



COMMUNITY **Livability**Plan

All Roads Lead Home

I-710 Corridor Neighborhoods
LONG BEACH CALIFORNIA

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Guide to the Document

The Plan that follows is organized into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Project & Process

Chapter One provides an introduction to the project, a description of the Plan area, a discussion of community livability as a concept and its specific application in the I-710 corridor in Long Beach, and a summary of the project process and components.

Chapter 2: Existing Conditions

Chapter Two summarizes the existing conditions within the Plan area, including land use, mobility options, transit and traffic. This chapter also includes summaries of the key existing state, regional, subregional and City planning efforts related to the corridor with the potential to impact community livability.

Chapter 3: Cultural Needs Assessment

Chapter Three summarizes the Corridor Plan area demographics. In addition to describing “who” the corridor is, it also describes “what” the needs and priorities are of corridor residents, with regard to livability issues, by category of issue, as expressed to the project team in the outreach conducted as part of this planning process.

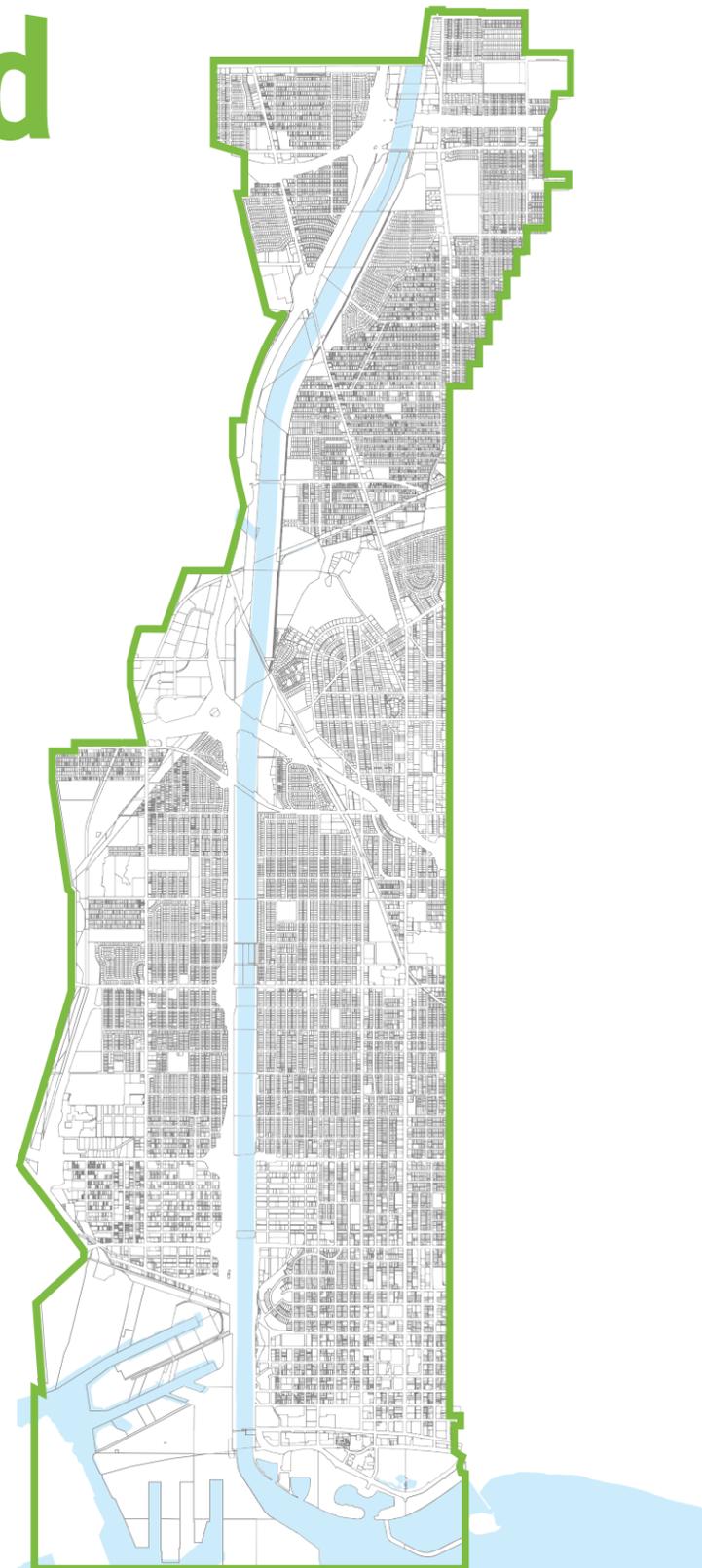
Chapter 4: The Community Livability Plan

The Plan chapter includes a compilation of community assets identified in the corridor area, as well as a set of recommendations relating to livability improvements that should be made corridor wide, and those that apply specifically to corridor neighborhoods. The regional context for livability issues is also touched on in this chapter. Finally, the Plan includes 15 Livability Plan design concepts developed to illustrate livability improvements that may be made in specific locations in neighborhoods throughout the corridor.

