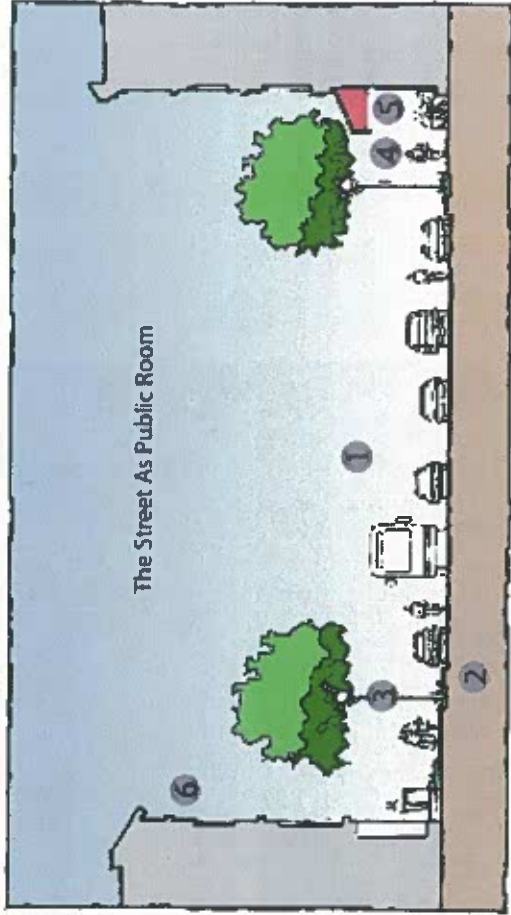
## ❖ Balance the Needs of All Modes of Travel

Consistent with recent State legislation, policies, guidelines and standards based upon this principle will describe how the City will provide for the accommodation of all public rights-of-way users, where all modes of travel are considered equally, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists. Moreover, specific attention will be paid to those with specific needs such as individuals with disabilities, seniors, and children.

Residents, workers, businesses and visitors in Long Beach deserve readily accessible and convenient transportation options that ease and facilitate their movement from place to place. While automobiles will remain the leading choice of transportation for many Long Beach residents and visitors, walking, bicycling, and transit must be supported and encouraged as well. With this in mind, the physical layout and land use characteristics of a particular street will guide the intensity of uses and types of travel modes that may be emphasized.



On streets with excess vehicle roadway width capacity, a “road diet” re-allocates roadway width to other modes of travel.  
*Bixby Knolls, Long Beach*



- 1: Street    2: Curb Zone    3: Planting/Amenity Zone  
4: Walk Zone    5: Setback    6: Street Wall

*The public room of the street is comprised of six major elements within our view range as a pedestrian walking on the sidewalk: the street, curb zone, landscaping, walking zone, setbacks and the streetwall created by buildings. The street itself could include parking stalls, bike lanes, travel lanes and a median. These elements work together to establish the character of the street, and in turn the neighborhood.*

## ❖ Promote Bicycling

Bicycling is a viable alternative to driving in Long Beach with its regional bicycle path and route network, relatively flat topography, pleasant climate and highly connected grid-system of streets. The City recognizes that a safe and effective bicycling experience can really make a community enjoyable and enhances our quality of life. Bicyclists are attracted to facilities that are accommodating to bicycles and are continuous and secure. Major bicycle facilities composed of on-street bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards and continuous off-street paths are preferred by bicyclists because these types of facilities promote efficiency and safety for bicycle travel. All but the most skilled of bicyclists prefer to mix with automobile traffic only on low-volume, low-speed streets. The City's approach to accommodating bicycling must be consistent with these preferences.

For longer-distance trips that are beyond the practical reach of pedestrians, bicycling serves as an efficient option and replacement; for short-distance trips, bicycling is competitive with the automobile in terms of efficiency. Bicycling offers benefits to individuals and society as a whole as it is a non-polluting and sustainable form of transportation.

