



# City Council Report

**City Council Study Session: February 1, 2011**

**Agenda Item: 4-A**

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Eileen Fogarty, Director of Planning and Community Development  
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**Subject:** Coordinated Planning, Management, Construction Phasing and Communications for Approved and Proposed Projects in the Civic Center and Downtown Area.

## **Recommended Action**

Staff recommends that the City Council review and comment on the potential approaches for the coordination of projects approved and proposed for development in the Civic Center and Downtown Areas during the next few years.

## **Executive Summary**

The City is moving forward to realize the vision developed in the Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE), Civic Center Specific Plan, and focused Downtown/Civic Center planning efforts. In the next several years, the community will have many exciting opportunities in the form of proposed capital projects and in conjunction with the coming of the Exposition Light Rail. Those proposals constitute a unique opportunity for the City to realize the community vision for investment in the vibrancy and success of the City's civic future.

The vision covers a broad spectrum of the proposed projects that represent open space, civic facilities, major transit improvements, new facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as ensuring that cars can continue to move through and park within the Downtown. The vision also includes new uses brought forward through private development. Generally, the proposed projects can be divided into three geographic areas that are interconnected:

**The Gateway Projects** would provide access and linkages between the Civic Center, Downtown and Coastal areas, which include:

- *The Colorado Avenue Esplanade from 4<sup>th</sup> Street to Ocean Avenue*
- *Freeway Capping – Phase 1 Sidewalk Widening at Ocean Avenue*
- *California Incline and Pier Bridge Replacement Projects*
- *The Exposition Light Rail Downtown Station*

**The Civic Center Area** consists of a wide range of approved and proposed projects that were envisioned, originally through the Civic Center Specific Plan, and more recently through the 2009 Civic Center/Downtown integration planning, including:

- *Palisades Garden Walk and Town Square Parks*
- *The Village Mixed-Use Housing Project*
- *Olympic Drive Extension from Main Street to Ocean Avenue*
- *Renovation of the Landmark Civic Auditorium Renovation*
- *Early Childhood Education Center with Santa Monica College*
- *Santa Monica High School shared sports, cultural and/or parking facilities*

**The Downtown Area** includes the recently completed Santa Monica Place renovation that opened up the mall, offering new views, connecting 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade to the Civic Center area, and providing a new sense of vibrancy and excitement through new stores, restaurants and public spaces. As Downtown moves forward, there are a number of projects that would complement the recent investments, including:

- *Public Parking Structure 6 Re-build and Expansion*
- *A Bike Center/Clean Mobility Center in Parking Structures 7 and 8*
- *AMC Theater Re-build and Expansion*
- *Community Visioning for the City-owned 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> and Arizona Site*
- *Several Proposed Hotel Projects*

Additionally, proposed circulation enhancements will help to realize the LUCE No Net New PM Peak trips goal, while also facilitating economic and cultural vitality in the Downtown and Civic Center areas. These enhancements to pedestrian connections, bicycle facilities, transit infrastructure, wayfinding and parking management represent the integration of the City's long standing commitment to sustainability and the LUCE, resulting in:

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions through vehicle trip reduction
- Increased opportunities and access to alternative forms of transportation including walking, biking and transit
- Creation of complete neighborhoods where housing, office and daily services are all within walking distance

It is essential that as the Downtown and Civic Center evolve, that there are a variety of transportation options for residents, employees and visitors, that this network functions smoothly, and that it is easy for people to find their way.

This exciting vision requires that implementation is carefully planned and managed. The City has a host of unique and transformative opportunities that few cities are fortunate to have. With the reality that a range of projects may be constructed in near proximity and within a close time frame, it is important to ensure that the act of “placemaking” allows the “place” to continue to function. The City will focus on the details of implementation to ensure minimal disruption. The challenge for the City will be to ensure that the components of this transformation are brought forward in a way that is tightly managed and phased to allow Downtown and the Civic Center to continue to flourish. Innovative communication strategies, messaging and online information tools will be developed to stay in contact with community members. It is also essential that a two-way communication system be successfully maintained so that stakeholders can articulate their needs and obtain information.

This is the first of periodic reports providing an update on our progress. The report describes the key areas of proposed significant investment over the next five years, followed by the proposed framework for construction phasing and temporary transportation mitigation strategies. A report on Expo Light Rail will be provided separately in the near future for discussion. The report also highlights communication approaches to ensure ongoing public awareness and feedback. It describes management strategies that would ensure proactive and aggressive management of construction to minimize impacts to residents, businesses and visitors. Finally, it provides an understanding of the ultimate vision that will yield significant long-term benefits.

## **Background**

This study session will focus on the “big picture”, the next five years of integrated implementation for proposed public and private projects in the Civic Center and the Downtown. This report updates the comprehensive review provided to City Council on [March 24, 2009](#). At that time, Council confirmed the following goals for the area:

- Connect the Civic Center and Downtown
- Create a vibrant downtown Light Rail Transit (LRT) gateway
- Enhance and expand open space and parks
- Resolve circulation issues for pedestrians, bicycles, transit and other vehicles
- Address parking needs comprehensively, identifying shared use opportunities

Following this initial direction, the City held a workshop with the community on May 11, 2009, and identified Redevelopment Agency (RDA) funding priorities at a [May 12, 2009](#) City Council meeting. These priority proposed projects included:

- Expo Green Streets and Pathways for roadway, pedestrian, bike and transit improvements, including a pedestrian Esplanade from the new Light Rail station to the Pier
- A Phase One freeway cap to create an improved entrance to Palisades Garden Walk

- The Downtown Parking Strategic Plan
- Expo Station Area Enhancements
- Specific Civic Center allocations for:
  - The Civic Center parks (PGW & Town Square, the Civic Auditorium Park)
  - Civic auditorium renovations
  - Early Childhood Education Center
  - Joint Uses with Santa Monica High School
  - Shared civic center parking

The Council’s direction resulted in a number of coordinated planning and design initiatives. A Civic Center/Downtown circulation analysis has identified critical timing and resource requirements, such as optimal phasing of the Olympic Drive extension, the parameters for the Colorado Esplanade, improvements to ensure access to the bicycle station in Santa Monica Place, as well as circulation options through the Civic Center Auditorium site. The comprehensive Civic Center shared parking analysis has evaluated interim and long-term solutions to retain an adequate and flexible parking supply. Additionally, the community and City Commissions have identified the need to ensure optimal pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Village, Palisades Garden Walk, other parts of the Civic Center and to the Light Rail Station.