Appendix

The Appendix, in a separate volume, incorporates the project schedule, Working Group meeting notes, comments from the Councilmember interviews, comments from the first round of community outreach presentations, a general list of comments as well as a categorized list residents made at the four Neighborhood Design Workshops, and a list of comments made at the three Design Review Meetings.

All Roads Lead Home



Committing to develop and implement a Community Livability Plan for the I-710 corridor neighborhoods in the City of Long Beach is a natural outgrowth of a single crucial realization: neighborhoods within the I-710 corridor bear a disproportionate share of the negative impacts resulting from the operation of the I-710 Freeway and the Ports. Further, they receive few of the benefits derived from the \$3 billion in goods that arrive through the two Ports and are transported through their neighborhoods. This **Plan** seeks to bring a better **balance** between residents' exposure to environmental and health hazards, and the benefits and investments they want and need in order to maintain a **healthy** environment in which to live, learn, work and play. The I-710 corridor is part of a network of **pathways** for goods arriving from international markets and distributed to the rest of the United States. This corridor includes some of the most heavily

used freeways, roadways and railways that are a part of the nation's goods movement system. Yet we cannot lose sight of the fact that in this more than 16 square mile area of our City, **all roads lead home**. This corridor is home to over 190,000 of our City's residents – nearly 40% of our total population. Nineteen of our parks and recreation areas are here. Twenty four of our City's schools are in this corridor. The Los Angeles River corridor is a prominent feature here as well, with its **linkages** to the rest of the Los Angeles basin upstream for water, wildlife, and recreation. It will be critical to maximize the quality of life benefits to corridor neighborhoods from the developing network of RiverLink parks and greenbelts. We must be mindful that this corridor is **a place for people** – a place where people want a high quality of life and a healthy, prosperous and livable future. This is a future that the residents who call this corridor home **deserve**.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

In 2006 the City of Long Beach received a Caltrans Environmental Justice Planning Grant to develop a Community Livability Plan, an initiative to address quality of life issues for City neighborhoods that are affected by the I-710 freeway. A variety of public agencies, including the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services, have documented the impacts the I-710 has had on individuals who live adjacent to this active goods movement corridor. These impacts—including traffic, noise, emissions, air quality, as well as associated public health implications—are of considerable concern to the community and its leadership. The City therefore conceived of this project to identify and prioritize the community’s collective vision for livability improvements that can and should be made in I-710 corridor neighborhoods.

With a focus on community involvement as a foundation for this effort, the City developed two primary goals for the Community Livability Plan:

- To work with the I-710 corridor neighborhoods to identify and develop plans to address the impacts they are experiencing from the operation of the I-710 freeway, and
- To develop a series of action strategies and design solutions to improve the physical environment for residents in those neighborhoods

PLAN AREA

The planning area for the Community Livability Plan is a 16.88 square mile zone that incorporates all public and private parcels and public rights of way located roughly within one mile of the I-710. The boundaries of the planning area are roughly Atlantic Avenue to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the south, and the City boundary line to the west and to the north. All or portions of twenty-nine different City neighborhoods fall within the Community Livability Plan planning area, as shown in Figure 1-1. Notable landmarks include the Los Angeles River, the Metro Blue Line, the western end of downtown Long Beach, the Port of Long Beach, and the 405, 91 and I-710 freeways. Figure 1-2 shows the City of Long Beach vicinity.

