

CONTEXT

MIDTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

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2.0 Context

2.1 LOCATION

The Midtown project area is in the City of Long Beach and is just north of the Downtown. Long Beach is the seventh largest city in California, with roughly 460,000 residents and nearly 160,000 employment opportunities (2010). The City is about 20 miles south of Downtown Los Angeles and borders Orange County on its eastern edge.

Long Beach Boulevard is historically significant as a grand entrance to the City and its Downtown. The boulevard continues to be one of the City's primary transit corridors, with the Metro Blue Line operating in the center of the street from 1st Street to just north of Willow Street (where it veers northwest off the boulevard).

In total, the project area encompasses 375 acres of public and private property, including 261 acres of parcelized land and 114 acres of roads and other rights-of-way. The northern border is Wardlow Road and the southern boundary is two and a half miles south at Anaheim Street. The eastern and western boundaries generally fall one block from Long Beach Boulevard, except at key intersections and the area between Spring and Willow Streets, where the boundaries extend to Atlantic and Pacific Avenues.

The project area is also within three general neighborhood areas of Long Beach: Wrigley/West Long Beach, west of Long Beach Boulevard; Central, east of Long Beach Boulevard; and the Downtown, south of Pacific Coast Highway. Figure 2-1 shows a map of the project boundaries in the regional context, and Figure 2-2 provides a view of the local context.

FIGURE 2-1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

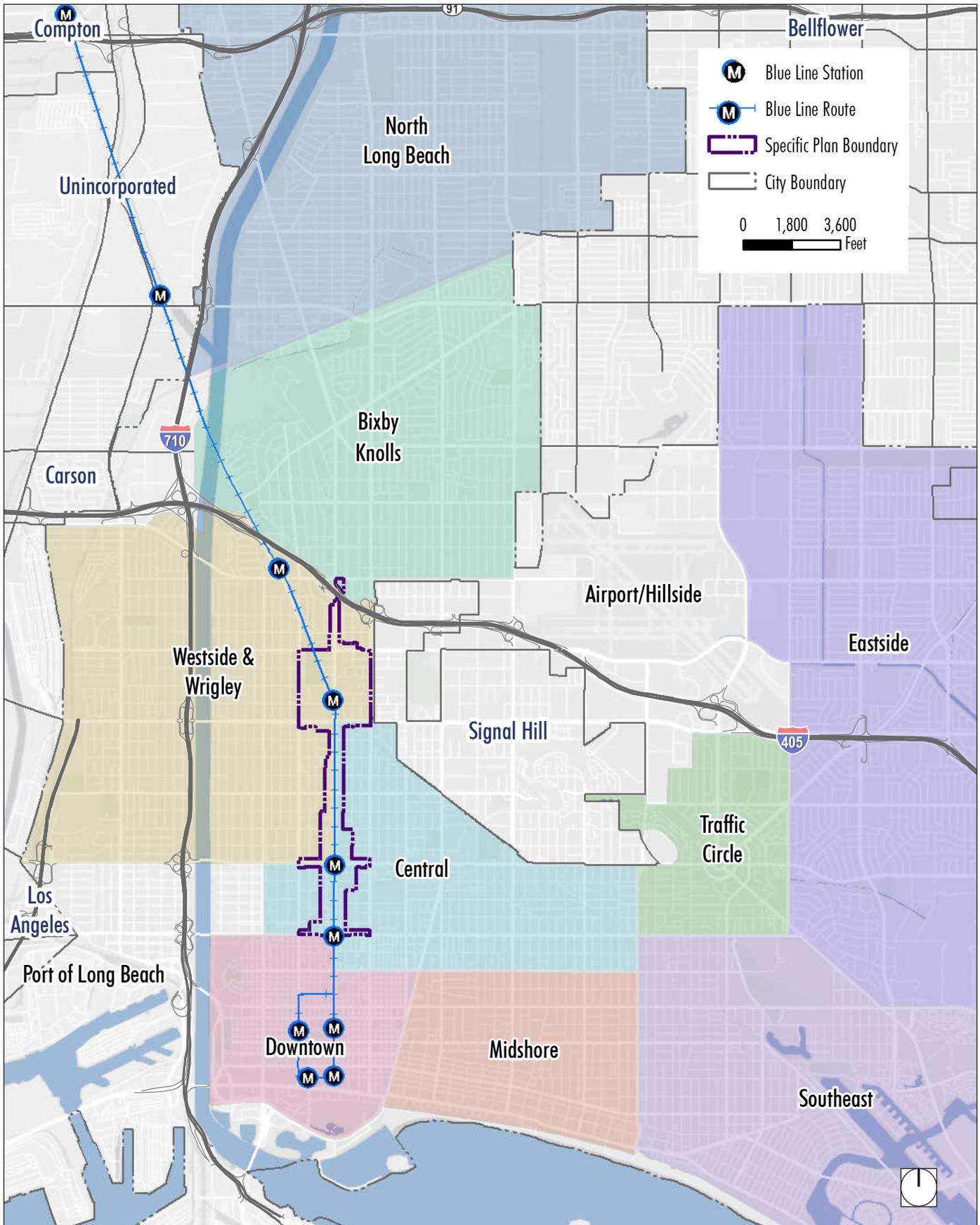
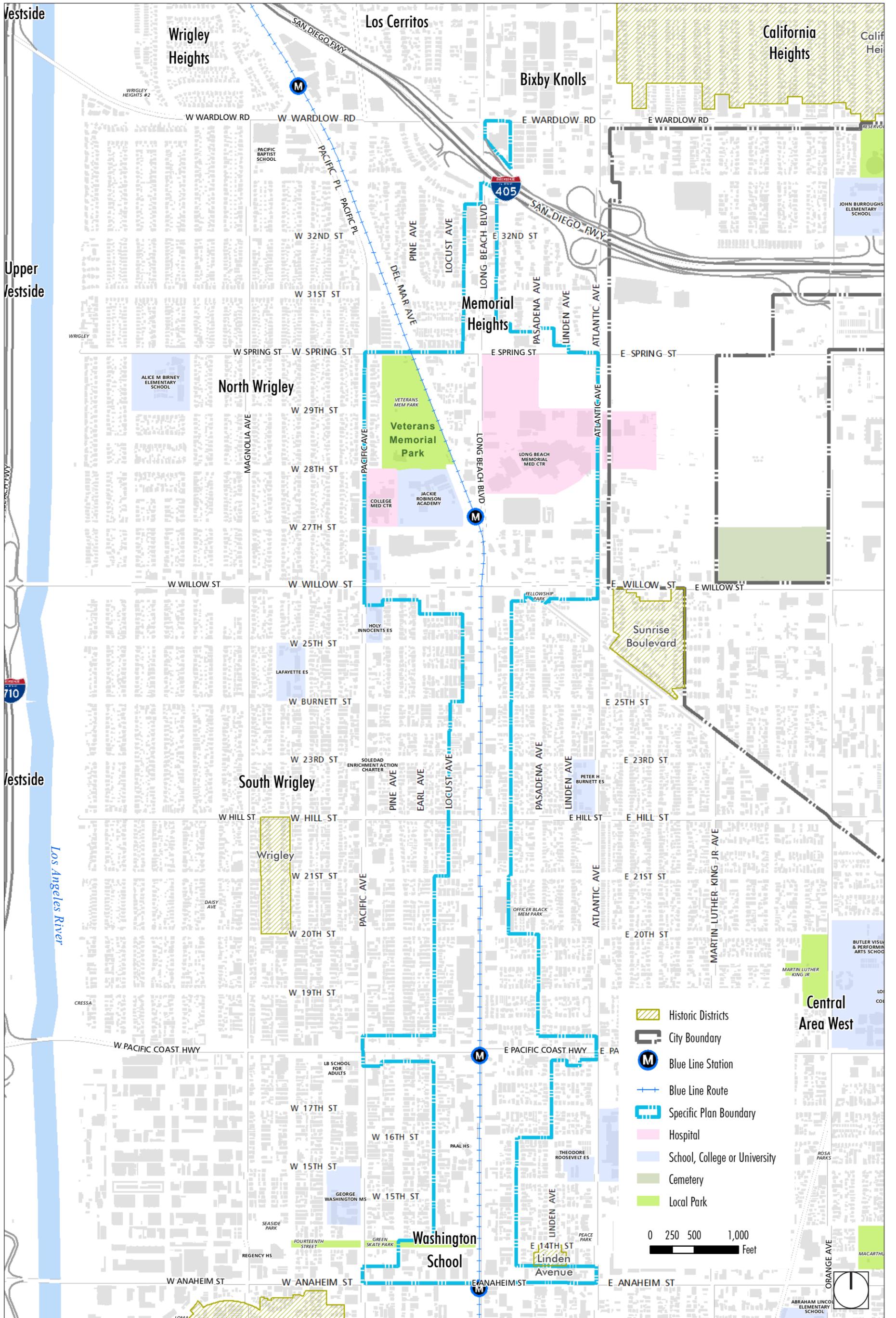