## **Discussion**

### ***DOWNTOWN AND THE CIVIC CENTER - A SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT***

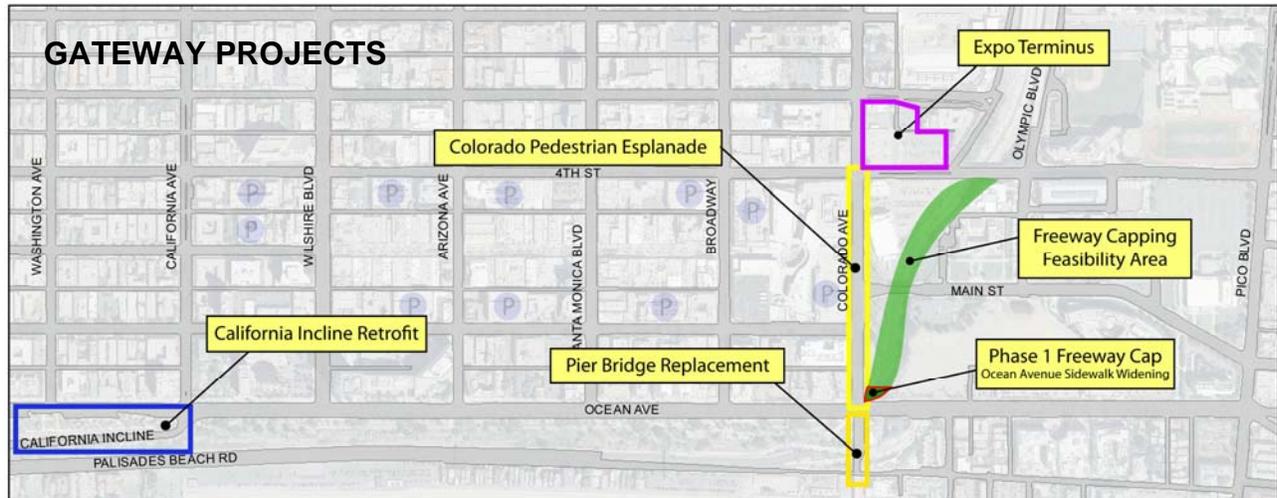
The wide range of proposed projects in the Downtown and Civic Center are grouped in this report into areas that reflect their relationships and interdependencies as well as coordination strategies. This discussion covers significant proposed projects that are anticipated to begin construction within the next five years, that are organized into the following sections:

- A. Downtown/Civic Center Project Discussion
  - Gateway Projects
  - The Civic Center Area
  - Downtown Projects
- B. Parking and Circulation Improvements and Management Strategies – describing necessary access and connectivity for these areas, including parking access and pedestrian, bicycle, bus and transportation demand management strategies.
- C. Project Construction Timing, Phasing and Management Strategies
- D. Communication and Outreach: “Be Excited, Be Prepared”

## A. DOWNTOWN/CIVIC CENTER PROPOSED PROJECTS

### Gateway Projects

The Gateway Projects would create a welcoming entry to the City and provide linkages between Downtown and the Civic Center and the coastal area to the west.



- Colorado Avenue Pedestrian Esplanade: A newly-designed promenade for pedestrians and pathway for bicyclists would be created connecting the LRT station to Ocean Avenue, the Pier, Main Street Bridge and Downtown. The reconfigured roadway will expand bicycle and pedestrian facilities, increase landscaping and public art to create a visual and functional focal point between the Downtown and Civic Center. Procurement of the designer is currently underway. The project construction is partially funded by a grant from Metro.



- The Pier Bridge Replacement: The project would replace the Pier Bridge, improving safety and access for pedestrians and bicycles, while accommodating vehicles. The community outreach process in 2005 revealed a clear community prioritization for pedestrian and bike access. The City is preparing the necessary design information to apply for federal funding for the bridge replacement.
- Freeway Capping: Bridge widening, sidewalk improvements and freeway capping would stitch together parts of the Downtown/Civic Center separated by the I-10 freeway. A feasibility and phasing study was initiated last year, along with preliminary engineering of a first phase. The feasibility study will evaluate the

opportunities and challenges to various freeway capping alternatives, identify rough costs, measure potential benefits to the City and surrounding property owners, and identify potential funding strategies for short and long-term phasing options.

*Phase 1 Sidewalk Widening Project.* The first phase would create public space at the Colorado and Ocean intersection, improving a critical nexus between the Downtown, Civic Center, Pier, and Palisades Park, and creating an improved entrance to Palisades Garden Walk. The intersection's southeast corner would be extended over the Caltrans right-of-way at the McClure Tunnel. It is subject to Caltrans approval and an expedited schedule is being requested in order to synchronize completion with Palisades Garden Walk if possible.

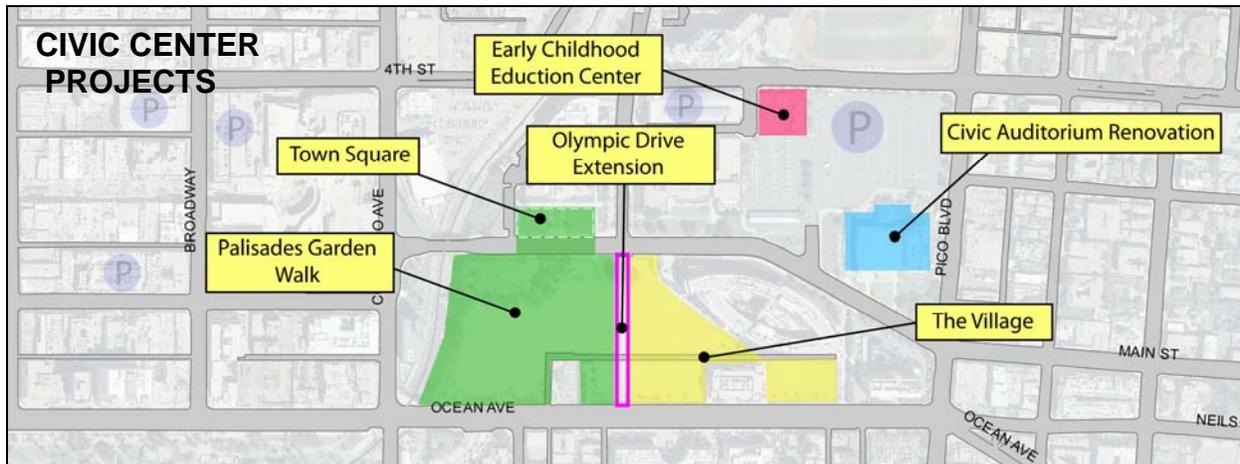
*Additional Phases Freeway Capping.* The City has held initial discussions with adjacent property owners about future site improvements and the potential for a partnership to create expanded open space adjacent to Palisades Garden Walk or connections across the freeway. Sidewalk improvements to the existing bridges at 4<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets would be likely early phases to improve connections.



- California Incline: In cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the City is proposing to reconstruct the California Incline Bridge to meet current seismic standards. The 1,400 foot long bridge would be replaced in the same location, and feature wider sidewalks and bicycle lanes in addition to the vehicle lanes. Construction would require full closure and temporary re-routing of traffic. A comprehensive construction traffic management plan is being developed in coordination with Caltrans and City of Los Angeles to guide the timing and location of construction period detours. Motorists would be directed to alternate streets such as 7th Street, Moomat Ahiko Way, or Lincoln Boulevard with the goal of distributing traffic, avoiding the addition of vehicles to already busy streets and routing vehicles away from residential areas. Other contemplated measures in the plan include providing closed circuit television cameras at intersections to enable real-time traffic conditions to be monitored and managed from the traffic management center.
- Expo Light Rail Downtown Station: The station, located on the former Sears Automotive site, is anticipated to be a center of activity and hub of bicycle, pedestrian and transit traffic in the Downtown/Civic Center. The City has requested that the Expo Construction Authority provide a second entrance at the south end of the station to serve the Civic Center and Santa Monica High School. Concurrent with the Expo station planning, the City is evaluating different options for joint partnership for development on the remainder of the station site.