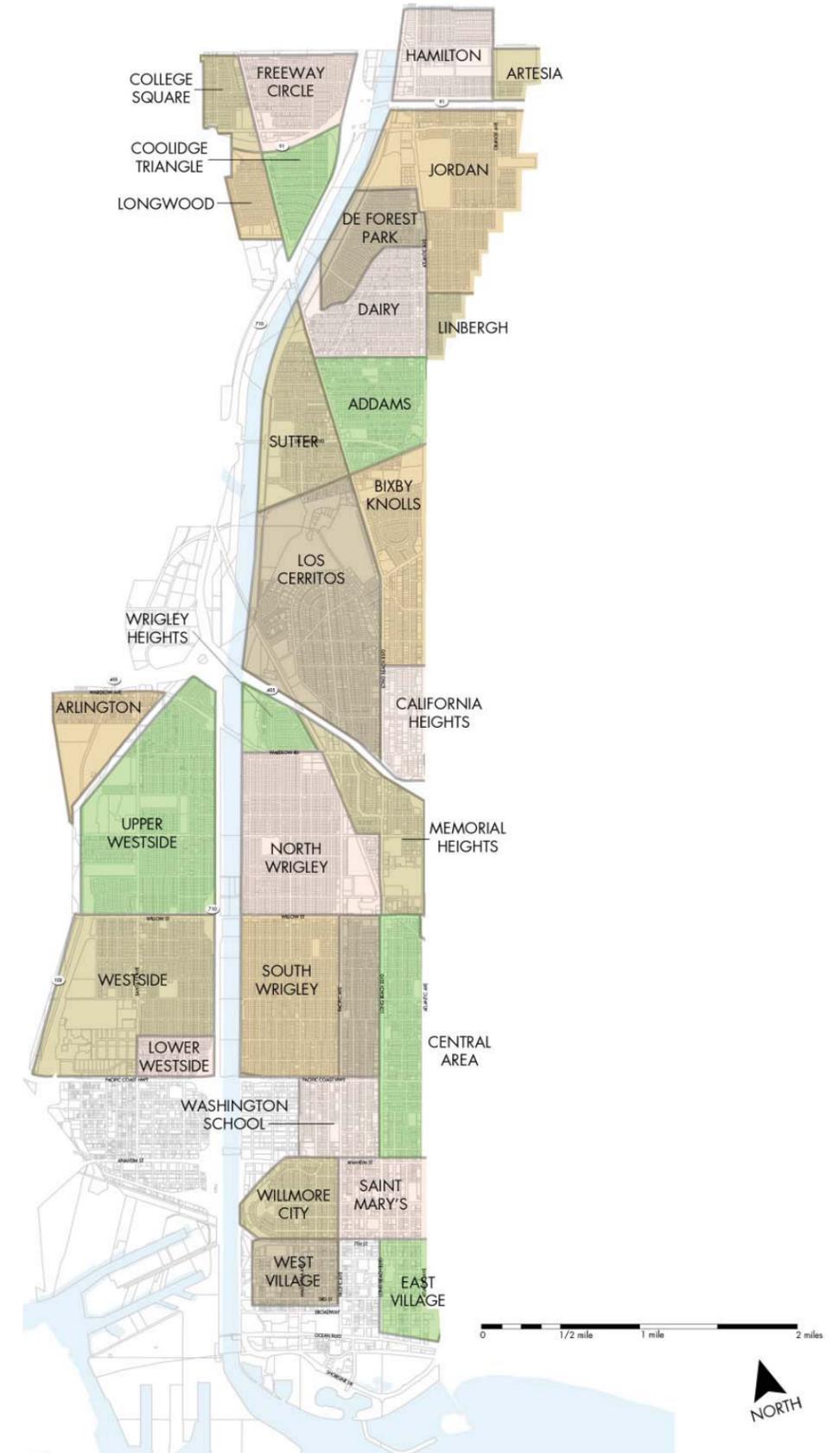


FIGURE 1-1: PLAN AREA



FIGURE 1-2: VICINITY

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The City of Long Beach Department of Public Works initiated the Community Livability Plan as an initial response to the outcomes of the I-710 Major Corridor Study (MCS) and the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy (LPS). During the planning process for the MCS, extensive community outreach efforts enabled residents to explore and voice specific areas of concern in their communities. In these meetings, the community overwhelmingly emphasized their two primary issues were health and air quality, as well as concerns with noise, safety, congestion and the expansion of the Port.

Because of the community concerns that emerged from the outreach process for the MCS, the City decided to develop a plan that would build on the results from the community workshops, in order to address quality of life issues that can make impacted Long Beach neighborhoods more livable. The Department of Public Works sought and successfully obtained a Caltrans Environmental Justice Planning Grant, to develop the plan. The project was initiated in February of 2007, and was completed by January of 2008.

It is important to note the Community Livability Plan is not a part of the I-710 MCS or the LPS for the I-710 Major Improvements Project. Current planning efforts related to the I-710 have been summarized and evaluated, and every effort was made to understand the overall impact that these plans and their affiliated objectives and policies could potentially have on neighborhoods within the Community Livability Plan area. However, the ultimate focus was directed to understanding the current strengths, weaknesses and priorities for change that are unique to every neighborhood that is located adjacent to the I-710, and the findings within this planning effort will be forwarded for consideration in the development of the EIR/EIS for the I-710 Corridor.

APPROACH

The approach to this project was to identify the most important community assets that help build and maintain healthy neighborhoods, and to then use these assets as a framework for neighborhood design and planning. The team worked with community residents to understand their most important neighborhood issues and concerns, and correlated those issues with existing and proposed City projects and plans. This information was then used as a foundation for identifying possible future improvement projects and recommendations which can be implemented in the short-medium- and long-term future.



DEFINING COMMUNITY LIVABILITY

A community can be perceived as livable based on the quality of its environment, social interactions, and its economy. Elements that affect livability, or quality of life, health and well-being in Long Beach neighborhoods include:

- Public safety and health (physical security, presence of environmental contaminants)
- Physical elements (supportive land uses, open space, connections, comfort)
- Environmental elements (noise, air quality, water quality)
- Social elements (community networks, organizations, services, pride)
- Cultural and environmental resources (historic, trees, architectural)
- Economic elements (financial stability, jobs, prosperity)

A variety of benefits result from highly livable communities. These benefits include healthier people, less crime, a more aesthetically pleasing, functional and comfortable built environment, potential increase in property values and business activity, and strong community ties and social bonds among neighbors.

Community Livability at Multiple Scales

The team identified a range of community livability components that affect the quality of life in the neighborhoods adjacent to the I-710 and that are tied to the health and well-being of their residents. Some community livability elements are more regional in scope and scale, and have an impact over a very wide area. Others are more local in scale and scope, and impact people within a relatively small geographic area.

The diagram shown in Figure 1-3 illustrates the breadth and complexity of the issues encompassed in community livability planning in this particular southern California corridor. The outer rings of the circle represent issues that are very broad, even global in scope, impacting the entire planning area and beyond. Moving toward the center of the circle, the next ring impacts at the scale of several neighborhoods, a slightly smaller area than the outer rings. And at the center of the diagram, neighborhood design itself has the most localized impact.