FIGURE 2-2 LOCAL CONTEXT



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2.2 HISTORY

Long Beach Boulevard, called American Avenue until 1958, is a busy street that has catered to nearly all modes of travel over the past 100 years. The size of its right-of-way, generally 132 feet, reflects its history as a streetcar route. The original Red Line streetcar line began service in 1902 and ran along the Metro Blue Line route, operated by Pacific Electric Railway. By 1927, Long Beach had over 30 miles of streetcar tracks and soon became one of the fastest growing cities in the country.

In the 1930s, automobile use exploded and streetcars fell out of favor. The proliferation of freeways and an increasingly auto-centric culture pushed Long Beach Boulevard to adapt to the new car-oriented way of life. Not only did it become vehicular dominated as a means of travel, but the boulevard also became a regional destination for people to shop for new cars in the 1960s and 1970s. However, after the passage of Proposition 13 capped property taxes, cities began competing for auto dealerships to boost sales tax revenues. Dealerships abandoned the boulevard for larger sites in other cities, and the area began to decline. The effects of this loss are still visible in the remaining vacant lots and marginal commercial uses.

Long Beach Boulevard began shifting from an auto-dominated street to a transit-oriented community in the late 1980s. The Metro Blue Line opened for business on Long Beach Boulevard on July 14, 1990, transporting passengers from Los Angeles to Downtown Long Beach. The Blue Line has become one of the busiest light rail lines in the country, averaging roughly 90,000 boardings every weekday. It has become so busy that several station platforms have been extended to provide for longer trains and new riders.

The City has sought to use transit as a catalyst for Midtown's physical and economic revitalization since the Metro Blue Line's opening in 1990. The City adopted the Long Beach Boulevard Planned Development District (PD-29) in 1991 to provide a regulatory framework that could attract new investment along the boulevard in the form of mixed-use, high-density infill projects.