Long Beach has taken a leadership role on experimenting with new bicycle facilities. As an innovator, we have been willing to try new types of facilities to expand our network.



This bike corral on Retro Row provides increased parking options in this Parking Impacted Area. *Retro Row, Long Beach*



Roundabouts reduce vehicle speeds on residential streets and provide convenient movement for bicyclists. *Davis, CA*



Dedicated bike lanes produce convenient and "entry-level" bike facilities for less experienced bicyclists.

## ❖ Promote Walking

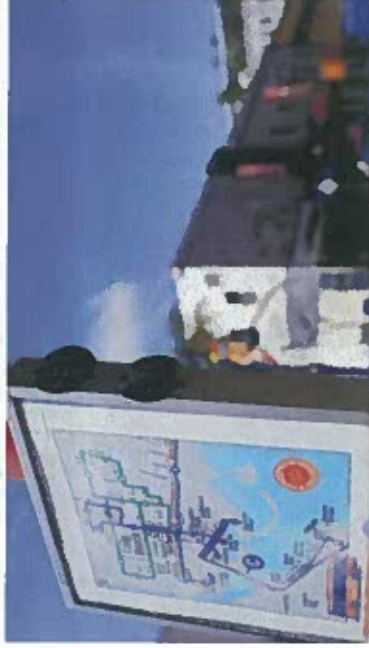
Pedestrian activity is a good indicator of vibrant public spaces. This principle seeks to make walking safe and pleasurable for everyone, on all streets and at all times of day. The policies and programs associated with this principle pay particular attention to the needs of children, the elderly and the disabled. It recognizes that Long Beach's streets are part of its open space and recreation network and that walking should be a fun, healthful, everyday activity. Walking offers other public benefits such as neighborhood connectivity, and provides opportunities for people to be active as a part of their daily lifestyles. The City will continue to prioritize capital and operational improvements that promote pedestrian travel and safety.

Water features and public art help create details and variety that make the public realm inviting

*Downtown Culver City*



This refuge island adjacent to Jordan High School provides students crossing Atlantic Avenue safe haven from traffic.  
*North Long Beach*



Wayfinding signage provides pedestrians directional and informational orientation.  
*Pine Avenue, Long Beach*



Streets and alleys can be converted to pedestrian streets and public spaces with commercial activity.  
*Downtown San Francisco*

## ❖ Promote Transit

Transit directly supports a healthy pedestrian and built environment by providing a means of expanding the area able to be accessed by pedestrians while minimizing the space needed to move large numbers of people. Transit is a critical element of the overall transportation system in Long Beach, which has a significantly higher “transit-dependent” population compared to the region. Connecting the transit system to other modes occurs adjacent to the streets at transit stops and at intermodal centers like the First Street Transit Mall in downtown Long Beach. Pedestrian access to these connections is essential to transit usage along with convenience, destinations served, reliable and frequent service, and safety. Bike racks on buses are essential for multi-modal travel.

Providing an inviting and comfortable environment at transit stops enhances the pedestrian experience.  
Portland, OR



“Real-time” transit arrival time via cell phone text or kiosk display provides useful information that enhances the transit experience.  
Transit Mall, Long Beach



## ❖ Create Dynamic and Context Sensitive Streets

Streets should be designed and managed to support the places and neighborhoods they serve and to balance the needs of everyone who travels along them. While streets serve to accommodate movement, their design should flow first from what kind of place is being created alongside them. Successful pedestrian environments include interesting design elements such as public art and sculpture, open space with park-like amenities, and appropriately human-scaled commercial or retail services.

Context-sensitive solutions and designs promote creating holistic places that are sensitive to the environment, while maintaining safety and mobility. Streets should be designed to respect the context of the area and promote the land use. The land use, along with the role and function of the street, determine design features to be applied and an acceptable level of service for vehicular traffic. The City intends to balance level of service and safety for automobiles with other equally important outcomes for advancing mobility options in each of the land use districts.