## **The Civic Center Area**

The combination of uses in the Civic Center would create a vibrant cultural center and mixed-use district as envisioned in the Civic Center Specific Plan and the LUCE that is activated by residential, educational, civic and open space components. Work, play and services in the combined Downtown/Civic Center would be easily accessible by foot, bicycle, or transit creating a truly sustainable environment. A shared parking program would address both event and day-to-day parking needs.



- The Village: The Village mixed-use housing project will create 160 units of affordable housing and 160 market-rate units. Ground floor space is dedicated to retail uses along Olympic Drive and Ocean Avenue. The Village exemplifies the LUCE principles of a complete neighborhood with housing, open space and green connections, public art, retail services and transit all within walking distance.

- Olympic Drive Extension: Completion of Olympic Drive from Main Street to Ocean Avenue is part of construction of The Village, including a signalized intersection at Ocean Avenue, a pedestrian crosswalk to the park, and a bicycle route. The streetscape improvements will support active recreation and retail uses.



- Palisades Garden Walk & Town Square: These parks would create seven acres of new public open space that will serve both as a destination and a link between the Oceanfront, Civic Center and Downtown. Palisades Garden Walk would build upon the original arroyo landscape of the area so that the public could enjoy walks through a series of braided pathways, enjoying watercourses, "hills" and

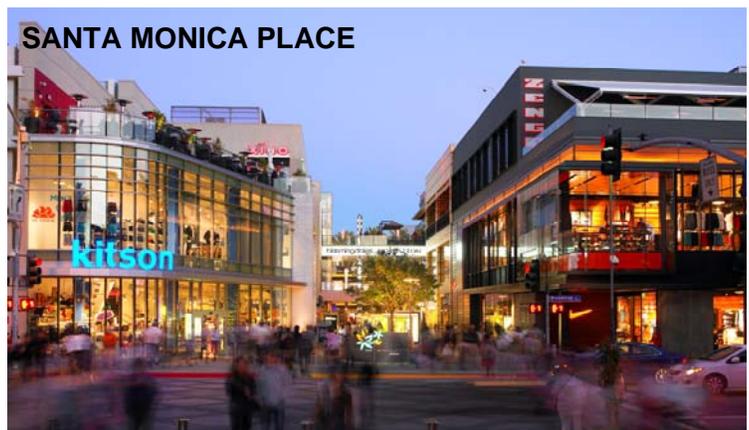
“bays” that highlight horticultural species and provides areas for exploration and relaxation. The Town Square would honor the original design of the landmark City Hall and provide enhanced opportunities for public discourse and engagement.



- Civic Auditorium Re-Use: Negotiations are underway with the Nederlander Organization to partner in realizing the community’s vision for a lively future for the Landmark Civic Auditorium. Necessary renovations are proposed to support a full roster of cultural events including concerts and theater, and address disabled access and seismic upgrade needs.
- Early Childhood Education Center: This partnership with Santa Monica College is proposed to provide childcare services and be a lab school for the College’s early childhood education program. Once final siting decisions are made, an implementation plan and operating agreement would be developed with the College who will be responsible for construction and overall management.
- Santa Monica High School Joint Use Opportunities: the Santa Monica/Malibu School District proposed a joint use project for the Santa Monica High School campus that includes sports, cultural and parking facilities that can be used by the community when not in use by the high school. Within the constraints of the available Redevelopment Agency funding, joint use opportunities would be further refined as the school district proceeds with its planning process.

## Downtown Projects

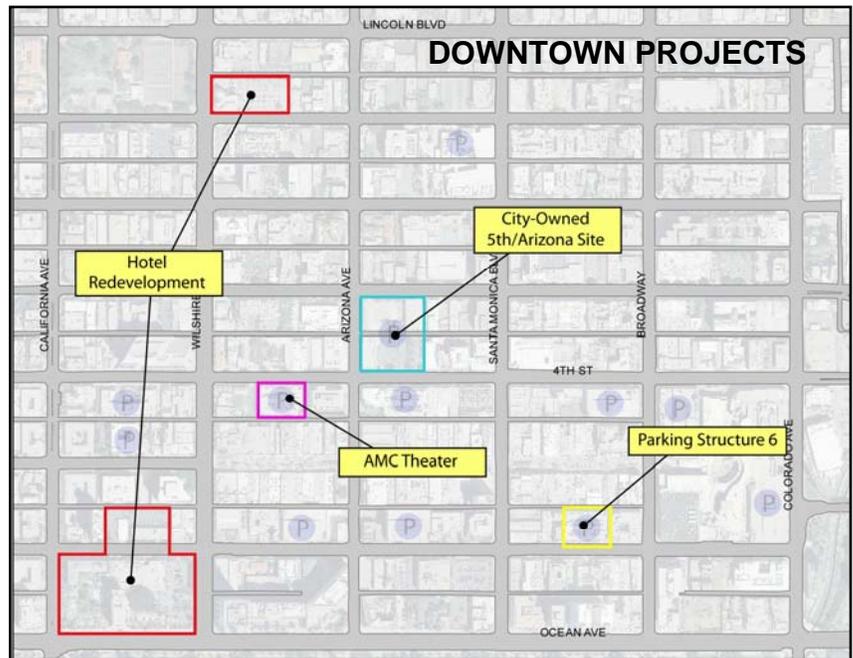
With the successful completion of the Santa Monica Place renovation, and the potential of the Gateway Projects and the forthcoming Light Rail Station, Downtown is poised for a new era of opportunity. Several significant projects could proceed simultaneously with the development of the Downtown Specific Plan. The Specific Plan will establish the urban design framework, balance the walking, bicycling, transit and vehicle



circulation, and define a healthy mix of commercial and residential uses, while implementing the expanded boundaries and principles set out in the LUCE. Public and private projects include:

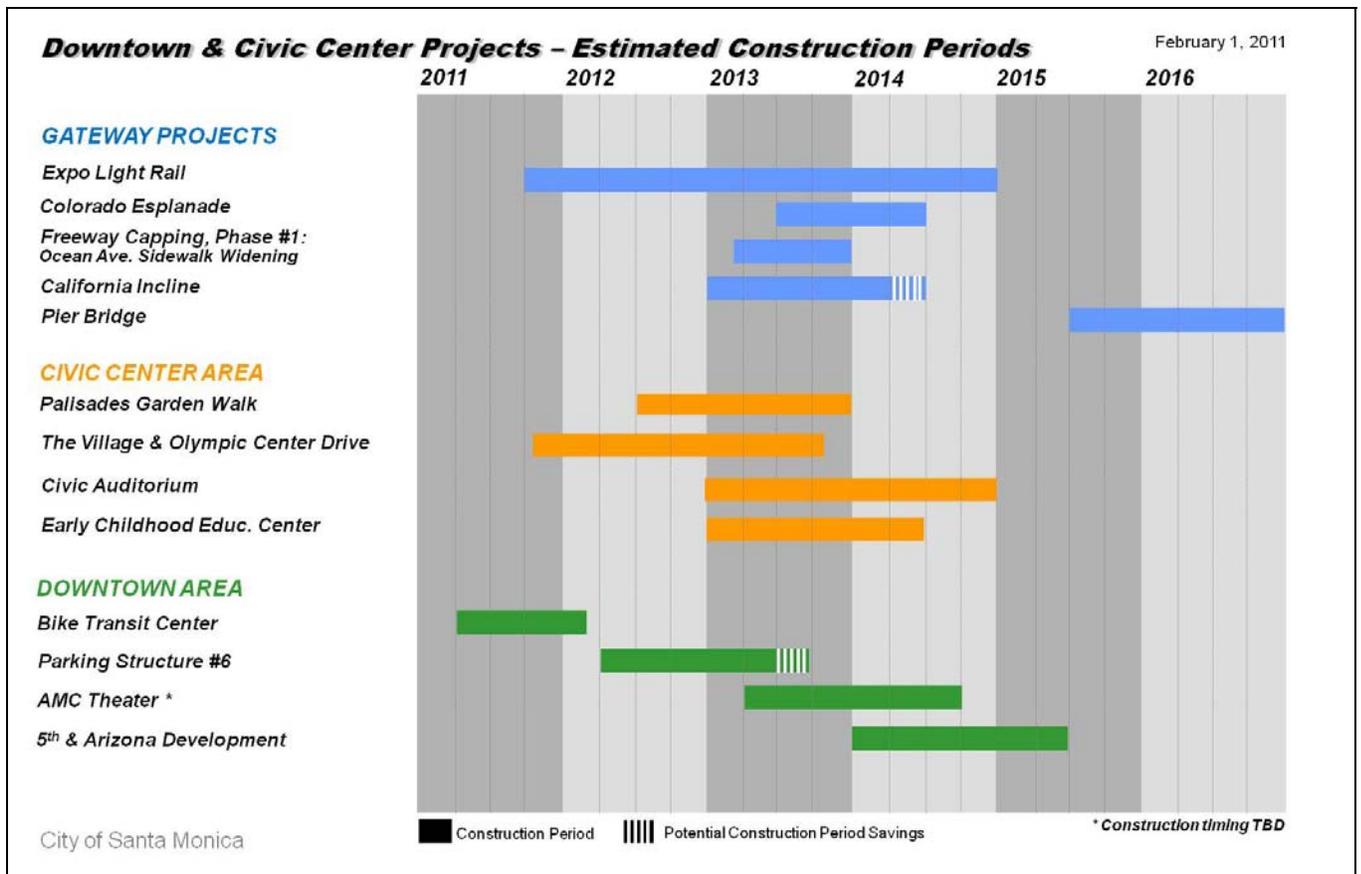
- Public Parking Structure 6 Re-Build: A design-build team is under contract with the City to demolish and rebuild Structure 6 with a total of approximately 715 spaces.

- The AMC Theater Project: A state-of-the-art theater is proposed on 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Santa Monica Boulevard and Arizona Avenue, with 12 screens and 570 net new theater seats in the Downtown. The project responds to a long-identified need to modernize cinema facilities in Downtown so that they are competitive with other areas. The project would demolish Parking Structure 3 and necessitate short term and long term replacement parking.



- City-Owned 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> and Arizona Site: The community visioning process for this site recently acquired by the City is underway. This site presents an exciting opportunity to enhance the Downtown with complementary uses that serve the growing population of Downtown residents. The Council established guiding principles for the community process at the [December 14, 2010](#) Council hearing.
- Hotels: Development Agreement negotiations continue for a hotel project at 710 Wilshire Boulevard. Construction of a new hotel, the Shore Hotel, on the former Travelodge site started last year. Planning for the Miramar Hotel is proceeding concurrently as well as planning for the updated Downtown Specific Plan.

These projects are in various stages of planning, design and pre-construction. The chart below provides a chronology of the estimated time frames that projects will be under construction.



## B. PARKING AND CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

This array of public and private projects proposed for the coming years necessitates careful planning for long-term and construction-period parking and circulation in the Downtown/Civic Center. It is critical that there would be only limited disruption to businesses and residents during this time, and that access would be maintained in order to ensure the continued functioning of the districts. Proposed pedestrian, bicycle, transit, roadway and parking improvements have the potential to mitigate short-term issues, represent long-term investments in the City’s future success, and work toward achieving the LUCE goals for greenhouse gas reduction, congestion management and No Net New Evening Peak Trips. Transportation Demand Management tools such as shared parking, bicycle parking, and transit programs will also be key to Downtown/Civic Center circulation.

## **1. Shared and Managed Parking**

The City is in the process of upgrading the Downtown parking supply in accordance with the approved 2006 Downtown Parking Plan and the recommendations of the Walker Parking Study. Managing the parking resources serving the Downtown/Civic Center area will ensure capacity and flexibility as projects continue through completion. Key parking related projects that are either proposed or underway include:

- Rebuilding Parking Structure 6, increasing the number of spaces from 342 to 715.
- Removal of 339 spaces from Parking Structure 3 as part of the AMC Theater project
- Addition of 100-130 public parking spaces at the City owned 5<sup>th</sup> and Arizona site contingent on a public visioning process for the site
- Analysis of the need for additional shared parking in the Civic Center area.

Currently, there is a combined total of 7,375 parking spaces in the Downtown/Civic Center. On average 975 spaces are available in the Downtown/Civic Center even at peak periods (Table 1). Most available spaces are in the Civic Center and at the Main Library, demonstrating that within a short distance of Downtown, there remains sufficient parking available for current demand. Further staff analysis, based on actual and projected use, validated this conclusion. In addition, several Walker Parking Study recommended implementation actions to support access to Downtown are underway:

- Parking Pricing. Strategically increasing evening, maximum daily rates and monthly rates in the Downtown core to more efficiently manage existing public and private parking resources to meet parking needs, thereby creating greater availability of parking for visitors to Downtown
- Shared Parking. Implementation of a program to facilitate public use of private facilities. Additional evening and weekend parking spaces have become available at 7 locations in Downtown and made visible through signage allowed in the public right-of-way by agreement with the City
- Alternative Transportation. Using increased parking revenues to fund additional programs to support employee access to Downtown by transit, bicycle and carpooling
- Shuttle Service. Using increased parking revenues to support shuttle service to outlying parking resources, including the Civic Center Parking Structure during parking structure reconstruction
- Parking Management. Incorporating Santa Monica Place parking into the larger system of Downtown parking management, with the same operator and rates to match other structures

**Table 1 CURRENTLY AVAILABLE PARKING**

Location	Weekdays	Weekends
Main Library	100	350
Civic Auditorium Parking Lot	575	900
Civic Center Parking Structure	300	550
South Beach Lots	1500	250
5th & Arizona	100-130	100-130

A Comprehensive Civic Center Parking Study is also underway to address parking demand from existing and future Civic Center uses based on time-of-day, week and year, including temporary Downtown replacement requirements. The study incorporates demand from City Hall, Palisades Garden Walk, the Civic Auditorium, Samohi shared use, the Early Childhood Education Center, large events, and a potential cultural facility.