Development along the boulevard and new economic opportunities for local residents have been minimal over the past 20 years. Since PD-29's adoption, most new development has been limited to low density and single-use commercial and retail projects. The designs and layouts of these projects emphasized automobile access and provided few physical connections or access to transit. This resulting development pattern is neither consistent with the City's desired mixed-use transit corridor, nor does it provide significant benefits to local residents.



Historical photo of Long Beach Boulevard from the 1910s or 1920s.



Mike Salta Pontiac, 16th Street and Long Beach Boulevard, circa 1966.



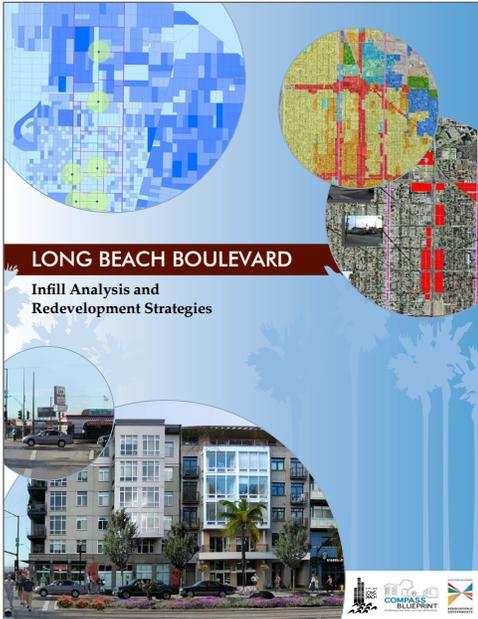
The Blue Line opened in July 1990, reestablishing passenger rail service from Long Beach to LA.

Photo credits:

Top: Ronald W. Mahan & Joseph J. Musil Photo Theatre Collection

Middle: Bob Wicker, PontiacsOnline.com

Bottom: Dorothy Peyton Gray Transportation Library and Archive at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority



The 2007 SCAG Demonstration Project highlighted key issues and strategies for improving the corridor.

In 2007, the City of Long Beach was selected for a SCAG Compass Blueprint Demonstration Project to analyze the existing land use regulations and market constraints for transit-oriented development on Long Beach Boulevard and to make recommendations for specific code changes and redevelopment strategies. The Demonstration Project and the City ultimately concluded that the corridor would benefit from an overhaul of PD-29 to incentivize new, transit-oriented development. In 2011, the City partnered with SCAG on a second demonstration project to create this Specific Plan and EIR for this segment of Long Beach Boulevard and Midtown. This Specific Plan replaces PD-29 and is now the regulating document for land use in the area with the exception of a 4 acre residential area near Daryle Black Park which is covered by conventional zoning.

Long Beach Memorial Medical Center first opened in Midtown in 1958 and is currently run by the not-for-profit MemorialCare Health System. The medical center prepared plans to improve its facilities and operations within Midtown in 2005 through a master plan and environmental impact report (EIR). This master plan is currently being updated, and the City coordinated closely with MemorialCare to plan physical improvements and operational programming to best serve Midtown.



The corridor contains a wide variety of single- and multifamily housing, commercial and service businesses, and medical facilities.

2.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.3.1 Existing Land Uses and Development

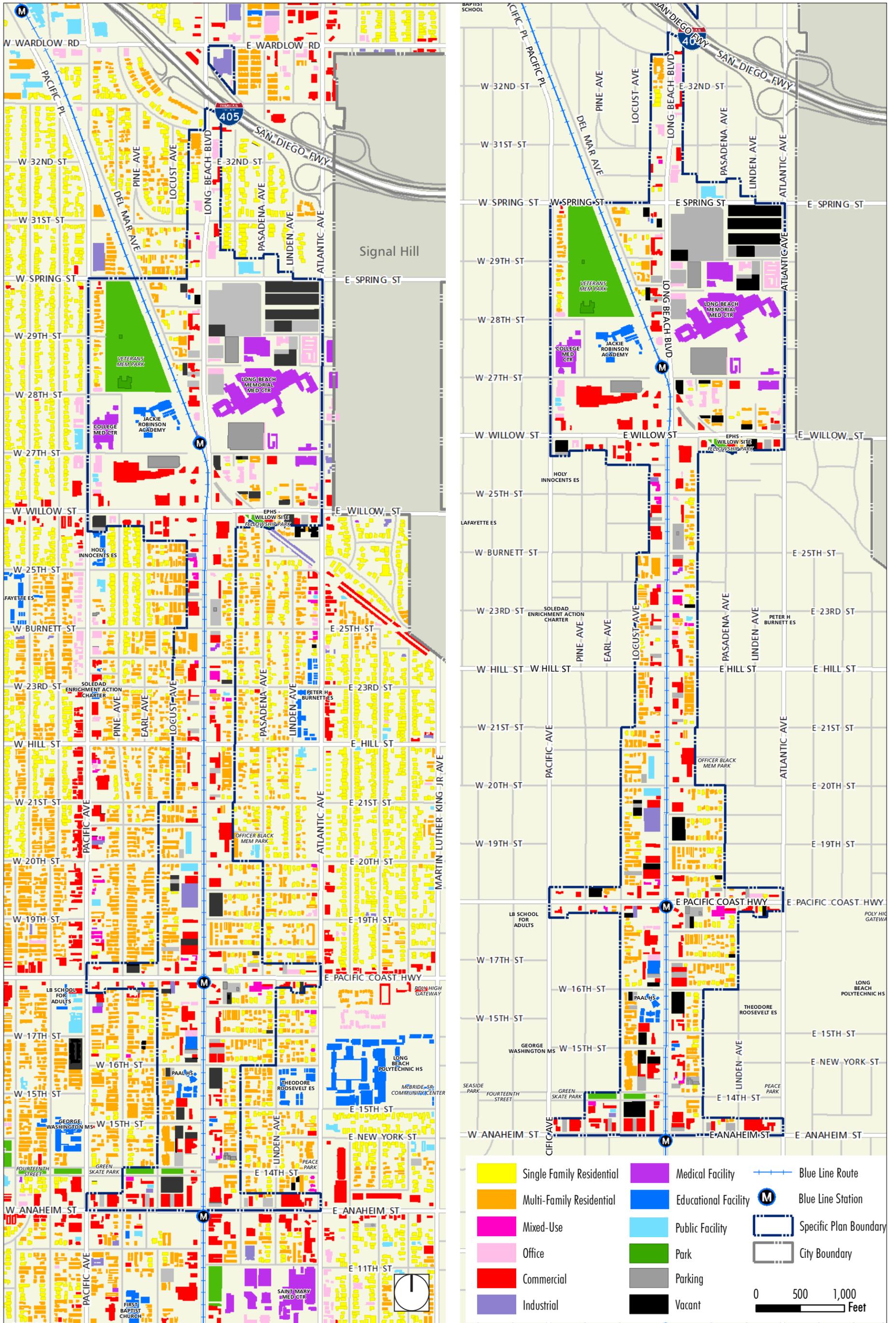
A wide variety of land uses can be found within and around the Long Beach Boulevard Midtown project area. Figure 2-3 illustrates the pattern of existing land uses as of 2014 by building footprint and land use type—both around and within the project area.