This landscaped bulb-out slows vehicle traffic and provides additional public space for street furniture.  
East Village, Long Beach



Street trees, potted plants and on-street parking buffers the pedestrians on this busy thoroughfare.  
Downtown Los Angeles



Active and interesting public spaces encourage walking therefore reducing the perceived distance.  
Portland, OR

## ❖ Protect and Enhance the Environment

The City's transportation system has a substantial impact on the environment. About 20 percent of the City's land area is devoted to roads and the percentage is significantly higher when surface parking lots are included. Transportation consumes resources, contributes to climate change, affects air quality, creates noise pollution, and impacts ocean water quality through runoff from nonpoint source pollution—all of which affect our quality of life and public health. Choices and policies surrounding mobility can have a significant affect on improving environmental quality and public health.

To protect the environment with better street and parking lot designs, the City encourages the use of permeable surfaces to reduce rainwater and urban runoff through the City's storm drain system. Creating natural drainage swales in parking lot landscapes, with sand and gravel layers, allows contaminants to be filtered on-site. This both creates a pleasant green space and protects our offshore water quality. Likewise, using grasscrete or other permeable surfaces for lightly used roadways or parking areas can allow water to penetrate the earth's surface and be filtered through it.

Streetscapes should integrate native, drought tolerant or low water-use plant species, and innovative "first flush" storm-water techniques such as bioswales and permeable paving where



Streetscapes should integrate native, drought tolerant plant species, and innovative "first flush" storm-water techniques such as bioswales.

[Downtown Los Angeles](#)



An urban man-made wetlands at the site of the historic tributary of the tanner creek into the Willanette River.  
[Tanner Springs Park, Portland](#)

## ❖ Support Healthy and Active Neighborhoods

Long Beach is a city made up of many unique neighborhoods. Each neighborhood has its own history and characteristics. Not only are neighborhoods places to sleep, but they provide for the daily needs of modern life, from local shopping areas offering stores and personal services, to our open spaces, streets and sidewalks, libraries, schools and fire stations -- they are all a part of our local neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, some of our neighborhoods are lacking components of a “complete neighborhood” or they have been saddled with incompatible or obsolete developments. This principle establishes making each neighborhood complete by improving the urban fabric to ensure that

daily destinations are within a walkable or bikeable distance, blight is minimized and residents have access to healthy foods and safe places to create and congregate. This principle is designed to better shape infill developments so that they are only placed where infrastructure can sustainably support them and their scale and character will be made compatible with the surrounding environment.

Moreover, community members identified having access to nutritious food and reducing blighting influences and unhealthy activities, particularly to young people, as important in achieving a healthier population.



Farmers Market provides access to healthy foods  
*Downtown Long Beach*



Long Beach Organic's Community Garden provides an urban nature oasis in the Downtwon.  
*East Village, Long Beach*



Convenient bike parking enables residents to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines.  
*Bixby Knolls, Long Beach*

