

Chapter Four

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY LIVABILITY PLAN'S MISSION?

Preparing a Community Livability Plan for the entire eight mile stretch of I-710 corridor in Long Beach is a significant undertaking, addressing over 29 individual neighborhoods, parts of four City Redevelopment Project Areas, parts of multiple City Council Districts, major freeway and river corridors, and all of the other key components so critical to neighborhoods. The mission for this work has multiple dimensions, and responds to issues from the global to local, in the same way that the livability issues impacting the corridor are broad ranging, from the global economy and goods movement systems to the design of local corridor neighborhood streets, schools, parks, trails and bikeways.

Acknowledging this complex reality, the project team tackled the following tasks in developing the Community Livability Plan:

- Educate the community about the larger outside issues affecting livability inside the corridor neighborhoods.
- Provide information about initiatives already underway, regionally, and beyond, to address the global issues impacting livability inside the City's corridor neighborhoods.
- Make recommendations about corridor-wide improvements which can be tied to the I-710 Major Improvements project, and its EIR. Set the bar high for the I-710 project and suggest components of that project that must be considered, in order to mitigate project impacts on the corridor neighborhoods, and to enhance connectivity within the corridor – for more than just goods movement.
- Make recommendations about improvements that can be made on the ground in corridor neighborhoods, in order to improve livability and quality of life there, with or without the I-710 major improvements project.
- Make any and all recommendations, while being aware of the work already underway and planned in these neighborhoods, by City departments and agencies, and facilities and services in these neighborhoods that are already assets in them, and that support a high quality of life.

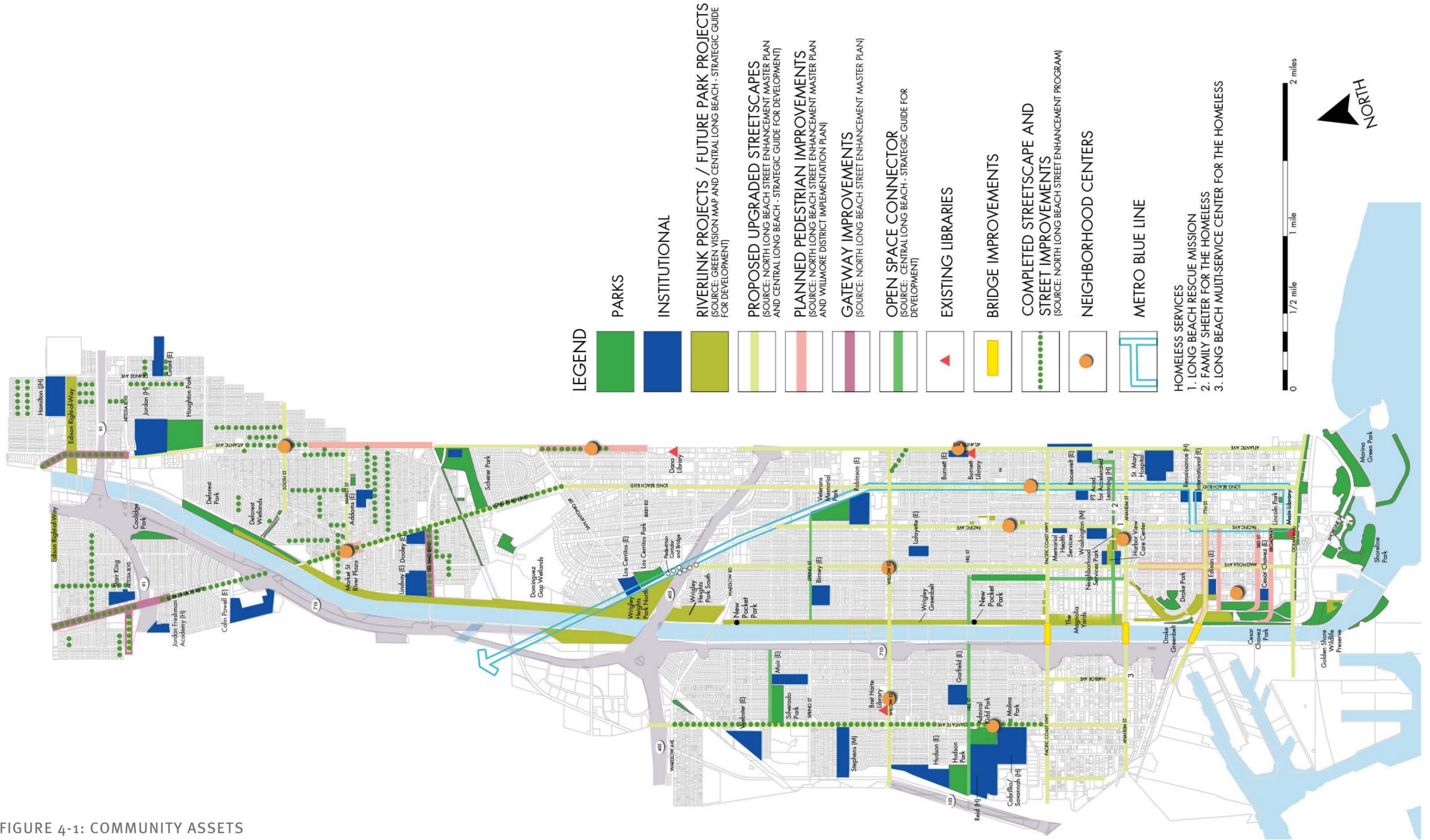
In order to respond to this mission, and each of these tasks, the team has prepared, and includes on the following pages: a community assets map; a summary of the plans and initiatives already responding to larger livability issues affecting the corridor neighborhoods, but outside the scope of the neighborhoods; a map and recommendations addressing corridor-wide issues; and a map, recommendations, and a series of conceptual designs addressing neighborhood issues.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Various City departments and bureaus, including Public Works, Redevelopment, Neighborhood Services, and Parks, Recreation and Marine are stewards of a significant number of existing plans and initiatives within the corridor area. One of the first tasks in this project was to compile important projects and initiatives, facilities and strategy areas in a single corridor Community Assets Map, which is shown in Figure 4-1. This map has served as an important reference for the planning work of this project, provided context for the comments made by the community, and served as a jumping off point for our process.

