



1.0

# introduction

1.1 Background

1-2

1.2 Project Boundary

1-6

1st Street Station

OCEAN

INTERNATIONAL

Exit to Street

LOS ANGELES

OCEAN

OCEAN

## 1.1 Background

Long Beach is ranked near the top nationally for being one of the most walkable and bike-friendly communities

Long Beach is one of Southern California's most unique waterfront urban destinations to live, work, and play. As California's seventh-largest city, Downtown Long Beach is centrally located and a mere 20 minutes from both Los Angeles and central Orange County. Additionally, visitors can easily access Downtown via public transit and explore its many shops, restaurants, and attractions by bike or on foot. Downtown Long Beach offers all the amenities and variety of a major urban center within a clean, safe community and is enhanced by the temperate climate and breathtaking ocean views.



Figure 1.1 A pedestrian crosses Daisy Avenue.

More than 30,000 residents live in Downtown Long Beach. Residential development opportunities continue to grow based on recent entitlement activity. Dedicated bike lanes in Downtown promote safe road sharing between motorists and cyclists. Additionally, the well-connected grid, array of retail amenities, and excellent transit service of the plan area allows residents and visitors to forgo their cars to walk or bike for nearly all errands.

Frequent special events, such as conventions, the jazz festival, the Grand Prix, Summer and Music series, Pride festival and many others, generate significant pedestrian, vehicular, and transit demand. Evening usage, particularly on summer weekends, is especially high. The highest pedestrian demand is in areas such as the Pine

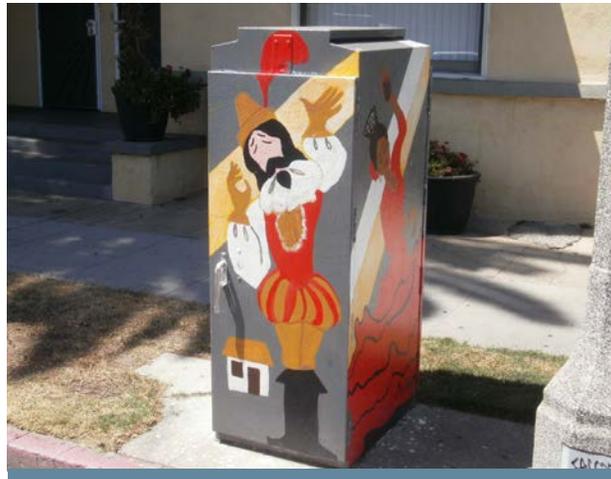


Figure 1.2 Browsing merchandise along First Street.

Avenue corridor, in the East Village Arts District, and along Shoreline Drive between The Pike and the oceanfront area, where there are more and more pedestrians walking between activity centers such as restaurants, the Aquarium, shops at The Pike, the convention center, hotels and the Long Beach Arena.

As Long Beach continues to mature and evolve, the City faces many challenges in supporting this vision of itself as a world-class city. (Streets and other public rights-of-way make up over 20% of the City of Long Beach’s land area). Pedestrian injuries and fatalities continue to occur on busy streets. Each year, the City spends millions of dollars maintaining and improving City streets, yet too often the streets serve only a single purpose—the movement of automobiles. By building on previous planning efforts such as the Mobility Element and Complete Streets Criteria, Long Beach could achieve a number of important goals, including enhancement of all modes of travel, improved ecological performance, encouragement of physical activity for public health, and restoration of the streets’ rightful role as the heart of the City’s public life.

Through a careful existing conditions analysis, the project team has identified a number of issues in the study area relating to safety, barriers to accessing transit, and opportunities for enhancing connections to the Blue Line. This analysis was informed in part by Metro’s First/Last Mile Strategic Plan, which outlines a “layer



**Figure 1.3** Reflecting the creativity of artists and residents in Long Beach, the City has funded a utility box painting program, costing about \$2,000 per box. The enhanced boxes enhance the pedestrian experience.



**Figure 1.4** Lime Avenue is the first of several bike boulevards that have been planned for Downtown and Midtown.

### Figure 1.5: Mobility Milestones



**1990** Blue Line opens



**2007** Construction begins on the Promenade, spurring TOD investment



**2011** First protected bike lanes (cycle track) in California



**2011** Long Beach Transit Gallery remodeled



**2014** WalkScore.com names Long Beach the 14th most walkable city in the nation

cake” approach to identifying gaps in the pedestrian network.

The PMP provides a blueprint for achieving this multi-use vision of streets – streets that continue to function as corridors of movement - while at the same time reach their potential for enhanced community life, recreational opportunities, and ecological benefits. The PMP also creates safer, more direct connects to the Metro Blue Line, to increase ridership and encourage residents and visitors to take alternate modes of transportation. As Long Beach continues to grow, the PMP will help to ensure that it can fulfill its vision of a world-class city – one that is renowned for the quality of its streets and the vibrant public life that they foster.

## A Growing Population

More than **5% of Long Beach’s population lives Downtown**, with a density of 15,770 residents/ square mile, twice the Citywide average

Downtown Long Beach’s **population has steadily grown by 8%** since 2000, compared to less than 1% Citywide

Nearly **30,000 people** call Downtown home

20% of residents work in the Educational Services and Health Care fields





Figure 1.6 Third Street in Downtown.