This planning effort has focused on neighborhood design. At the local and neighborhood scales, the Community Livability Plan can make the most immediate impact on Long Beach neighborhoods. Efforts throughout this planning process focused on creating community design strategies that improve quality of life and livability at the local scale, such as improving open space and the environment, the local transportation system and public safety. Those issues that are more regional in scope have also been detailed and mapped in Chapter Four which focuses on corridor-wide issues.

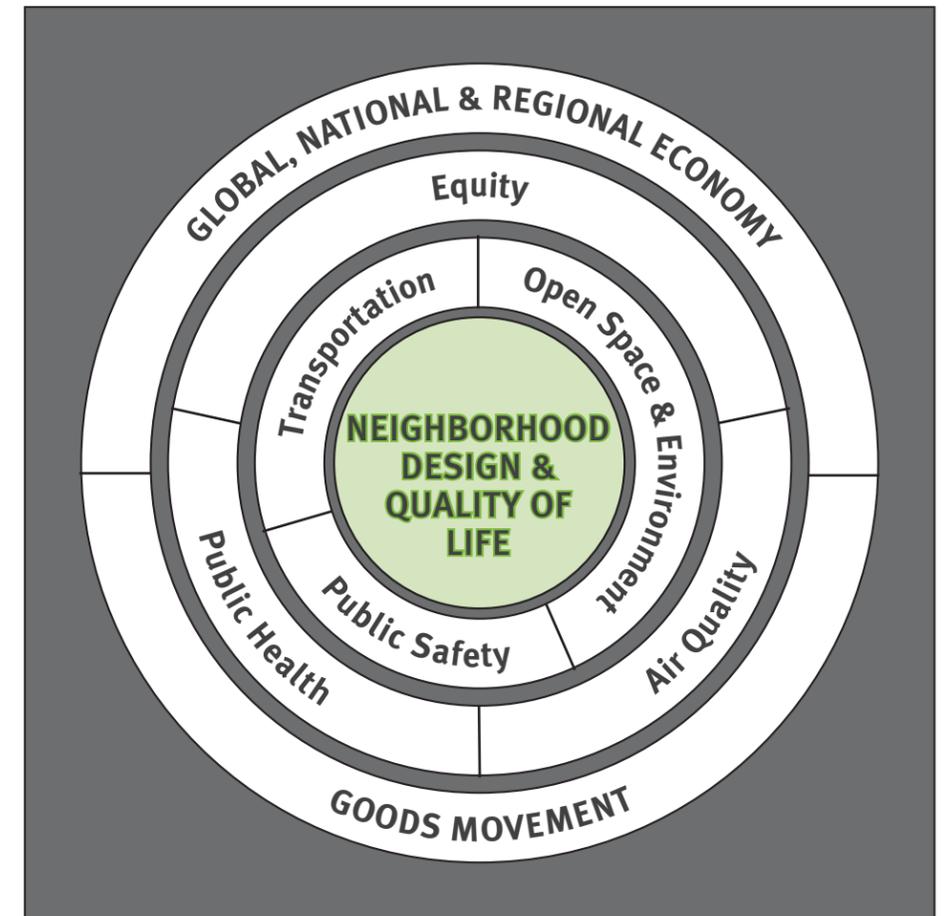
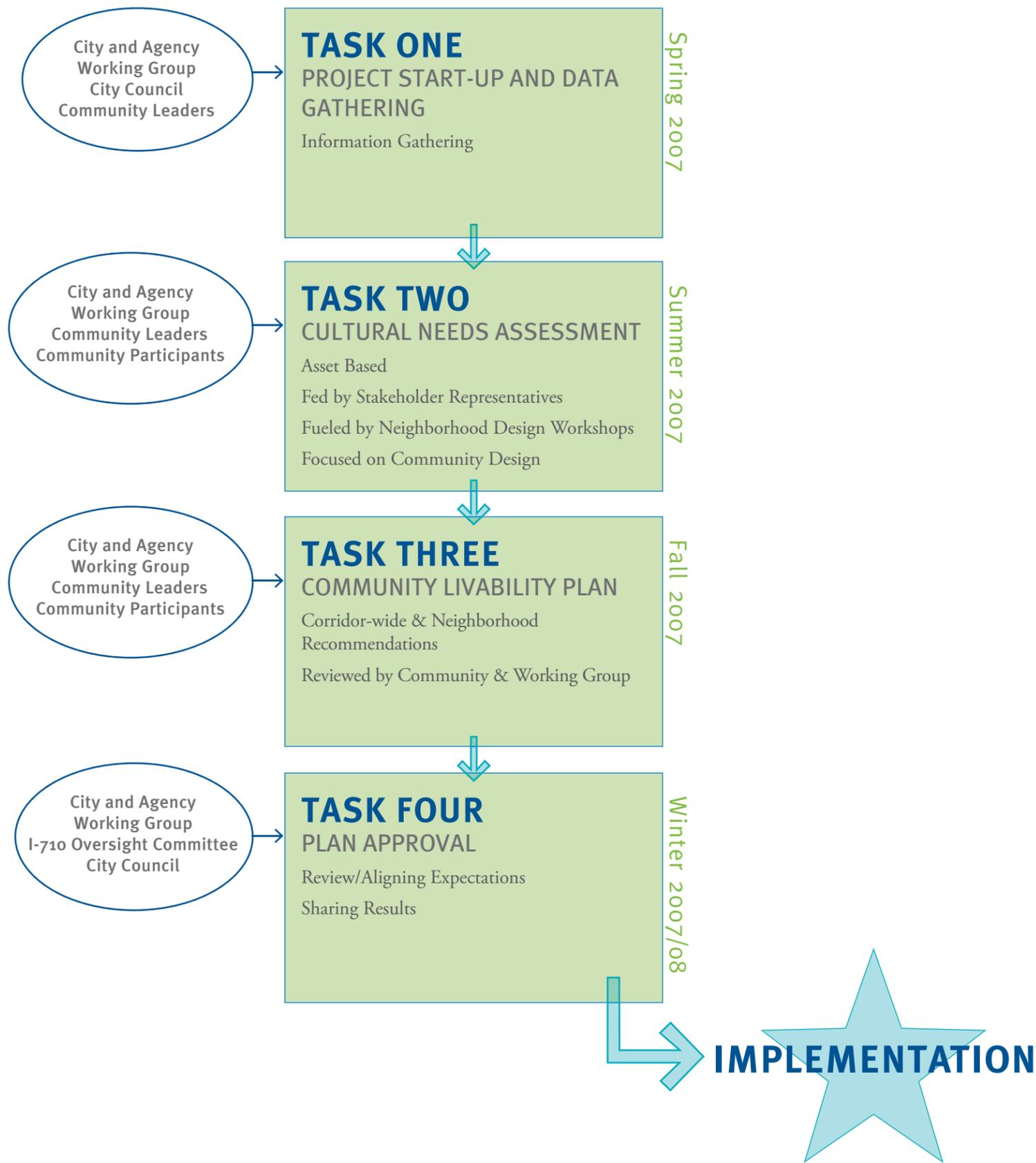