Due to differences in peak demand and use characteristics, the analysis is indicating that current and immediate future demand can be accommodated with a shared parking program which may reduce the necessity for building new spaces in the near term. On limited occasions, additional parking may be needed for large scale events or when multiple large events are scheduled simultaneously. In those cases, additional shuttles to beach lots or private parking facilities, along with TDM measures to manage demand could accommodate parking need. Transit, bicycle and pedestrian access enhancements during events would also strengthen links to parking facilities, and further reduce total demand for parking.

The study incorporates a phasing analysis to remain flexible and accommodate necessary demand while addressing the fact that some Civic Center uses have yet to be fully programmed, such as the High School remodel, and the additional cultural facility. The ultimate parking solution will be contingent on finalizing programming decisions. If there were to be additional parking built, the study identified the preferred site location for new parking under the southeast corner of the Civic Center, east of the Civic Auditorium.

In response to comments at the December 14, 2010 City Council meeting, the additional costs to construct parking under the Palisades Garden Walk park were evaluated. In order to meet the structural load requirements for earthwork and plantings on top of parking, the park would need to increase its budget by over \$10 million. In addition, it would delay completion and opening of the park by over one year. The cost to locate subterranean parking under the future park would be substantially higher per space than under the Civic Auditorium lot because a large sewer line results in a smaller footprint, inefficient layout, and limited access. The complications add at least \$2.5 million to the cost of the subterranean parking, over and above the base construction costs. The reconstructed Parking Structure 6 located just one block north of the Civic Center would include at least 715 parking spaces, which is a net increase of 350 spaces in close proximity to the park and Pier.

#### Interim Parking Strategies

A number of strategies for interim parking management during the period that the Downtown Parking Structures upgrades are under way are outlined in an [October 15, 2010](#) Information Item. The Interim Parking Plan focuses on temporary parking replacement strategies that relocate approximately 500 monthly parking pass holders into the Civic Center and the Main Library parking structure in order to free up short term visitor parking in the remaining Downtown structures, consistent with the Downtown Parking Program EIR adopted by Council on [May 9, 2006](#).

In addition to relocation of monthly parkers, a series of other initiatives are currently being explored in cooperation with the Bayside District Corporation to ensure that a sufficient supply of parking is available, and includes:

- Temporary Parking: Maximizing the use of temporary parking locations at 5<sup>th</sup> and Arizona and the Sears Automotive site (following site remediation) until projects planned for those locations are underway. At least 200-300 spaces could be temporarily accommodated on these two sites.
- Rate Adjustments: Further adjustment of both on-street and off-street parking rates to incentivize parking further away from the Downtown and adjusted rates for special events.
- New Technologies: Further implementation of new parking technologies such as credit-card enabled parking meters, and changeable messages signs with real time information to be installed later this year.

- Wayfinding Improvements: Implementing a first phase parking wayfinding system, real time information signage such as beach parking availability coming this year, and other implementation beginning in 2012, smart phone and other parking location assistance devices.
- Transportation Demand Management: Reducing demand for parking through additional TDM programs, and bicycle and transit facilities.
- Centralized Valet: Implement either a centralized valet program throughout Downtown, a valet location on 4<sup>th</sup> Street across from Parking Structure 3, or valet assist operation in the 5<sup>th</sup>/Arizona lot.
- Relocations: Renegotiate agreements to reduce or relocate private spaces in Parking Structures 2 and 4.

The City and Bayside District Corporation have retained the services of Kimley-Horn & Associates to provide review and input on the draft Interim Parking Plan, expected to be complete by March. Throughout the course of any future construction, staff will continue to monitor parking data and adjust the plan to ensure that the needs of the various Downtown parking stakeholders are met to the greatest extent possible.

#### Incentives and Access Strategies for Interim Parking Sites

To keep short-term parking available in the Downtown and facilitate access to Civic Center parking a number of strategies are proposed to encourage relocation of monthly parkers to the Civic Center and facilitate access through shuttle and transit connections, as well as pedestrian connection improvements.

- Financial Incentives: As an incentive to encourage monthly parkers to choose the Civic Center Structure, a Big Blue Bus transit pass would be provided free of charge when monthly parkers pre-purchase a 12-month parking pass. The 12-month pass would already be offered at a lower rate, providing two months free, and combined with a free transit pass, this is a significant financial incentive. In addition, providing a free transit pass is one of most effective means to encourage transit ridership. A shift of each parker to walking, bicycling or transit even a few times per month will make an impact in reducing parking demand and congestion.
- Shuttle And Transit: The City is initiating an interim shuttle service and pass program to facilitate connections between the Civic Center structure and Downtown in coordination with Big Blue Bus.
  - Transit Passes: The existing “smart card” monthly parking structure pass will be enabled to also serve as a fare medium for boarding any Big Blue Bus route at any location system-wide.
  - Bus Re-routing: Lines 4 and 9 will be slightly rerouted to pick up and drop off passengers immediately adjacent to the north and south structure entrances

- to supplement Lines 2 and 3 that currently operate both directions on 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Shuttle Service: Once Parking Structure 6 is closed, additional shuttle service will be provided during weekday commuting periods on schedules designed to meet travel demand. A broader study of downtown shuttle options will be developed to address downtown transit circulation needs of the City's business districts, which will include a discussion of how shuttle services may encourage greater use of perimeter parking facilities.
  - Pedestrian Connections to Parking Structures: Improvements to bridges over the I-10 at Main Street, Ocean Avenue, and 4th Street are needed to foster connections to parking resources, Expo Light Rail, and major destinations such as Palisades Garden Walk and the Pier. These proposed improvements would support the interim parking solutions and be long-term circulation assets. Pedestrian enhancements to the existing bridges could be completed in the next 12-18 months following community input and if City funding is allocated.

#### Minimize Duration of Construction and Parking Structures Off-line

Reducing construction duration and starting the process early for Parking Structure 6 will minimize the time during which both Parking Structures 3 and 6 would be offline. A process has been initiated for planning the re-use of the City property located at 5<sup>th</sup> and Arizona that would address the potential for additional temporary and long-term parking on that site. Parking capacity and options will be evaluated as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> and Arizona site visioning process.

## **2. Balanced Circulation Network**

A key goal of the comprehensive strategy is to build connections between the Downtown and Civic Center projects with an enhanced pedestrian and bicycle environment, while maintaining functional vehicle circulation. Proposed projects for the Downtown network would also establish the streets as community space.

### Vehicles

Opportunities to expand the vehicle network are limited, so strategies focus on increasing efficiency and optimizing flow through signal synchronization, wayfinding, and dynamic information sharing. Real-time information encourages people to make informed decisions and avoid congestion. These strategies have worked effectively during busy events, including Glow, the Pier Centennial, the LA Marathon and the Main

Street Farmers' Market. Real time traffic and parking management and communications tools in the works for Downtown/Civic Center include:

- Real-time Traffic Monitoring and Control: A state-of-the-art traffic control center enables constant monitoring and immediate adjustment of signal timing and dynamic directional signage. It will be connected to 97 intersections by Fall 2011.
- Signal Synchronization: Signal synchronization has improved flow on major corridors including 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Ocean Avenue, and is being expanded to Pico, Santa Monica Boulevard and Wilshire.
- Dynamic Directional Signage: In order to effectively direct vehicle traffic into, through, and out of the Downtown area, the City can deploy a variety of signs.
  - Temporary static signs for closures, detours, or special conditions.
  - Portable Changeable Message Signs for temporary traffic control that can be changed remotely as traffic conditions vary.
  - Permanent dynamic wayfinding signs at key gateways into the City.
- Real Time Parking Information: Motorists can be alerted to available parking through real-time parking availability signs.
- Public Information: Online real-time parking information system can continue to direct motorists to available parking. Other opportunities to convey real-time parking availability to mobile phones are being explored.