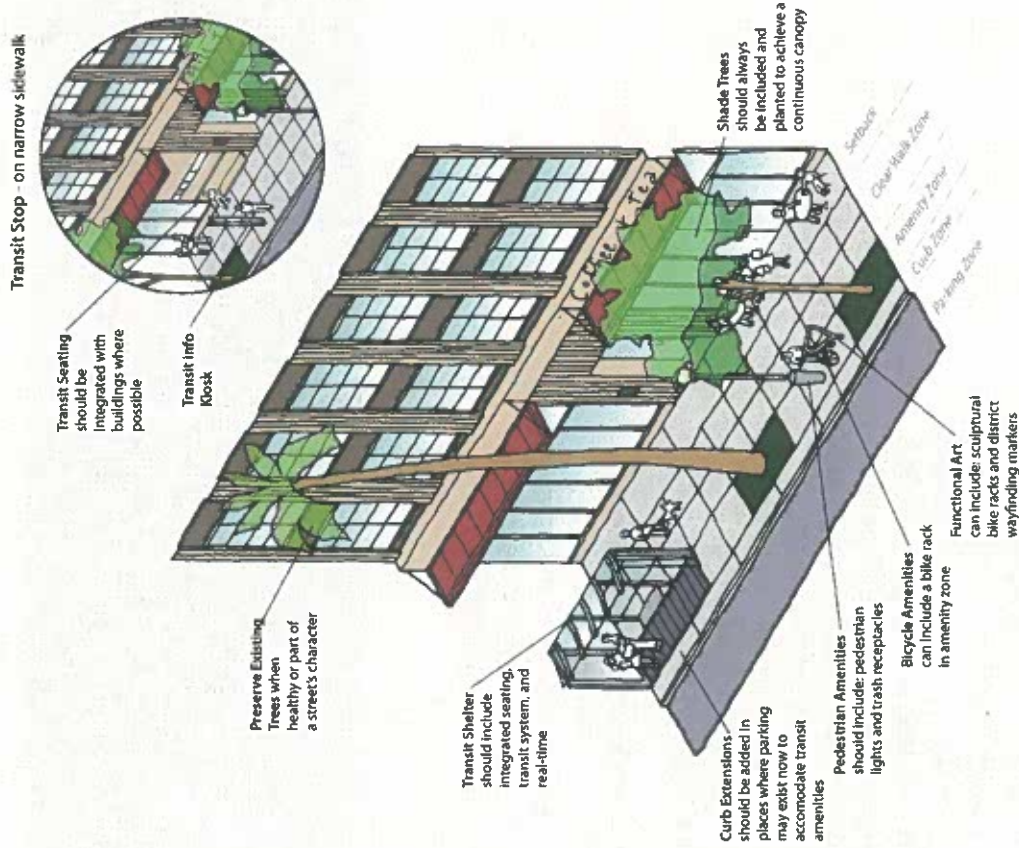
# ❖ Create Transit-Oriented Developments along Transit Routes

This principle supports higher-intensity uses along transit-supported corridors, in the downtown and near transit stations, particularly at Metro Blue Line stations on Long Beach Boulevard. Transit can become an effective alternative to the automobile if appropriate services and amenities are incorporated into the design of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) projects. By enabling transit riders to accomplish multiple errands within their commute, the City can help public conveyances become a more viable and convenient transportation option. This will allow more people to live and work within walking distance of transit facilities, saving them the cost of buying a vehicle and facilitating better air quality and health outcomes as well.



**Concentrate growth near major transit stops.**  
*Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles*

## Transit Stop



## ❖ Ensure Connectivity to Activity Centers and Other Modes

The key to achieving a functional multi-modal transportation system is providing efficient connections between different modes. For example, most transit trips start and end with a pedestrian trip, and the use of bicycles on transit has continued to increase. In other words, paying attention to all modes in street planning and where those connections create a more efficient system provides more travel options and greater efficiency.

This principle will help create great streets that function as community connectors and as activity centers. Since the majority of our social and commercial activity occurs along these community connectors, how they function and are designed will have a significant affect on our neighborhoods.