Residential. The project area and the surrounding neighborhoods are home to thousands of Long Beach residents, who live in a mixture of single-family and multi-family homes. Several historic neighborhoods lie within a quarter mile of the project boundaries: Drake Park/Willmore, Linden, Sunrise Boulevard, and Wrigley.

Commercial. Although struggling commercially in many ways, Long Beach Boulevard is still a key retail corridor for the surrounding community. A range of small- to medium-sized retail and service establishments provide essential services for area residents. On a typical day, several areas along the corridor bustle with patrons on foot or accessing transit. Households in the neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor tend toward lower income families who would benefit significantly from an increase in retail destinations within close proximity and a greater variety of housing opportunities along the transit-rich corridor.

Medical. Long Beach Boulevard is the medical core of Long Beach, with multiple hospitals and dozens of medical office, diagnostic, and research

FIGURE 2-3 EXISTING LAND USES



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businesses. MemorialCare is currently preparing a healthcare facility master plan for the Long Beach Memorial Medical Center campus. The long-term vision for this master plan is reflected in this Specific Plan and incorporates mixed-use development, workforce housing, and a more activated street frontage for Long Beach Boulevard.

Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, including Long Beach Memorial Hospital, Miller Children’s Hospital, and Pacific Hospital of Long Beach are adjacent to the Willow Metro Station. Just south of the Specific Plan boundary at Anaheim Street is St. Mary Medical Center.

Open Space and Recreation. Like many urbanized corridors in Southern California, few recreation and open space areas can be found along or near Long Beach Boulevard. The northern and southern portions of the corridor have access to open space, but the central portion of the project area is largely devoid of open space.

Veterans Memorial Park is the largest park space (14.7 acres) in the general area. It is adjacent to the Willow Metro Blue Line stop and has sports fields/courts and a community recreation center. McBride Park, on Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue east of Polytechnic High School, is the newest park in the area and includes a skate park and teen center. The 14th Street Park also has a skate park and connects to Seaside Park west of Pacific Avenue. Finally, a few mini-parks (Fellowship, Daryle Black, and Peace) offer small areas of recreation for residents in close proximity.

Education. A number of schools (listed below) can be found along and around the corridor to serve families in the adjacent neighborhoods and, in some cases, the greater Long Beach area.

- Jackie Robinson Academy (K–8) adjacent to the Willow Metro Station.
- Holy Innocents Parish (K–8) south of Willow Street off Atlantic Avenue.
- Burnett Elementary (K–5) at Atlantic Avenue and Hill Street.
- Roosevelt Elementary School (K–5) next to Polytechnic High.
- Polytechnic High School (9–12) on Atlantic Avenue south of Pacific Coast Highway, and PAAL Academy on Long Beach Boulevard south of 16th Street.
- Washington Middle School on Pacific Avenue north of 14th Street.
- Renaissance High School for the Arts on Long Beach Boulevard between 8th and 9th Street.

The large number of schools at all levels of education means that Long Beach Boulevard, Pacific Avenue, and Atlantic Avenue are heavily used by children and must become safer streets for walking, biking, and riding



Top: 14th Street Park and Veterans Park
Bottom: McBride Park



From top left, clockwise: Jackie Robinson Academy, Polytechnic High, Roosevelt Elementary, and Burnett Elementary



Long Beach Boulevard is one of the few streets in Southern California that truly carries all modes of travel.



Traveling southbound from the off-ramp at Long Beach Boulevard requires a cautious left turn across northbound traffic, which includes cars, buses, and trucks.



The Blue Line provides excellent regional transit access, but it also creates east–west barriers and adds over 20 feet to an already wide roadway with its exclusive travel lanes.

transit. Additionally, Hancock University, a private college at 16th Street and Long Beach Boulevard, is expected to grow and is interested in student housing and other student-serving uses along the corridor.