### Pedestrians

Pedestrians activate the Downtown/Civic Center, and pedestrian amenities along with direct and convenient connections to multiple destinations are key to the area's success. Through informational materials from the City and Bayside, visitors and residents can be encouraged to access Downtown by foot, bike or transit rather than driving. In addition, the City is constantly in the process of upgrading the pedestrian environment as seen with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Street improvements, and ongoing planting of street trees, crosswalk improvements and count-down pedestrian information. New pedestrian connections proposed for the Downtown/Civic area include:

- The Colorado Esplanade, creating wide and inviting pedestrian sidewalks
- Proposed enhancements to the west side of Ocean Avenue from the Pier to Moomat Ahiko Way

- Proposed bridge improvements to the Main Street and 4th Street bridges between Downtown and Civic Center that also support parking solutions
- Intersection improvements on either end of the Colorado Esplanade at 4th and Ocean would create functional pedestrian crossings.

On-going work ensures a continuous and high-quality pedestrian environment in the Downtown/Civic Center with current efforts focused on:

- Maintaining a continuous walkway even during construction periods
- Testing an all-pedestrian “scramble” phase at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Santa Monica Boulevard
- Improvements to sidewalks adjacent to Santa Monica Place and Parking Structures 7 and 8
- Signal timing adjustments at the Third Street Promenade crossings
- Education efforts including Senior Walking and Pedestrian Safety workshops

### Bicycle Network

The LUCE and the Sustainable City Plan both emphasize the importance of a safe, comfortable cycling environment, with a goal of creating a viable alternative to auto travel. Demand for bicycling facilities is increasing rapidly, and implementation of the LUCE bicycle network would make a significant improvement in area mobility. The following improvements are underway:

- Bike Center: A full service bike transit center in Santa Monica Place Structures 7 and 8 will be open by July 2011. It will include 358 secure long-term bicycle parking spaces, short-term bicycle parking and services for people who walk, bike or take transit.
- Bicycle Parking: The amount of bicycle parking in the Downtown is rapidly expanding. Parking for 50 more bikes is being installed on the Third Street Promenade and 300 bike bollards are being distributed throughout Downtown. Additional racks have been installed in the Library surface lot.

A comprehensive bicycle circulation program is underway that can be implemented in 2011-2012. Improved lane reconfigurations, striping/markings and even roadway geometry would provide a more appealing bike network in the Downtown/Civic Center, and create better bicycle access to popular destinations. These proposed improvements will encourage visitors and residents to bike to the Farmers Market, movies and other popular activities. The popular bicycle valet at the Farmers Market has already increased ridership and provided a convenient bicycle parking alternative. With additional outreach, evaluation of specific design challenges and additional funding, the program can include:

- Upgrading intersections and bike routes that connect into the Downtown such as Broadway, and exploration of new routes on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Street, and Colorado Avenue.
- Expanding the bicycle valet program to serve the Downtown Farmers Market
- Introducing bicycle parking corrals
- Consideration of a “scramble” signal timing at Colorado and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to allow easy bike access to the new Bike Center in Parking Structure 8.

Focusing on bicycling, transit and walking, as better alternatives to cars in the Downtown, is key to reducing the impact of moving cars and getting them to appropriate parking spaces.

### Transit Network

Currently, an average of 29,000 people ride the Big Blue Bus or Metro to and from Downtown Santa Monica every day. Published professional reports cite that the main factors which induce drivers to switch to transit are the availability and price of parking, and the travel time by transit compared with the automobile. The 2010 Big Blue Bus survey supported these findings, with 24 percent of passengers citing parking cost as their reason for riding the bus, and 17 percent citing a shorter travel time by bus.

To improve service reliability and travel time and attract new riders, Big Blue Bus efforts will focus on improving the key east-west and north south transit corridors that connect Downtown/Civic Center with the rest of the City and surrounding areas, including:

- Traffic signal priority for transit buses, the first phase of which will be completed this year
- Potential expansion of the transit priority service coupled with an enhanced streetscape with more inviting sidewalks, bus stop amenities and bus lanes.
- Stronger incentives for employees and residents of new developments to be supplied with transit passes.

### Transportation Demand Management:

Promoting employee trip reduction measures through Bayside District Corporation (Bayside) and Downtown businesses is an effective tool. Many Downtown businesses already have employees who rideshare – but there is always room to do more. Starting this Fall the City will begin utilizing a two-year Metro grant to fund incentives such as rolling shopping carts for residents, and fare subsidies for employees to encourage

transit, walking and bicycling as alternatives to driving. These incentives are to be distributed through programs that will leverage their value, and develop the capacity of business improvement districts and community groups

City staff collaborated with Bayside to promote Rideshare Week in October 2010, providing alternate commute information for business owners and employees via an insert in the Bayside Beat and an information table on the Promenade. Staff is working with Metro's consultants to market its vanpool program, and is training Bayside Ambassadors on transportation options so they can provide information to businesses, employees and the public.

### **C. PROJECT CONSTRUCTION TIMING, PHASING AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Several goals have been identified to guide the effective management of the proposed Civic Center/Downtown public projects, including maintaining mobility/circulation for pedestrians, bicycles, transit and vehicles; ensuring access to business to promote business vitality; and providing access to parking for businesses and customers. These goals can be accomplished through a variety of available tools and techniques including:

- Regular and proactive communication with various stakeholders early in the process and continuing through construction to ensure that stakeholders are aware of construction schedule, sequence of construction, and any issues that may impact them.
- Phasing of public projects to ensure those most critical are undertaken first (i.e. Reconstruction of Parking Structure 6 in Downtown Projects) and sequencing projects to reduce overlapping impact (ensuring California Incline and Pier Bridge Occur do not overlap). In addition, phasing of work to reduce or eliminate overlapping construction impacts, or coordination of complementary work efforts to reduce construction impacts.
- Contractor Management tools such as early completion incentives, flexible construction schedules, proactive management of traffic routes and construction staging, and empowering project managers to address issues promptly and proactively.

The project management team will be flexible, fluid, and responsive during the project constructions schedules.

## **1. Planning Construction by Building on the Successes of the Past**

Within the last decade, the City has experienced the successful construction of several large projects that can serve as models for future efforts. Each project was carefully managed and executed in a way that minimized impacts to businesses and residents, as well as the pedestrian, transit and vehicle network within the busy Downtown environment.

- Santa Monica Place remodeling, including the building exterior on Parking Structures 7 and 8.
- The Transit Mall project that covered five blocks of Broadway and seven blocks of Santa Monica Boulevard, requiring reconstruction of the street and sidewalk. The project was completed within the City's schedule and budget.
- The Colorado/Ocean Sewer Relief Line and Downtown Projects in 2007 including the Fourth and Second Street improvements and the Downtown Traffic Management System.