FIGURE 1-3: COMMUNITY LIVABILITY ISSUES AT MULTIPLE SCALES



PROJECT PROCESS

The Livability Plan process is comprised of four major project tasks, which commenced in January of 2007 and concluded thirteen months later in February of 2008. These four projects tasks and their major components are shown in Figure 1-4 and summarized below.

Task One was an information gathering and outreach phase that provided a foundation for the development of the Livability Plan. First, the project team collected and analyzed a variety of existing information—including GIS data, related planning documents, and other public documents—in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the range of economic, cultural and environmental issues that were considered in the development of this plan. Second, the project team formed a Working Group made of up staff members from City departments and City Council offices, as well as representatives from other public agencies. The Working Group provided an advisory role to the project team throughout the entire planning process. Finally, the project team met with community groups and City Council offices in order to introduce the plan and obtain input. The information gathered in the task to develop a summary of existing conditions, in Chapter Two of this document.

Task Two was a community outreach and assessment phase focused on understanding the major concerns and future opportunities for change that community residents envision for I-710 corridor neighborhoods. The project team organized and then conducted four Neighborhood Design Workshops throughout the corridor in order to solicit input regarding major neighborhood concerns, strengths, and opportunities for change. Afterward, this information was processed and analyzed, and ultimately used in the development of the Cultural Needs Assessment, in Chapter Three of this document.

Task Three was a plan development phase in which a series of proposed corridor and neighborhood improvements was created. Using information from the existing conditions and cultural needs assessment as a guide, the project team came up with proposed projects at the corridor and neighborhood scales, and a set of site scale conceptual plans. These projects were then presented to the community at three separate Design Review Meetings. The proposed corridor and neighborhood recommendations, as well as a series of conceptual plans, were ultimately adopted as the Livability Plan recommendations summarized in Chapter Four.

Task Four was a plan development phase that involved compiling and organizing information into a unified plan. After the final Livability Plan was developed, the project team presented it to the Working Group, the I-710 Council Oversight Committee, and the City Council.

FIGURE 1-4: PROJECT PROCESS



PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH

One of the City’s purposes in developing this plan was to work with the corridor neighborhoods to identify and develop plans to address the impacts that community members experience from the operation of the I-710 freeway. Because the goal of the plan was to identify community assets in different neighborhoods, and to then build on those assets, the project team sought to maximize the level of community and stakeholder involvement in the planning process.

A variety of measures were implemented to maximize stakeholder involvement in this planning process. These measures included Working Group meetings, Community Stakeholder Presentations, Council District Presentations, Neighborhood Design Workshops, and Design Review Meetings.

Working Group Meetings

In order to ensure all relevant and interested City departments expertise and resources were brought to the table in this planning process, a working group comprised of key members of a wide range of City departments was formed. The working group met regularly throughout the planning process to share project-related news and information, review working documents, and plan future events.