Compiling a single map of significant facilities (parks, schools, libraries, social service centers), projects (RiverLink, streetscape, pedestrian and gateway improvements, open space connectors, neighborhood centers, neighborhood improvement strategy areas) helped the team to understand where improvements have already been made, or are planned. In reviewing and discussing this asset mapping, individual City departments, often understandably focused on their own separate responsibilities, gained a broader perspective of the City initiated activity – already contemplated or underway. Ideas about linkages between projects have then been a focus of the corridor wide and neighborhood recommendations. Further, this mapping has served as a reminder that the corridor neighborhoods are not a clean slate, that they are evolving now. Livability Plan initiatives should neither reinvent the wheel, nor duplicate existing activity, but complement and add to the City's livability agenda. Finally, the mapping is an educational tool for community residents, shedding light on the City's plans, actions and strategies already in place, and providing a solid foundation for the additional recommendations for action in this Plan.

FIGURE 4-1: COMMUNITY ASSETS





REGIONAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

In addition to the activities and actions of the City and local agencies, regional state and even national entities' actions and initiatives also have an impact on the I-710 corridor neighborhoods' livability. The Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) published the first step toward an Air Quality Action Plan for the I-710 corridor in June of 2007. The following brief summary of broader regional policies impacting air quality in the I-710 corridor neighborhoods has largely been drawn from the information compiled and included in the GCCOG's report, which describes the state, regional and subregional activities related to air quality and goods movement.

The Ports

Clearly, the I-710 Freeway and Ports and the associated goods movement systems, contribute significantly to air quality, health, traffic, noise and aesthetic impacts to the I-710 corridor neighborhoods. The Port of Long Beach, together with the Port of Los Angeles to the west of it, are the two busiest container seaports in the United States, and together are the fifth busiest in the world. The components of the goods movement systems in the port, including ships, marine and harbor equipment and vehicles, trains, trucks and land-side equipment that are powered by diesel fuels, all contribute to the air pollution impacting the residents of the I-710 corridor neighborhoods. Air pollutants at the ports include nitrogen oxides (NO_x), which contributes to smog, and particulate matter (PM), which poses health risks. These pollutants exacerbate air quality impacts in this region, only one of two regions in the State of California not attaining air quality standards.