The projects used proactive management tools to anticipate issues and comprehensively manage construction, temporary traffic and detours, communications and public relations. These strategies and this experience will be essential if and when the City moves forward with the proposed Downtown/Civic Center projects, and staff anticipated using many of the innovative techniques from these projects including:

- Construction phasing that maintains continuous access to businesses and residences
- Efficient sequencing and scheduling of construction to allow construction progress while making best efforts to eliminate or reduce overlap
- Required contractor attendance at coordination meetings to resolve any potential issues
- Clear communications with the stakeholders and timely resolution of issues
- Regular stakeholder meetings to identify concerns and coordinate events
- Holiday or special event media campaigns to promote local businesses and ensure smooth functioning.

For example, the City worked with a team of community stakeholders during the Colorado/Ocean Sewer Relief Line, including the PRC, Chamber of Commerce, Bayside District, Fire and Police Departments, and the Holiday Inn in deciding to close Colorado Avenue during the construction to reduce the construction duration by over three months. Simultaneously, the City implemented a traffic management and detour plan to address access and traffic needs around the project area. Even with this

disruption, the proactive approach was commended by the Pier Restoration Corporation and the Holiday Inn for swift implementation and coordination of the project.

## **2. Construction Phasing, Staging, and Entitlements – Project Management**

City staff will provide project management oversight for all projects whether managed by the City or other responsible agencies. As work load increases, staff's efforts will be supplemented with consulting services. Project managers will meet weekly with contractors and vendors to coordinate project activities. An inter-disciplinary project implementation team will meet with the project managers bi-weekly or as needed to reassess and evaluate construction impacts, progress and make adjustments to the implementation plans and resolve conflicts. In addition, regular stakeholder meetings with key business and resident groups within the project areas will be implemented in order to provide status updates and coordinate any detours or local impact.

### Project Entitlements, Permitting and Approvals

Staff will continue to work together to facilitate the public review and project entitlement process, including visits to Boards and Commissions. Through early exploration of potential issues with an interdepartmental team, and careful scheduling of public meetings, some efficiencies in project schedule may be realized. Additionally, past projects have shown that a proactive approach to plan check including consultation with the Building Official has enabled project managers to identify potential issues early in the process and move through the permitting process quickly.

### Project Construction

The City will take an holistic approach to the construction of future projects, will identify key issues and concerns that might have an impact on residents, businesses and motorists, and will work to coordinate and implement projects without delay or any unmitigated significant impact. Staff is considering the whole City as the project area in order to coordinate and schedule the work efficiently. Staff will map out and continually update all construction projects and prepare a construction coordination map of planned and active construction projects.

### Construction Phasing

Future construction will be phased with critical attention given to project location, duration, construction impact and proximity to other nearby construction activities/projects. Projects that are further apart could be scheduled concurrently, while projects within one geographic area with impact to adjacent right-of-way might be phased and sequenced if proceeding simultaneously is anticipated to result in cumulative impacts.

Staff will identify appropriate construction working hours depending on the location of the project and peak traffic. Some work may be done after-hours or begun after morning peak traffic hours in order to minimize impact to major access roads and thoroughfares. In addition, construction work which impacts traffic, access, or business will be on hiatus during the holiday period between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day to the extent feasible. Traffic routes for construction material and equipment delivery will be identified during the construction planning period and will be made a part of the contract requirement.

Due to the size and magnitude of several of the projects, there will be dramatic shifts in traffic patterns. Therefore, to minimize impact to the surrounding communities, commuters and businesses, staff has developed general guidelines as depicted in Attachment A.

#### Construction Staging

Construction staging can be strategically identified at the project site or close proximity to the work site in order to minimize impact to the local street network. In the Downtown area, contractors would work to stage on the project site, the sidewalk and possibly parts of the parking lane, to the greatest extent feasible. The contractor working on the California Incline will utilize the project site in addition to a location to be identified for storage of material. Some smaller projects have minimum need for staging and storage of material on-site and will use the work site for material and equipment in use.

#### Expediting Incentives

The City can identify opportunities to include early completion incentives in some of the critical projects. This incentive is intended to motivate the contractor to complete work ahead of schedule without jeopardizing quality of work. Incentives will only be included for critical projects. The criteria that will be used to assess the merits of including incentives will be practicality of early completion, traffic inconvenience and delays, and if the project is an essential functional need of the community.

#### Traffic Management for Construction Phasing

For large-scale projects affecting portions of the City, such as the California Incline, staff can identify construction staging and associated traffic control needs. Staff will build upon lessons learned during inter-departmental coordination of GLOW, the LA Marathon, the Downtown Transit Mall, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement Project, and the Santa Monica Place opening. The comprehensive plan for construction traffic management can be finalized in the next few months, specifying the parameters for temporary traffic control on all City streets. For example, the plan will describe when and for what duration certain City streets can be closed for construction activities, if at all. The plan can also set forth procedures for traffic control and bus detours when construction activities overlap or are in adjacent areas. The goal of the plan will be to ensure that construction activities can occur smoothly while minimizing impacts to residents, visitors, and businesses.

Through weekly review of planned construction activities, specific traffic control plans can be adjusted to reflect changing weather conditions, traffic patterns, special events, or other unique situations. The City's AM radio station, 1680 AM, will provide up-to-the-minute information on traffic conditions, road closures, and parking. Similar to previous large events, a series of messages will broadcast on the City radio station identifying specific conditions, such as detours.

### Moving Forward

The City has many years of experience managing a wide variety of complex and disruptive projects. This experience, and the lessons learned from it, has prepared the City for the challenges that future construction projects will bring. Staff have a solid understanding of construction and its disruptive nature and will work diligently to mitigate all negative impacts to the residents and businesses of Santa Monica.

### **D. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH: "BE EXCITED, BE PREPARED"**

A communication and outreach program is being developed to inform the community about the progress of projects at all stages during planning, design and construction. Keeping residents, the business community, and other interested parties up-to-date and engaged is essential to managing all facets of the construction effort. The program will consist of:

Community dialogue - regular meetings will provide timely information and project updates to neighborhood groups, businesses, stakeholders, and the media. These stakeholders will be engaged in on-going discussion and problem solving to ensure that construction proceeds as smoothly as possible. There will be early notice of any short-term effects, i.e. street closures, detours, noise. A "speakers bureau" approach will be employed.