Project team members included representatives of Public Works, Planning, Parks, Recreation and Marine, Redevelopment, the Harbor Department, the Police Department, Neighborhood Services, Health and Human Services, Long Beach Unified School District and staff members from Council Districts One, Seven, Eight and Nine. The project team also included representatives from other public agencies, including Long Beach Transit, Metro and the Gateway Cities Council of Governments.

The project Working Group met seven times throughout the course of this process. In addition, working group members participated in project activities such as a project site tour and the Neighborhood Design Workshops.

Community Stakeholder Presentations

During the first phase of this project, in the spring and summer of 2007, the project team made nearly thirty presentations to active community groups that operate within the Plan area, as shown in Figure 1-5. The project team used these presentations to introduce the Community Livability Plan to the community, take initial comments about livability issues, and invite participation in future workshops. These presentations also gave the project team an opportunity to differentiate the plan from the I-710 Major Improvements Project and EIR, from Port of Long Beach and Los Angeles plans and projects, and from the City’s Long Beach 2030 Plan.

During the community outreach presentations, the project team also had an opportunity to record some of the preliminary concerns that residents have about the

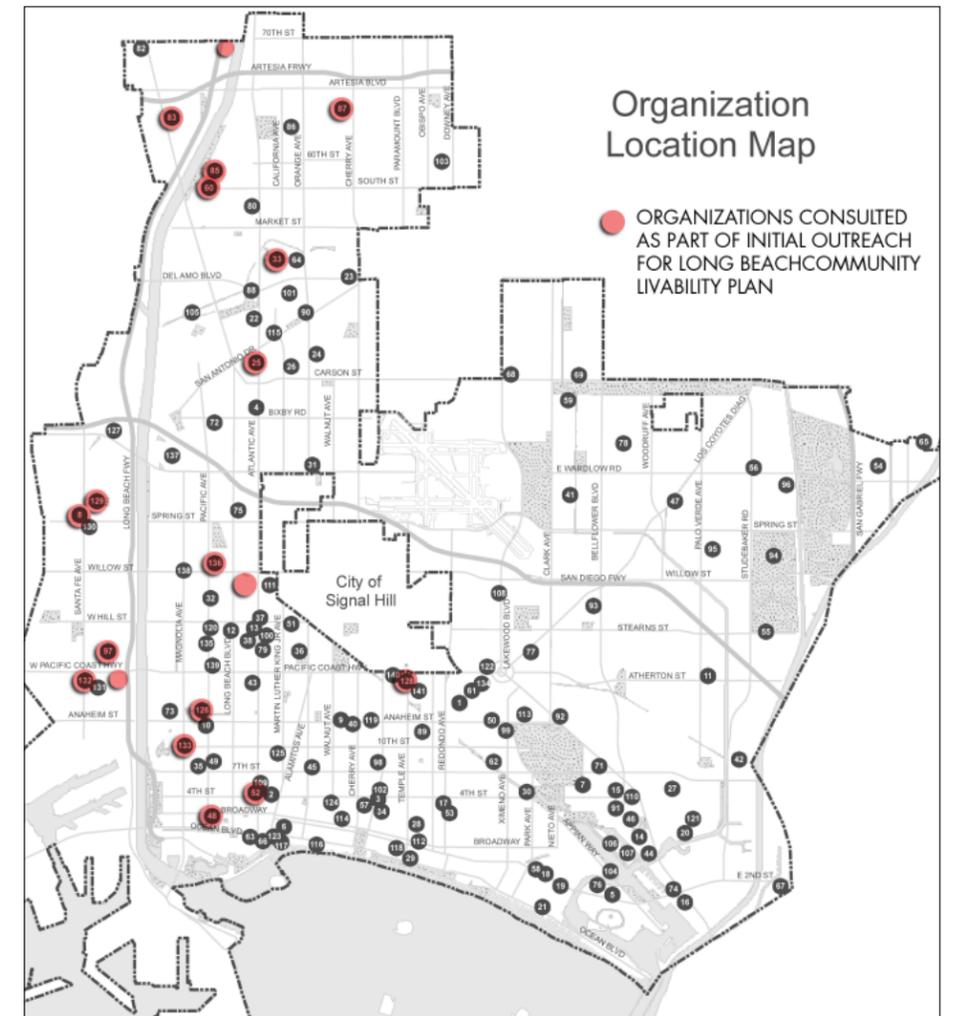


FIGURE 1-5: COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER PRESENTATIONS MAP