2.3.2 Circulation and Site Accessibility

Overall Structure. Long Beach Boulevard possesses many of the attributes required to support a vibrant, mixed-use, transit-oriented district. The area is well served by regional bus and rail transit; streets are laid out in a traditional grid with smaller block circumferences that provide multiple travel options for different modes; and sidewalks are generally wide and offer pedestrian access from the residential neighborhoods and local retail/service shops to the transit facilities. Figure 2-4 displays a map of the existing circulation systems within and around the project area.

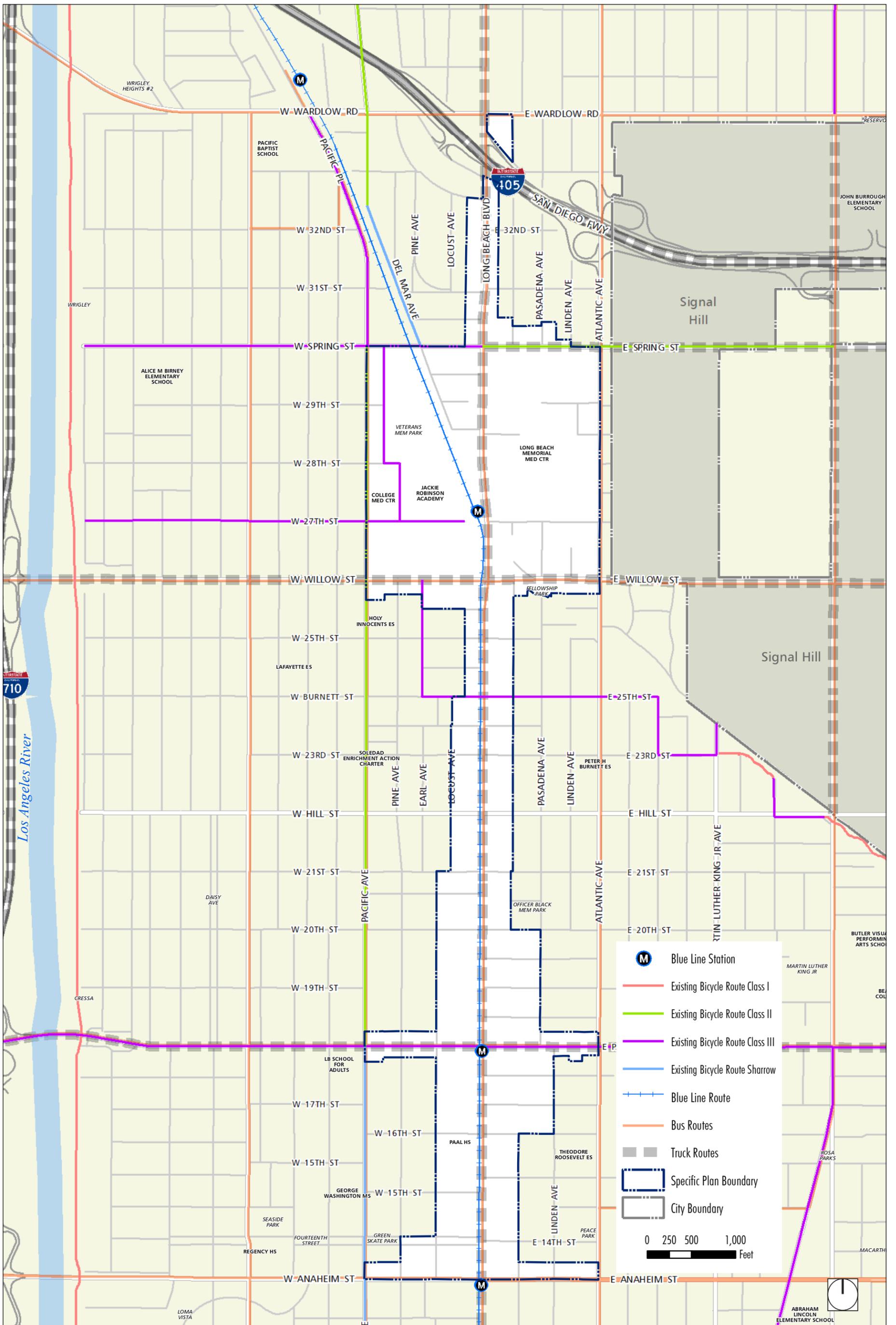
Automobile. For many years, Long Beach Boulevard focused on improvements and development geared to the automobile. Interstates 405 and 710 are just to the north and west, respectively, of the project area, providing access to the Southern California region.

Atlantic and Pacific Avenues were categorized for slower traffic speeds, and Long Beach Boulevard was used to accommodate more automobile traffic and served as a regional connector. The freeway interchanges conflict with this assignment of roles, because the partial cloverleaf on-/off-ramps at Atlantic Avenue are much easier and more convenient to traverse than compact and cross-traffic ramp systems at Long Beach Boulevard. Although Long Beach Memorial Medical Center’s campus borders Long Beach Boulevard, the campus has very limited access from the street. Ease of access is one of the main reasons the Medical Center has favored Atlantic Avenue over Long Beach Boulevard over the years.

Truck. Truck traffic in Long Beach is primarily related to the movement of goods to and from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach (accessed by using the I-710 and I-110 freeways), but trucks also use dedicated trucking routes along local roadways to provide shipping services to commercial and industrial businesses throughout the City.