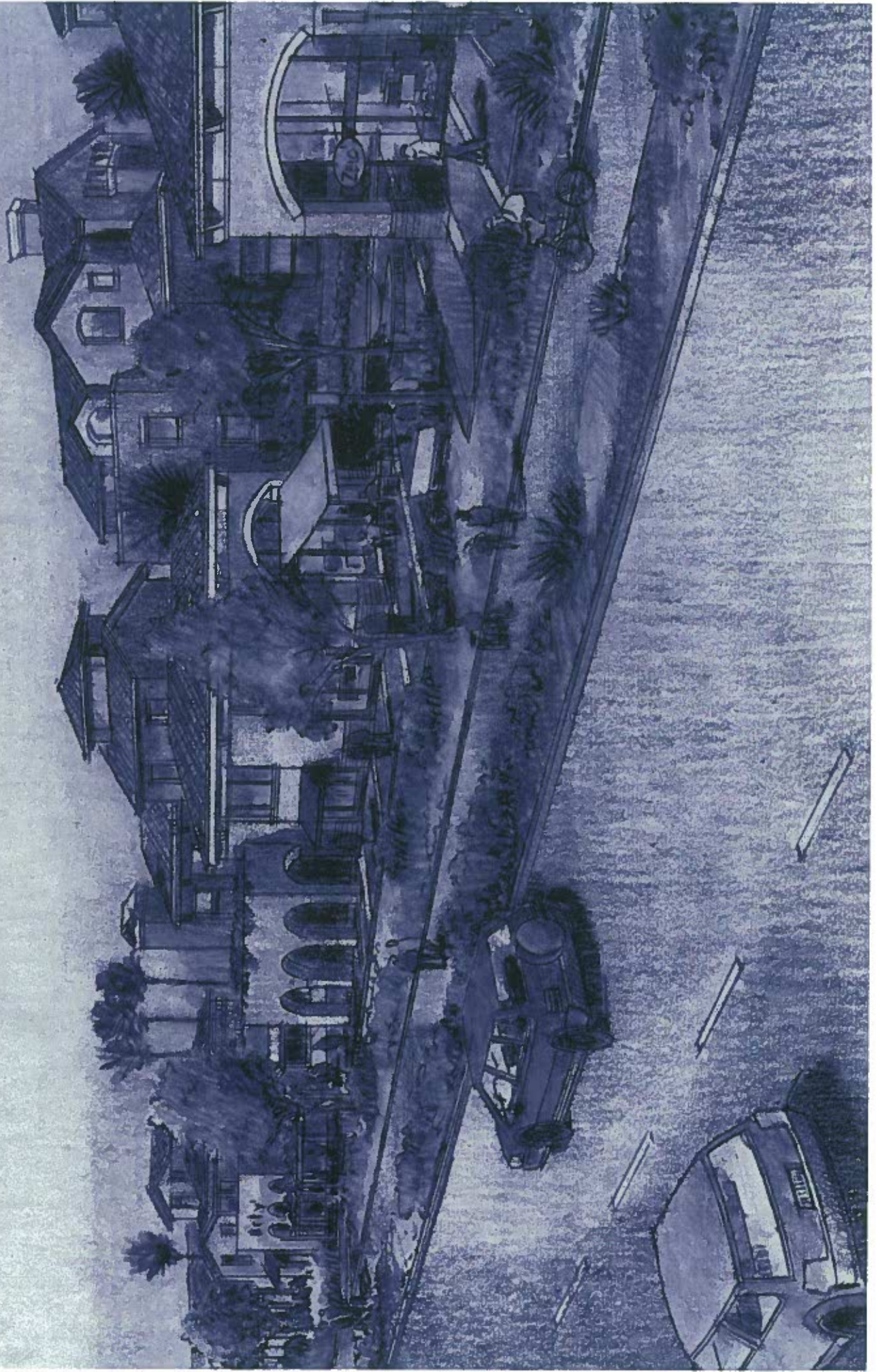


Enclosed bike parking at Metro Rail Stations extends the reach of Transit.  
*Metro Green Line, Aviation Station*