## 1.2 Project Boundary

The study area is divided into three major planning areas, roughly along the Blue Line between Interstate 405 and the Waterfront. Each planning area presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities, and the project team undertook an extensive analysis to understand each area and develop a list of capital improvement projects that will eliminate barriers to accessing the Blue Line. The PMP includes a list of high priority projects that strikes a balance between the Wardlow, Midtown, and Downtown planning areas.

### 1.2.1 Wardlow + Willow

The Wardlow and Willow station areas are home to a concentration of assisted living facilities and disconnected streets that terminate at the Blue Line. An underutilized Metro right-of-way presents an opportunity to better connect pedestrians to both stations.

### 1.2.2 Midtown

Anaheim Street and Pacific Coast Highway, each with a station at Long Beach Boulevard, are major corridors with high levels of traffic and a high incidence of pedestrian collisions.

### 1.2.3 Downtown

The Downtown planning area boundary is largely drawn from the City of Long Beach Downtown Plan, which includes five sub-planning areas: North Pine, East Village, West End, and the Downtown Core. This planning area encompasses four Blue Line Stations at 1st Street, the Transit Gallery, Pacific, and 5th Street.

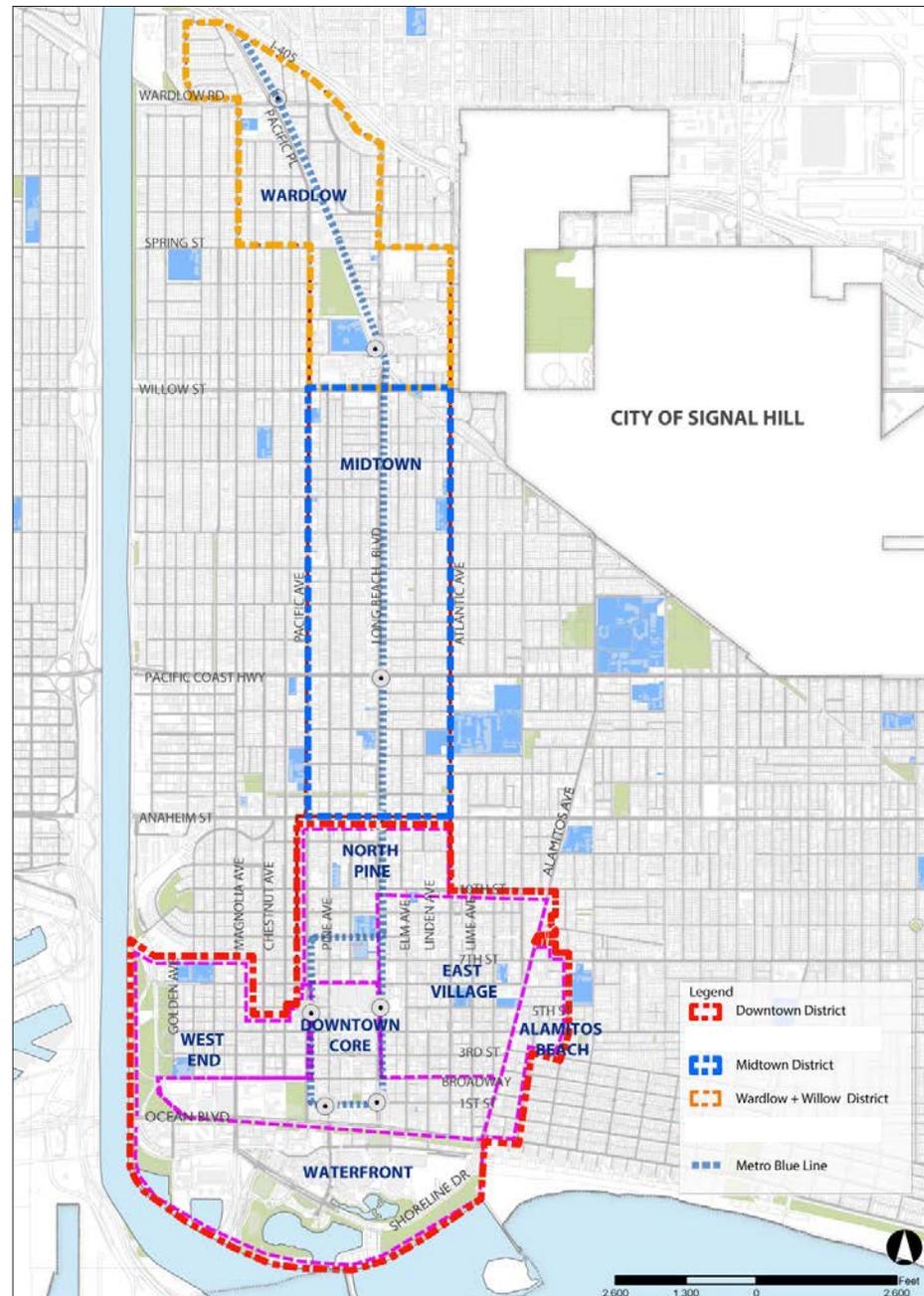


Figure 1.7

Project Boundary and planning areas used for analysis.



Figure 1.8 A father and daughter cross Shoreline Drive.