Local truck routes include Long Beach Boulevard, Spring Street, Willow Street, and I-405. Typically, these routes direct trucks away from residential neighborhoods toward streets specifically designed and maintained to accommodate the weight of large trucks and commercial delivery vehicles. Mixed-use and multi-modal corridors integrate residential and non-residential uses in a context that embraces many modes of travel. Such corridors, including Long Beach Boulevard, that are also designated truck routes must be carefully designed to accommodate local truck traffic safely and efficiently without sacrificing the safety, efficiency, and attractiveness of other modes of travel or mixed-use settings.

FIGURE 2-4 EXISTING CIRCULATION SYSTEM



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Transit. Long Beach Boulevard is also well connected to the Southern California region through the Blue Line and several major bus lines. The Blue Line is the main hub for transit and its route runs directly along Long Beach Boulevard, with three stations in the project area: Willow, Pacific Coast Highway, and Anaheim. The Blue Line provides access to Downtown Los Angeles, other rail lines, and local and regional bus systems.

The Metro Blue Line was a trailblazing project in 1990 and remains one of the most successful transit lines in the country. The benefits of the transit line and its stations are obvious at a regional level. Locally, however, the community struggles at times with the impacts from the transit line.

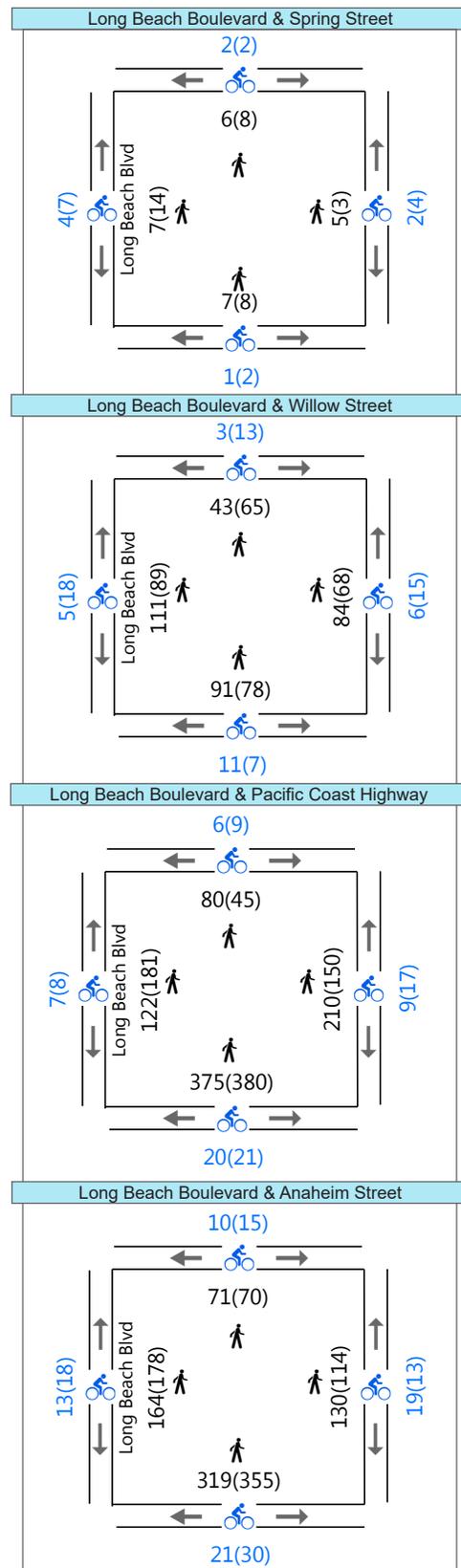
For example, a blue fence was installed around 2008, dividing the two-way movement of the Metro Blue Line as a safety measure to prohibit midblock crossing except in designated areas. This created a major disconnect between land uses on both sides of Long Beach Boulevard, and trash collects at the base of the fence, adding a blighted look to the corridor.

Additionally, the Metro Blue Line travels in a dedicated travel lane and widens the street area by over 20 feet, making it more daunting for pedestrians to cross the street and further disconnecting development and neighborhoods on the west and east sides of Long Beach Boulevard.

The corridor is also served by local and regional bus service by Metro and Long Beach Transit (LBT). Metro operates a limited number of local and express buses, and LBT provides numerous lines of local bus service along and near the corridor. These bus routes carry thousands of residents, employees, and visitors throughout the City and to and from surrounding areas, generating a substantial amount of pedestrian and bicycle activity along the roadways and at the intersections.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Activity. The corridor experiences a tremendous amount of pedestrian activity due to the existing development density, presence of transit, and widespread use of and dependency on transit in the project area. As expected, pedestrian crossings (measured in 2012 and depicted to the right) were highest at intersections near transit stations, with hundreds of pedestrians crossing the intersections during peak hours.

Midblock collision history along Long Beach Boulevard between Willow Street and 10th Street revealed that, of the 50 collisions between 2007 and 2012, 8 percent involved pedestrians and 18 percent involved bicyclists. The concurrent high volumes of pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicular activity along Long Beach Boulevard present challenges for the safety and efficiency of all modes. Although the overall block structure and sidewalks are conducive to pedestrian and bicycle access, many parts of the corridor’s public realm remain auto dominated, lacking features and amenities such as pedestrian lighting, waste receptacles, shade trees, bike racks, benches, and bus shelters.



2012 Bike and Pedestrian Counts along Long Beach Boulevard

 AM (PM) Peak Hour Pedestrian Volume
 AM (PM) Peak Hour Bicycle Volume

2.3.3 Infrastructure Systems

Storm Water. The project's storm water runoff is collected by existing storm drain facilities that generally flow westerly toward the Los Angeles River. Facilities are owned and maintained by various agencies, including LA County Flood Control District, City of Long Beach, and Caltrans. A few scattered, privately maintained systems can be found within the project area as well. Storm drain sizes vary from 12- to 96-inch reinforced concrete pipe. Existing catch basins throughout the project area intercept runoff and convey flows into the storm drain system.