In response to this port-related air quality concern, new policy and action plans have been adopted by both Ports, and are in the process of being implemented. These actions include the Port of Long Beach Green Port Policy, the Port of Los Angeles Clean Air Program, and the San Pedro Bay Ports Clean Air Action Plan, all of which are described in Chapter Two of this document. Changes that will result from the implementation of these policies and plans include: in-Port greening and equipment conversion to cleaner fuel sources and/or electric power, ship cold ironing (the ability for ships to plug in to electric power while in port, instead of burning diesel fuel), shipping/marine equipment conversions to cleaner fuel sources, and conversions to cleaner burning trucks.

The Rail Systems

Rail related air quality improvements measures being implemented in the Ports include upgrading locomotives and trains to the cleanest burning systems, as well as additional emphasis on developing on-dock rail facilities, which get goods directly from ships to rail without moving goods by trucks between the two modes of transportation. Further, advanced technologies are being considered and explored

for goods movement, such as high speed magnetic levitation rail systems which use electric power. In fact, the Locally Preferred Strategy for the I-710 Corridor Project EIR/EIS mandates that advanced and alternative technologies are considered in the design of the improved facilities for both trucks and cargo, in addition to mandating that any improvement project to the freeway also improves air quality in the corridor.

Harbor Area Refineries

During this plan public outreach process, corridor neighborhood residents have commented on the noxious odors emanating from refineries in the Harbor area, which impact their quality of life. While refineries do pollute, they are tightly regulated, and their air quality impacts are substantially less than shipping, port and trucking impacts stemming from burning diesel fuel and resultant particulate matter air pollution. At this time there is little local, coordinated action to more closely monitor the operation of local refineries, accidental air releases from them, and their specific impacts on community livability. Should Long Beach consider this a priority going forward, the focus of action should likely be on the accidental release issue, instead of pollution stemming from their normal operation.

Subregional Air Quality Initiatives

At a subregional level, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) Clean Air Program is also ongoing, and complements the work the Ports are doing directly. This program has been underway since 2002, and includes funding for trucking fleet modernization, and adding emission reduction devices to port trucks. Further, the GCCOG Air Quality Action Plan itself is intended to determine and quantify the existing air quality and public health setting for the subregion, determine the effectiveness of planned near-term air quality improvements, analyze and determine possible new air quality improvements or strategies for the subregion, develop a plan to implement and measure air quality improvements for the region, and work with Regional, State and Federal Agencies, industry stakeholders, local communities to develop consensus.

State Air Quality Initiatives

At the State level, the Governor's office has spearheaded the California Goods Movement Action Plan, prepared by CARB and the Business, Housing and Transportation Department. This Plan is the first in the state to address goods movement as both an economic engine for the state, as well as an impact on the state's environment. The Plan both identifies goods movement system improvements for the state to improve the flow of cargo and to mitigate air quality impacts.

CARB has also been implementing the Diesel Risk Reduction Plan since 2000. However, importantly, CARB has now introduced specific emissions standards and low sulfur fuel requirements as part of an Emission Reduction Plan for Ports and

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Port of Long Beach Environmental Programs

<http://www.polb.com/environment/default.asp>

GCCOG Air Quality Action Plan

<http://www.gatewaycog.org/gateway.html>

California Goods Movement Action Plan

<http://www.arb.ca.gov/gmp/gmp.htm>

Emission Reduction Plan for Ports and Goods Movement in California

<http://www.arb.ca.gov/planning/gmerp/gmerp.htm>

Goods Movement in California, introduced in 2005 and 2006. The goals of the Plan are to:

- Reduce emissions to 2001 levels by 2010;
- Continue reducing emissions until attainment of applicable standards is achieved;
- Reduce diesel-related health risks 85% by 2020; and,
- Ensure sufficient localized risk reduction in each affected community.