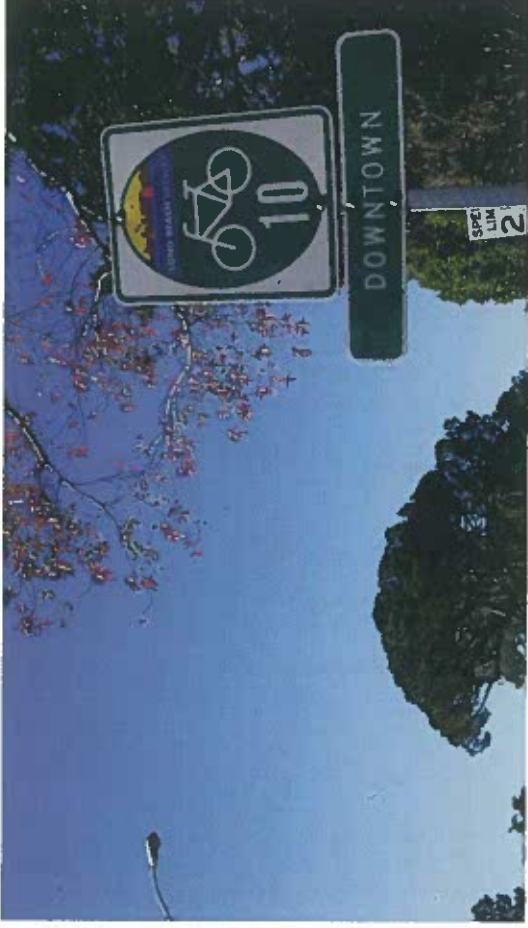
Mid-block pedestrian paths increase the accessibility of the downtown  
*Pine Avenue*

Works in Progress



# Bicycle Facilities Vision Map

One area of focus where the City has made significant progress is bike infrastructure. The majority of the short-term bicycle facilities in the 2001 Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) have been implemented and the City needs to re-examine and update the bike facilities in the BMP. In the past three years alone, approximately 39 miles of new bike facilities have been added to the bike network. The Public Works Department in the winter of 2011 began working with the professional transportation planning firm of KOA Engineering to develop new bike facilities. This Bicycle Facilities Vision Map is the culmination of extensive series public workshops to identify and prioritize new bike facilities for the Bicycle Master Plan in anticipation of the update. Bicycle policies and new proposed bicycle facilities will be included in the Long Beach 2030 Framework and Mobility Element.