In 2008, the City enacted a Low Impact Development Standards ordinance to control runoff and manage storm water on site. There is no large-scale regional treatment in place within the project area. Figure 2-5 displays a map of the existing storm water drainage system within and around the project area.

Sewer Service. Sewer service along Long Beach Boulevard has only a couple of small longitudinal-flowing sewer lines; however, sewer lines cross the boulevard at five locations. The general layout of the existing sewer falls southerly and mainly leaves the project site to the east and west. All sewer mains in the area ultimately discharge into a Los Angeles County Sanitation District trunk sewer crossing the Los Angeles River at 16th Street, flowing west and ultimately to the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant in Carson. Sewer lines are all gravity flow lines, and diameters vary from 8 to 18 inches. The type of material also varies: vitrified clay pipe, nonreinforced concrete pipe, and concrete pipe. Figure 2-5 displays a map of the existing sewer system in and around the project area.

City records do not show any force mains or lift stations in the project area; however, one siphon location is at the intersection of the alley due east of Long Beach Boulevard and 25th Street. There does not appear to be any deficient lines along Long Beach Boulevard or elsewhere in the project area. As of 2014, the City did not have any planned sewer maintenance and/or replacement projects for the area.

Water Service. Long Beach Boulevard hosts an 8-inch water line from 15th Street to 20th Street and a 12-inch water line from Willow Street to Wardlow Road. Within the project area, pipe sizes vary from 2 to 30 inches (2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 20, and 30 inches). The type of material also varies: asbestos-cement, cast iron, cast iron-cement motor lined, and ductile iron. Figure 2-5 displays a map of the existing water service system in and around the project area.

Aside from water mains along and crossing Long Beach Boulevard from Anaheim Street to Wardlow Road, City records do not show any other water facilities in the project area (booster pump stations, agency interconnections, storage tanks, etc.). The Long Beach Water District

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recently constructed a cast-iron replacement in Long Beach Boulevard between Willow Street and Wardlow Road, which was the only planned replacement project for the project area as of 2014. There did not appear to be any deficiencies with the current water system servicing the project area.

2.3.4 Market Conditions

Long Beach Boulevard enjoys great access to transit and offers a substantial amount of developable land. The market conditions for substantial investments have not been favorable for many years. Although the Blue Line represented an enormous public investment in the 1990s, substantial private investment is only now starting to progress north of the Downtown area. Additionally, the recent recession and vacancies in housing, retail, and office space made land values insufficient to entice new development. Finally, the State of California dissolved all redevelopment agencies in 2012 and removed one of the most effective tools cities had to spur new development.

To spur private development in the area, this Specific Plan presents strategies, plans, and improvements to build short-term value through subsidized and institutionally led development—with an emphasis on excellent design—and through public sector enhancements in the pedestrian environment and basic infrastructure.

Subsidized Development. Despite the loss of the redevelopment agencies and associated financing, opportunities remain for the City to participate. The City can contribute by either offering City-owned land for purchase or by offering favorable lease terms to help entice developers.

Another strategy for economic development is to build a full range of housing options, including units affordable to extremely low, very low, and lower income residents. Affordable housing projects can be eligible for federal and state subsidies, making them more likely to be built on the corridor. These projects can assist in revitalizing areas of the corridor and creating housing opportunities for the community. Over time, market rate, higher-density buildings, such as 4- and 5-story, wood-frame condominium buildings and midrise buildings, may become feasible without public subsidy.

Institutional Development. Partnering with anchor institutions may also spur redevelopment. The project area has many educational and medical institutions, including Pacific Hospital of Long Beach and Long Beach Memorial Hospital. These prominent organizations have voiced a desire to contribute to the corridor. Long Beach Memorial is currently completing a new master plan to comply with seismic retrofit regulations and adapt to changes in health care reform, future market dynamics, and community needs.

Phase 1 of the master plan includes improvements to the north campus area along Spring Street and Atlantic Avenue. Site improvements include the Miller Children’s Hospital Outpatient Village and medical center offices. This type of investment is key because these institutions have a long-range view for their community, are generally the landowners, and tend to be less driven by profit than private developers, making them ideal partners for advancement of the corridor.

Public Improvements. Public contribution to streetscape improvements and linkages can greatly increase private investment in the project area. The existing public realm is not alluring to developers and would-be dwellers. Enhancing the public realm, including the sidewalk, landscaping, open space, and bicycle facilities, is critical to attracting developers and property owners to invest and reinvest in the area.

Improvement Districts. Another successful tool for public improvements in the area would be the formation of business improvement districts, in which business owners choose to assess themselves for public enhancement projects. This usually results in more numerous and more enhanced public improvements, which has been shown to increase property values and private investment in the area. Similar types of districts are property-based improvement districts, which includes property owners, maintenance assessment districts, and community facility districts.

Focused and Creative Development Standards. The future vision for Midtown contains mixed-use and high-density, transit-oriented development. Mixed-use buildings can be expensive to construct and may be deterred if overly constrained by inflexible development standards.