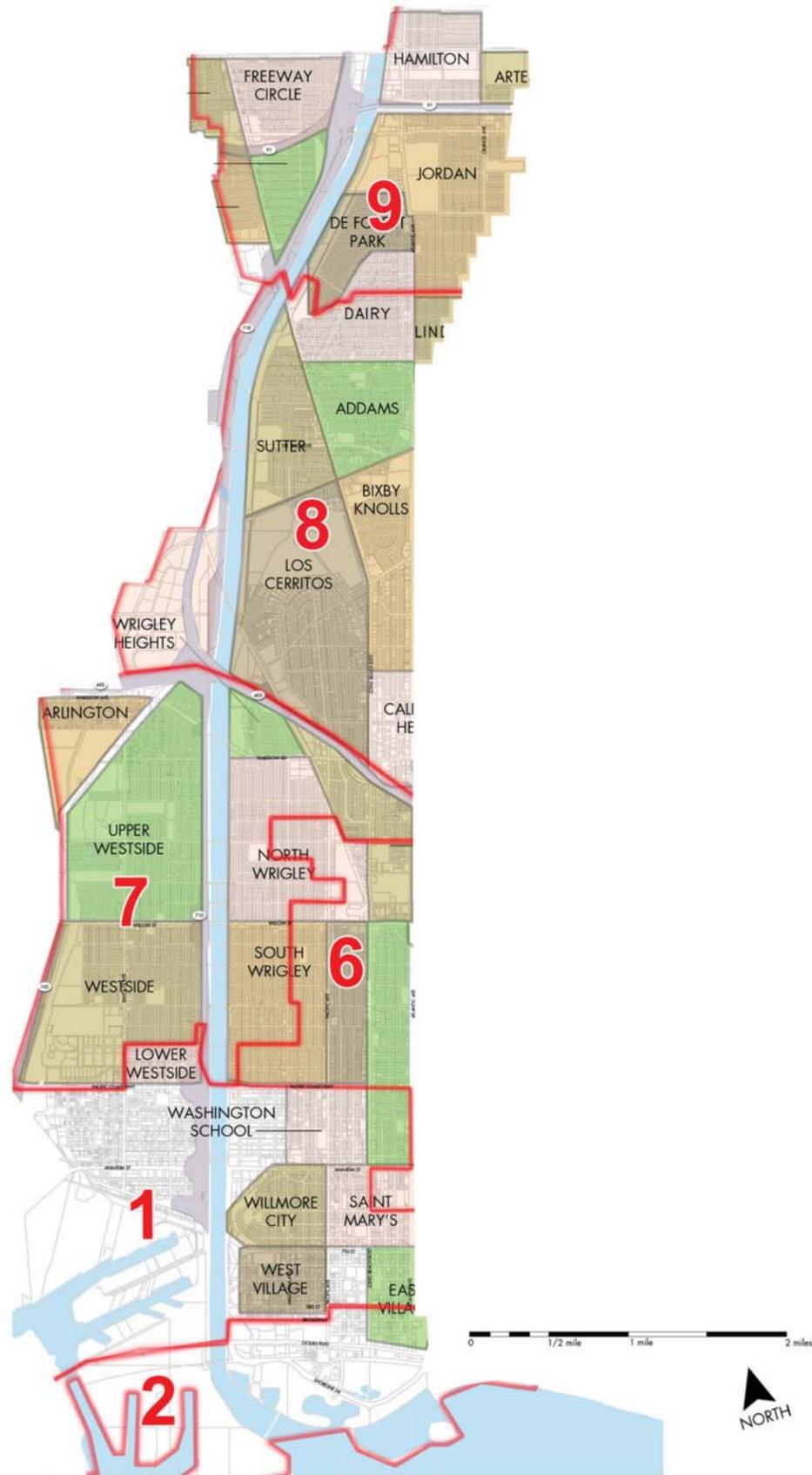


FIGURE 1-6: COUNCIL DISTRICTS WITHIN THE PLAN AREA

I-710 Freeway and their neighborhoods. Some of the issues residents spoke about during these meetings included better pedestrian and bicycle connections to the LA River, a need to improve public safety particularly in the River corridor, improving the aesthetic throughout the Corridor and particularly along freeway corridors, making neighborhoods and RiverLink projects greener by planting trees, and establishing safe paths of travel across the freeway bridges.

Council District Presentations

In addition to the Community Stakeholder Presentations, in March of 2007 members of the project team made brief introductory presentations to Council Members Bonnie Lowenthal, Tonia Reyes Uranga, Val Lerch, and staff members of Rae Gabelich. The purpose of these presentations was to introduce the project to the Council and to broaden awareness of the project while discussing opportunities for Council Member involvement. Council Members were invited to ask questions and make comments during these initial sessions. Some of the issues mentioned included concerns about freeway on-ramps and off-ramps, the need to connect communities together, problems with truck noise on the I-710 and big rig parking in residential neighborhoods, the importance of planting trees along the freeway corridor and greening roadway corridors, and problems with having to cross the freeway to get to schools and parks.

Council districts within the Plan area are shown in Figure 1-6.

Site Tour

At the beginning of June, 2007, a site tour of the planning area was organized for working group members. The purpose of the site tour was to provide team members with a direct opportunity to observe, discuss and share their knowledge of existing conditions within the study area. A map of the site tour route is shown in Figure 1-7.