Signs help bicyclists find and travel on routes.  
Downtown Long Beach



Develop an extensive network of bike boulevards  
Berkeley, CA



**City of Long Beach**

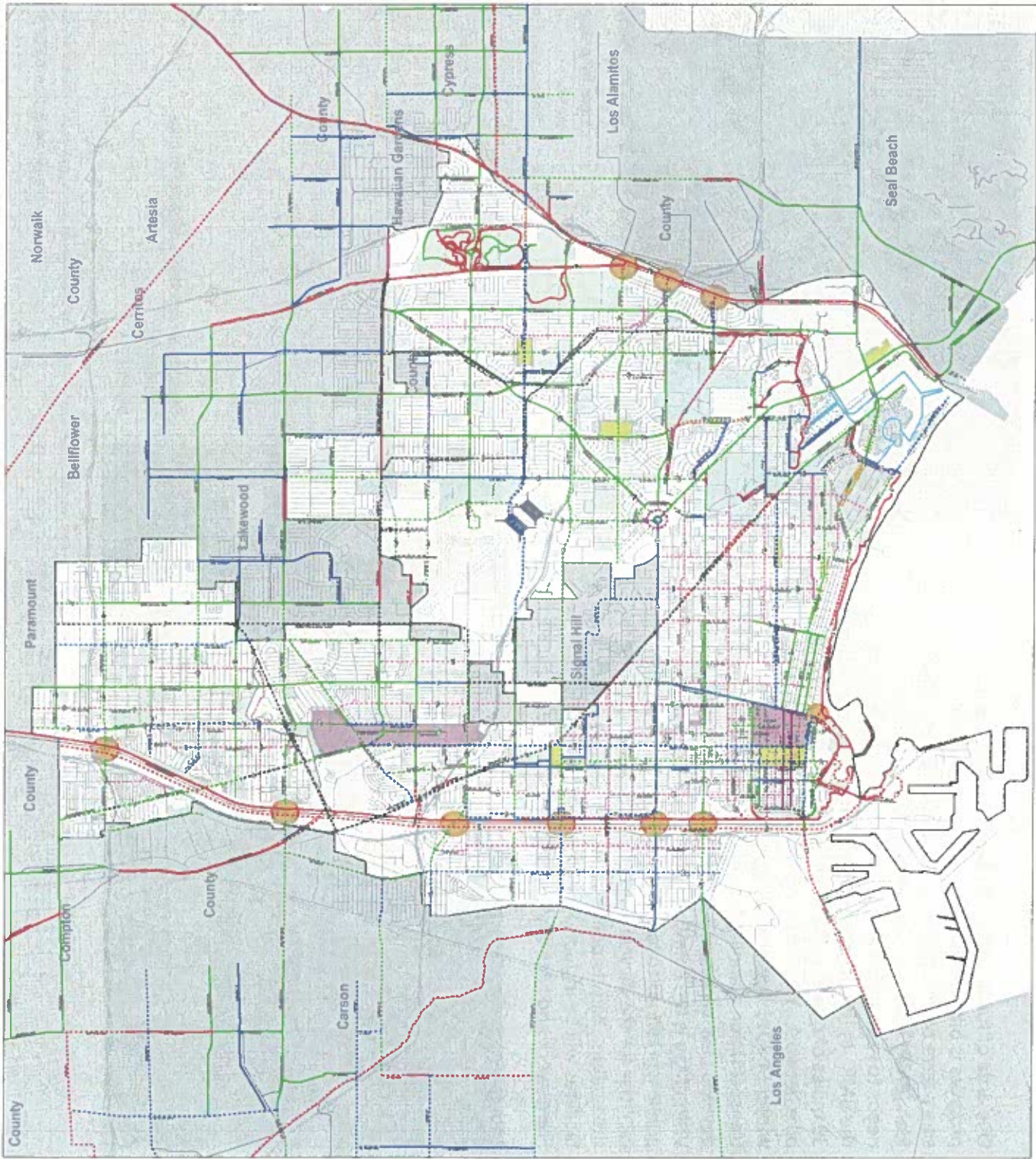
Long Beach  
Bicycle Master Plan

**LEGEND**

- Proposed Bikeways**
- Class I Bike Path - Off-Road (Paved)
  - Class II Bike Lane - On-Road (Striped Lanes)
  - Class III Bike Route - On-Road (Signed Only)
  - Bike Boulevard
  - Sharrow/Green
  - Cycle Track/2-Way Separated Bikeway
  - Undetermined
- Existing Bikeways**
- Class I Bike Path - Off-Road (Paved)
  - Class II Bike Lane - On-Road (Striped Lanes)
  - Class III Bike Route - On-Road (Signed Only)
  - Bike Boulevard
  - Protected Lanes
  - Sharrow/Green
  - Long Beach Bay Route
  - Bike Friendly Retail Districts
- Proposed**
- Park and Schools
  - Park
  - School
- RiverCreek Bikeway Access Points**
- Proposed Access Point
  - Long Beach Airport Runway Underpass
  - Existing Airport Runway Underpass