CORRIDOR-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

The City of Long Beach initiated this Community Livability Plan in part because of the many community concerns that emerged from the City's outreach process for the I-710 Major Corridor Study. In order to follow through on, and continue the process of, community engagement around the I-710 corridor issues that began to emerge during the major corridor study, this planning process and its outreach component have been completed. The City recognizes that the community outreach around these issues to date has revealed significant community concerns about the scope, form and impacts of any I-710 corridor improvements project to come. The set of corridor wide recommendations to follow in this section have been catalogued in order to provide input that is intended to influence the I-710 Major Improvements Project EIR/EIS, which was initiated early in 2008, and the mitigation measures that must be completed as part of the project. Corridor-wide recommendations are listed in Table 4-1.

A number of categories of potential corridor-wide improvements have been identified and mapped in Figure 4-2. These categories of improvements are defined, described and in some cases conceptually illustrated below.

Freeway Noise/Air Impact Zone Areas closest to the I-710 corridor, within a roughly 200 meter (650 ft.) distance from it, are most impacted by emissions and traffic noise from the corridor. Mitigation measures should respond to the needs of individuals who live, work and go to school within this impact zone. Measures which may be implemented within this zone include providing indoor air filtration devices, a program which is already being test-piloted at Hudson Elementary School in west Long Beach. This program could apply in some form to public facilities such as schools and other community facilities, as well as to private residences and businesses. Providing incentive or assistance programs to install double-paned windows in schools as well as in private residences and businesses could also mitigate noise and air quality impacts in this zone. Finally, soundwalls must be implemented as part of any I-710 improvements project in order to reduce the noise impacts of the freeway on adjacent residences, schools and other public gathering places. Public art on soundwalls facing the neighborhoods should also be included, along with green- ing, to enhance the view of such buffers.

Hill Street Pedestrian Bridge Hill Street is home to several public schools and parks, as well as residential neighborhoods. It is bisected by the I-710 and the LA River corridor, and terminates at the Terminal Island Freeway. City plans have already identified Hill Street as an open space connector from east to west through the corridor area. In order to facilitate this east-west connection, a pedestrian and bicycle only bridge should be considered for construction at this location as part of the I-710 major improvements project. While other locations within the City may be appropriate for separated pedestrian and bicycle crossings of the I-710 and LA River, this opportunity stands out, given the right of way width existing on Hill Street, the opportunity it presents as a major linkage to several public schools on the east and west sides of the corridor, and the benefits of providing an alternative to pedestrian and bicycle traffic on both Pacific Coast Highway and Willow Street.



I-710 Bridge and Overpass Improvements I-710 Bridge and Overpass Improvements Several I-710 bridges have been identified as “early action items” of the I-710 Major Corridor Study. These include the Shoemaker Bridge replacement, which is in design at this time. As bridge and overpass improvements and replacements are designed, and bridges are presumably widened, multiple modes of travel and transportation on them should be fairly considered, in order to facilitate residents’ travel from one side of the freeway and river to the other. Accessibility and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists must be a priority, with provision made for separated bike lanes, pedestrian lighting, wider and ADA compliant safe sidewalks and ramps, signage and possibly even public art elements.

RiverLink Open Spaces The City of Long Beach is currently spearheading and securing funding for development of the RiverLink, a proposed system of open spaces, gateways and open space connectors that will strengthen the physical connections between the Los Angeles River and surrounding corridor neighborhoods and commercial and industrial districts. The RiverLink system is a vital part of the Los Angeles River corridor, and must be supported and enhanced by the I-710 Major Improvements Project. Future I-710 construction projects should be designed to avoid existing and future RiverLink plans and projects as well as avoid compromising access to and public enjoyment of the River itself at interchanges and other potential points of conflict.