Working Group members tour the LA River near the Wrigley Greenbelt (top) and tour the Cerritos Bridge pedestrian undercrossing (bottom)

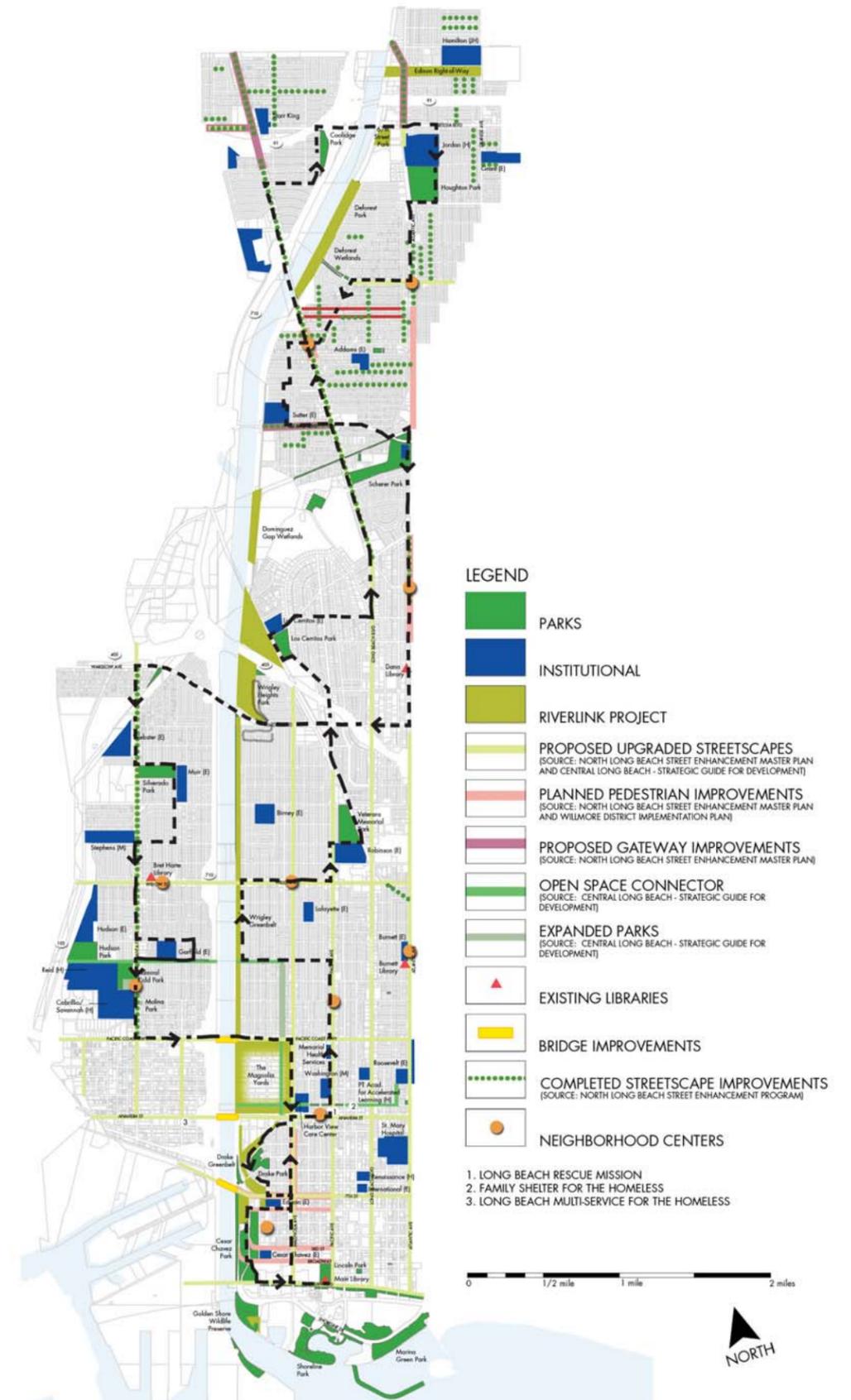


FIGURE 1-7: ROUTE OF SITE TOUR



The four Neighborhood Design Workshops (clockwise from top left): Workshop One - North Corridor; Workshop Two - South Corridor; Workshop Three - Central Corridor; Workshop Four - West Corridor



Community participants review concept plans in a Design Review meeting

Neighborhood Design Workshops

After concluding the Community Stakeholder and Council District presentations, the project team organized four public Neighborhood Design Workshops, which took place in August of 2007. A total of 203 Long Beach residents attended these workshops.

During each workshop, the project team worked with the community to understand stakeholders' most important issues and concerns, as well as major strengths in corridor neighborhoods. Participants in the workshops had an opportunity to propose community enhancements, as well as to participate in a larger dialogue focused on how to improve the entire I-710 corridor.

In the first half of each workshop, the team described current conditions and facilities in the corridor neighborhoods, including schools, parks, green corridors, the river corridor, streets, bridges and freeway edges. During the second half of each workshop, residents worked in small groups to first identify their most important community livability concerns, and to then discuss the major strengths and changes they desire for specific neighborhoods within the planning area. Information generated in the Neighborhood Design Workshops was used to develop the Cultural Needs Assessment, which is discussed in Chapter Two.

Design Review Meetings

In November and December of 2007 the project team met with the public again to review the conceptual maps, plans and designs that were developed after the Neighborhood Design Workshops, as well as to discuss the methodology that was used in translating the information from the workshops into a set of proposed plans and projects. Three meetings were held at different locations within the planning area and were attended by 80 residents. Residents who attended these meetings had an opportunity to review the proposed maps and plans, and to then provide their feedback on comment cards. The information generated in these meetings was used to revise and edit the proposed community livability improvements maps.