For example, if the Specific Plan requires ground-floor retail throughout the corridor, it is possible that some of the new buildings would have vacant retail space for many years. Throughout the nation, cities and developers have learned to minimize the percentage of retail in mixed-use buildings, unless located in Downtown areas or key activity nodes. The requirement for ground-floor retail should be limited to selected nodes, rather than for all projects in the corridor, to avoid overbuilding retail that cannot be easily tenanted. To avoid ground-floor vacancies in the short term before the corridor matures and the market demands continuous retail, the Specific Plan allows for other land uses to be on the ground floor, provided they are constructed with a floor height consistent with retail storefronts.

2.4 COMMUNITY INPUT

The City of Long Beach conducted a series of focused outreach meetings and follow-up interviews with roughly 40 stakeholders and multiple neighborhood groups dating back to 2012. The meetings generated significant input from residents, local business owners, property owners, community organizations, local and regional transportation agencies, the

school district, medical and educational institutions, and developers. The following summarizes the input from the outreach effort.

- **Reduce Impacts of the Street Width:** Long Beach Boulevard is auto dominated with heavy, fast-moving traffic and numerous vehicular lanes, making the street loud to walk along and difficult to cross. The physical and visual size of the boulevard can overwhelm the overall experience, minimizing positive impacts of new development. Although the Metro Blue Line is an important City and regional transit asset, the center median and blue fence create long stretches along the corridor that limit vehicular and pedestrian crossings for residents and workers.
- **Enhance the Pedestrian Environment:** There is a lot of foot traffic and bicycle use on Long Beach Boulevard, but the environment feels cold and uninviting to pedestrians, with predominantly gray concrete sidewalks and limited landscaping, art, and color. Palm trees offer a framed vista along the corridor but do not provide adequate shade for pedestrians and bicyclists. The boulevard should be lined with shops and restaurants that introduce areas filled with cafés and outdoor dining.
- **Improve Bicycle Access:** Bicyclists use the sidewalk because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable riding in the street among the cars, trucks, buses, and trains. Bike lanes currently stop at the edge of Downtown and could be extended into Midtown. Incorporating a Complete Streets approach to mobility could help to accommodate all transportation modes along the corridor: bicycles, pedestrian, automobiles, and transit.
- **Make It a Street Worth Its Namesake:** Long Beach Boulevard is named after the City, but currently does not offer a strong positive impression of Midtown or provide an attractive gateway to Downtown. The boulevard needs improvements and branding to help create a reason for being on the corridor, to attract new residential and commercial investment, and to show that “somebody cares about this street.”
- **More Park Space throughout Midtown.** Residents spoke uniformly in their desire for more parkland and open spaces in Midtown and along Long Beach Boulevard. Although the public understood that it can be difficult to create new open spaces in a built-out area, they looked to the City and this Plan to generate creative solutions for Midtown—particularly if the Specific Plan proposes to add new residents.
- **Show Progress on Innovative Ideas.** The community understood that Midtown would not improve overnight, but they wanted more than a long-term plan that waits for the market to respond. Residents and businesses support the idea of demonstration projects, where something temporary can become successful and permanent. The community grew excited about possible improvements and felt comfortable testing them in a temporary fashion.

The following is a partial list of the community organizations and stakeholders involved in the development of this Plan:

Centro Shalom
 City Fabrick
 Ecotech
 Environ Architecture
 Hancock University
 Interstices
 JR van Dijs, Inc.
 Left Coast Sports Innovations
 Long Beach Central Project Area Council
 Long Beach Memorial Medical Center / Miller
 Children’s Hospital
 Long Beach Rescue Mission
 Long Beach Unified School District
 Los Angeles County Metro
 Meta Housing Corporation
 New City Public Schools
 Pacific Hospital Long Beach
 Sourcing International
 St. Mary Medical Center
 Urban Village

- **Keep the Community Involved.** Improving Midtown will require partnerships and coordination, not only among multiple governmental agencies, but also among local institutions, businesses, community organizations, and residents. Ultimately, the ideas and designs must be owned and shaped by the residents and businesses to have long-lasting cultural or aesthetic value in the community. Developing a plan that incorporates consistent participation by the community in the Plan's implementation will increase its chances for success. Local businesses suggested the creation of an improvement district that focuses purely on tasks, programming, and improvements for the betterment of Midtown.
- **Live, Work, and Play in Midtown.** Midtown residents and workers share many of the same attitudes and preferences as others in California. They want to shop close to where they live, work where they live, and play where they live. The community sees a strong employment and transit base in Midtown and believes the City can make improvements that enhance their ability to spend more of their life in Midtown. With the potential influx of new housing options, many residents want to see an opportunity to stay in Midtown and have access to housing that is affordable to the existing community.
- **Leverage the Medical Center.** The Long Beach Memorial Medical Center currently emphasizes its entrance along Atlantic Avenue, but plans on enhancing its presence along Long Beach Boulevard through the design and placement of buildings and streetscape. Branding for the hospital is shifting from sick care to healthcare environment with a tagline of "The Good Life." This theme focuses on wellness and preventative care and complements the land use plan and opportunities for Midtown.
- **Make Midtown Safer.** The community discussed safety concerns created by the physical environment and level of activity in Midtown. A lack of lighting along Long Beach Boulevard and its cross-streets was cited by many as one contributing factor to safety in Midtown. A more complex factor raised by the community was the lack of a reason to be in Midtown. Residents and businesses understood that more people needed to be on the street in Midtown shopping, working, and participating in community activities during the day and night.
- **Reduce the Cost of Change.** The business and property owners stated their support for and desire to participate in improving Midtown. The cost and development fees and the complexity of the development process were viewed as an area where the City could directly reduce barriers to change. The community understood that the fees paid for legitimate and necessary expenses but saw the need to incentivize improvements in as many ways as possible.