LARIO Trail The Class I bike path, known as the LARIO trail, under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County, runs adjacent to the Los Angeles River from the terminus of the Rio Hondo near Lynwood, through Long Beach, to the Pacific ocean. Although the bike path is constructed, suggestions have been made, in the RiverLink plan, and in the outreach conducted as part of this Community Livability Plan, to improve the trail by adding landscaping, seating, shade, signage and other wayfinding measures, and by improving access to the trail from surrounding residential neighborhoods. Like the RiverLink park, greenway and connections system itself, the LARIO is a vital part of the Los Angeles River corridor in Long Beach, and access to it should be enhanced by the I-710 Major Improvements Project. However, in order to ensure that the LARIO trail is the community asset and recreation destination that it can and should be, it will also be critical to address the river corridor challenges and the homeless population that currently exists there. Residents have identified this issue as a serious safety concern in the Community Livability Plan outreach process, and described it as a major impediment to their use and enjoyment of the LARIO trail. In fact, it was noted at a public workshop that without this issue being addressed, RiverLink may be instead perceived as “crimelink,” and the access and connections it provides may be unwelcome in corridor neighborhoods.

I-710 Corridor Green Zone As noted above, areas closest to the I-710 corridor, within a roughly 200 meter (650 ft.) distance from it, are most impacted by it. Green zone improvements in these areas should include tree and landscape planting. Tree planting efforts in this zone can play a role in reducing levels of ozone, PM10, nitrous oxide and sulfur dioxide, minimize the heat island effect, and provide visual and noise barriers between the freeway and neighborhoods. Other green mitigation measures, addressing capturing and cleaning storm water runoff, and groundwater recharge should also be considered in these areas.

I-710 Freeway Interchanges New or redesigned freeway interchanges, which will be part of the I-710 Major Improvements project, should incorporate cutting edge design approaches to address multi-modal transportation systems operating on adjacent neighborhood roadways, and to improve safety for trucks, automobiles, pedestrians and bicyclists.

I-710 Streetscape and Street Improvements The I-710 Major Improvements Project will have an impact on the major streets that either bisect or run parallel to the freeway. Streetscape and street improvements include pedestrian and biking considerations that should be implemented as part of the I-710 freeway project. Street improvements should include, as appropriate, designated bikeways, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, ADA compliant sidewalks and ramps, signal and crosswalk improvements, public art, and comprehensive signage and wayfinding to facilitate all modes of travel and transportation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

I-710 Corridor Major Improvements Project
http://metro.net/images/I-710_newsletter.pdf