0 0.5 1 Miles





# Metro Blue Line Bike and Pedestrian Access Plan

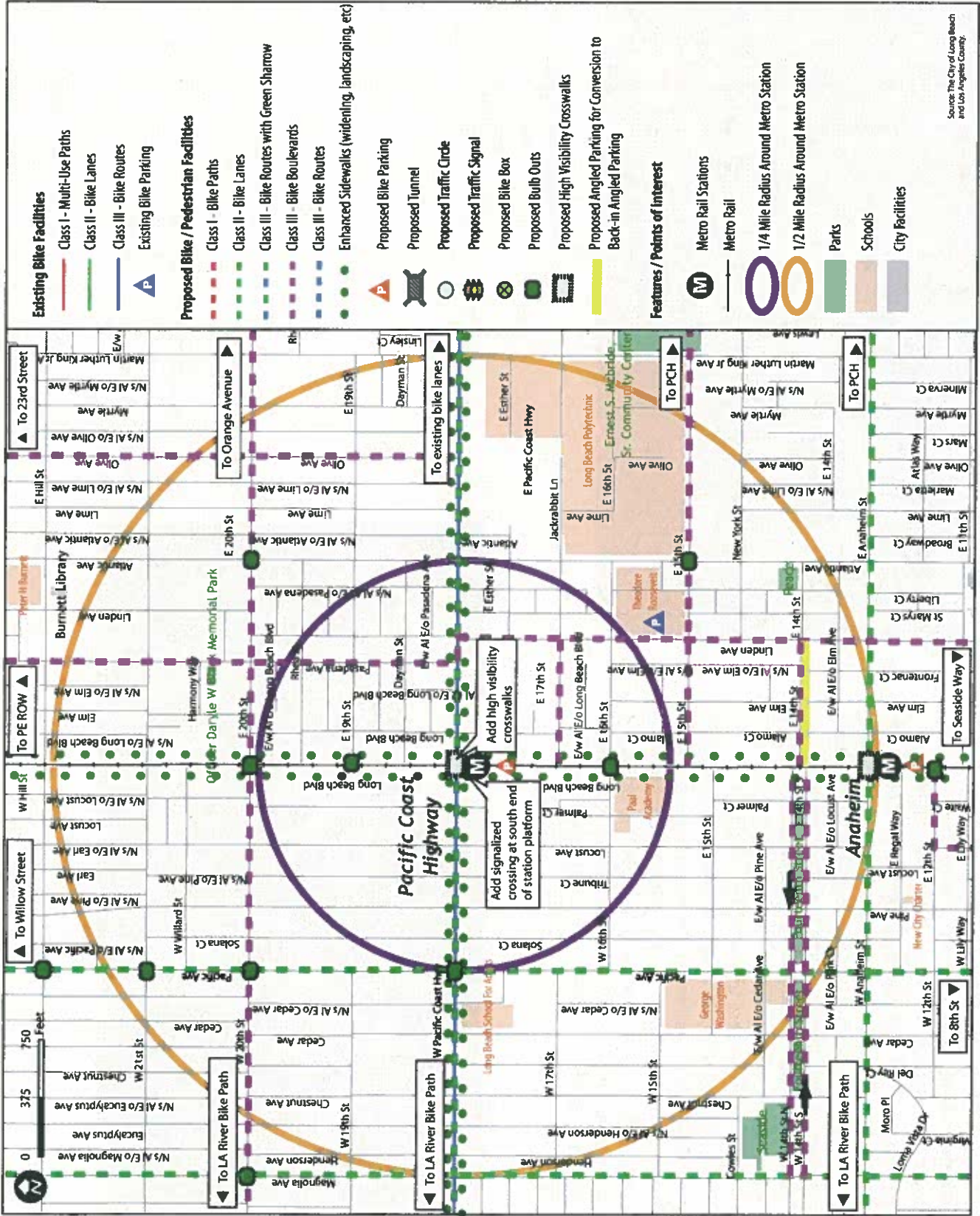
The City initiated the Metro Blue Line Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Plan to assess and recommend physical infrastructure and safety improvements to increase bicycling and walking to nine Metro Blue Line light rail transit stations in Long Beach: Transit Mall, First Street, Fifth Street, Pacific, Anahiem, Pacific Coast Highway, Willow, Wardlow and Del Amo Stations. Providing alternative transportation options is critical for the significant population in Long Beach that does not own or have access to a vehicle. This planning effort identified projects that have community support and strong funding potential. Planning level concept designs for the top three or four priority projects around each station have been developed to assist in future grant applications. The recommendations and programs identified in this report will inform Long Beach 2030.



Improving street and sidewalk lighting promotes a sense of security and makes locations appear more inviting  
Long Beach Boulevard



Bicycle boxes provide additional space for bicyclists to move to the front of the vehicular queue while at red light  
Portland, OR



Source: The City of Long Beach and Los Angeles County

Example of Walk Audit Results  
Long Beach Boulevard and PCH

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