Long Beach RiverLink
<http://www.longbeach.gov/park/facilities/study.asp>

LARIO
<http://dpw.lacounty.gov/wmd/watershed/LA/History.cfm>



FIGURE 4-2: CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS



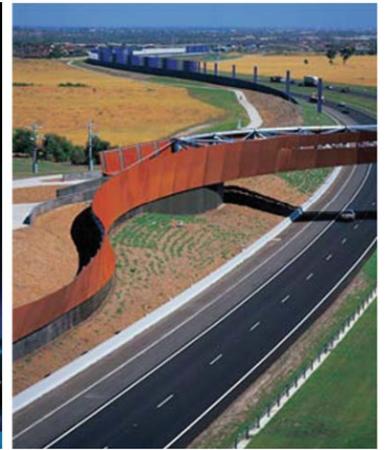
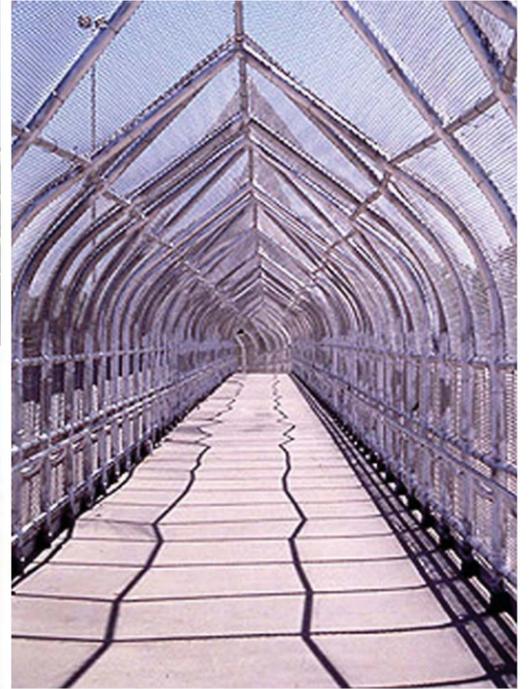
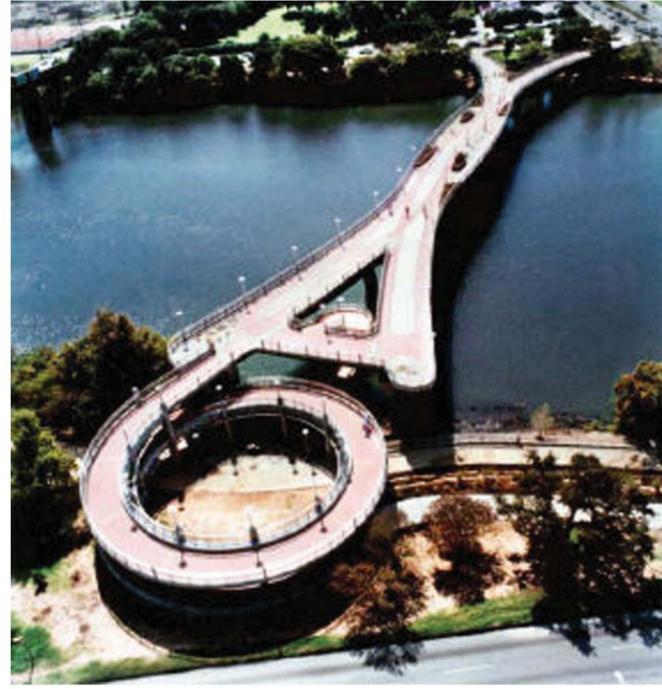
TABLE 4-1: CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE	IMPLEMENTATION/FUNDING
1. Freeway Noise/Air Impact Zone	Mitigation measures and programs to reduce the impact of the I-710, including double-paned glass, air conditioners, air purifiers, and sound walls	Metro, Caltrans, AQMD	Short-Term Long-Term	Metro, AQMD, Possible state and federal funding
2. Hill St. Pedestrian Bridge	Construction of new pedestrian/bicycle bridge at Hill St. to strengthen neighborhood connectivity	Metro, Caltrans, DPW	Long-term	Safe Routes to Schools, Caltrans, Metro
3. I-170 Bridge and Overpass Improvements	Improvements to each of the I-710 overpasses as part of the I-710 Locally Preferred Strategy and EIR	Metro, Caltrans	Long-term	Metro, Caltrans, federal funding
4. RiverLink Open Spaces	Implementation of multiple parks, open space connectors and gateways to improve access to LA River	DPRM	Short-Term Long-Term	DPRM, Possible state and federal funding
5. LARIO TRAIL Improvements	Pedestrian and bicycle improvements to the existing LARIO Trail to make it safer and more integrated with surrounding neighborhoods	LAC, DPW, DPRM, Metro	Short-Term Long-Term	DPW, Possible state and federal funding
6. I-710 Corridor Green Zone	Tree planting and other greening measures along public ROWs adjacent to the 710, 91, and the Terminal Island Freeway	Metro, Caltrans, DPW, CLB	Short-Term Long-Term	Metro, Caltrans, Possible state and federal funding, Possible Port funding
7. I-710 Freeway Interchanges	Improvements to freeway interchanges according to approved freeway expansion plans	Metro, Caltrans	Long-term	Metro, Caltrans, federal funding
8. I-710 Streetscape and Street Improvements	Street and streetscape improvements along major corridors adjacent to the I-710	Metro, Caltrans, DPW	Long-term	Metro, DPW, Possible state and federal funding

LEGEND

- Metro: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
- Caltrans: California Department of Transportation
- DPW: City of Long Beach Department of Public Works
- DPRM: City of Long Beach Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine
- LAC: Los Angeles County
- DS: City of Long Beach Development Services
- BNS: City of Long Beach Bureau of Neighborhood Services
- CLB: City of Long Beach - Multiple Departments

Corridor Improvements Imagery



BRIDGES

PLANTING