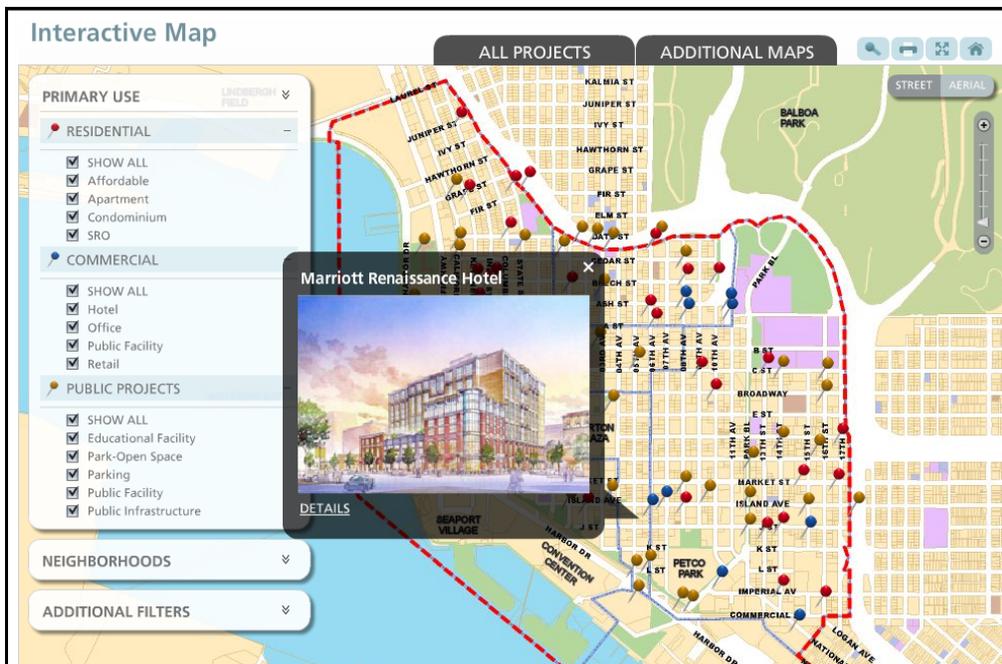
Establishment of strategic partnerships - The City will work in partnership with neighborhood groups, business improvement districts, Bayside District Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Pier Restoration Corporation, and Santa Monica Place to pool communication resources. The City's information will be disseminated to as many people as possible while inviting active participation. Tools will include: web resources; CityTV and radio; interactive GIS maps, smart phone applications, City e-mail and text message systems; newsletters, postcards, street banners and message boards; and paid advertising. Special attention will be paid to ensuring that impacted target audiences are reached.

Hot line and outreach services – Residents will be able to reach someone by phone who can assist them with their specific issues and concerns, and to find out how projects may affect them and how to solve daily problems that arise.

A multi-department messaging team has been assembled to ensure that information is well-communicated and disseminated as comprehensively as possible. Priority will be placed on making it easy for the community to receive information, find information, and get personal assistance with any issue or concerns they may have. As any projects progress, information will be made available to measure, track, and publicize results. The program will be built from lessons learned on similar efforts such as the Transit Mall, and PCH sewer construction where the “Know Before You Go” and “Cone Zone” programs were essential in keeping the community informed. Staff will revisit messages on an ongoing basis to keep the information fresh, accessible and engaging.

### Interactive mapping

Work is underway on an interactive mapping tool, showing project location and key characteristics, that will be posted to the City’s website. This dynamic tool will allow viewers to get immediate project information and images, and can link to additional resources and related efforts. The mapping tool will be easy to read and navigate, like this example from San Diego Center City Development Corporation:



## **NEXT STEPS IN DOWNTOWN/CIVIC CENTER DEVELOPMENT COMING TO COUNCIL**

The City Council will receive regular updates on the coordination and management of the Downtown/Civic Center development, as well as individual project updates and recommended actions at upcoming meetings. In the next few months, anticipated discussion items include the freeway capping feasibility study including connections and linkages between the Downtown and Civic Center, the Civic Auditorium renovation and operations, Redevelopment Agency funding priorities, as well as the Expo Light Rail and the optimal circulation solutions for the Downtown Station.

### **Financial Impact and Budget Actions**

Funding for the proposed public improvements in the Civic Center/Downtown area will come from a variety of sources, including federal funding and Redevelopment Agency funds. One element of uncertainty related to most of the public improvements identified in this report is California Governor Jerry Brown's proposal to eliminate Redevelopment Agencies. Such action could severely limit Santa Monica's ability to implement many of the open space, community facility and infrastructure improvements identified in this report. Council members, community members and staff are continuing to participate in the statewide effort to preserve the funds that are critical for local infrastructure, affordable housing, and economic development. In addition, in August 2010, the City and Redevelopment Agency entered into a Cooperation Agreement that creates a contractual obligation from the Agency to the City for funding of the public improvements.

The FY 2010-11 Adopted Budget and multi-year capital improvement budget plan include approximately \$136 million in Redevelopment Agency funding for the projects. Funds currently budgeted or planned are based on City Council/Redevelopment Agency priorities made in May 2009. The Agency's ability to fund the projects was based on a variety of assumptions regarding growth in tax increment, borrowing costs and timing, leveraging opportunities and State law. As project plans and designs have been further refined, and leveraging opportunities have been pursued, it has become clear that the Redevelopment Agency's initial earmarks will be insufficient to fund some of the

projects according to community expectations. Staff will return to Council in March with an updated analysis of the Agency's estimated funding capacity, as well as updated cost estimates for proposed projects, in order to facilitate a discussion of possible reallocation of Redevelopment Agency funding priorities.

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**Forwarded to Council:**

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City Manager

Attachments:

- A. Guidelines for Traffic Management During Construction

## ATTACHMENT A

### Guidelines for Traffic Management During Construction

- a. Specific traffic detours will be identified whenever a street closure is required.
- b. Scheduling stakeholder/community meetings prior to implementation of projects or phases of construction, to explain and provide information about upcoming work, possible impact and planned mitigation measures.
- c. Requiring one vehicle travel lane in each direction be provided at all times.
- d. Requiring access to residents and businesses to be provided at all times.
- e. Extended street closures, if required, shall be done at night or as needed for public safety.
- f. Traffic control and detours will be coordinated with other construction projects and activities within the vicinity of the work.
- g. Street closures outside the construction zones will not be allowed between November 15th and January 2nd.
- h. Developing a notification list of street closures and installation of Changeable Message Boards prior to start of work or closure of any street or intersection, indicating the date(s) and duration of closures.
- i. In certain conditions, after-hours work may be allowed to reduce impact to movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic within the public right-of-way.
- j. Requiring a phasing plan with timelines of all work within the City of Santa Monica to be prepared to include work within the public right-of-way, City-owned property and other large private projects. The plan will identify and resolve scheduling conflicts and expected impacts (to residents, businesses and traffic) and possible mitigation. Possible traffic mitigations will be identified prior to start of construction and will be reflected in the Traffic Management/Traffic Control Plans.
- k. Long-time staging or storage of material or equipment on residential streets or outside the work area within the public right-of-way will not be allowed.
- l. A comprehensive construction traffic mitigation plan for the impacted areas. The mitigations measures shall include a combination of strategies designed to minimize construction traffic impacts on surrounding roadways, proximate freeway ramps, and neighborhood streets. Strategies to be considered include but are not limited to: construction methods, construction staging strategies, intelligent transportation system strategies (including maximizing the deployment of Changeable Message System), and traffic mitigation measures for the affected surrounding roadways, proximate freeway ramps, and neighborhood streets. Traffic mitigation measures will facilitate traffic to stay on arterial streets and detour routes, and deter traffic from neighborhood streets. Measures could include, but will not be limited to: installation and/or modification of signage, striping/pavement markings, signal timing, speed humps, etc.

- m. No two consecutive/adjacent intersections, over-crossings, major street, and/or freeway ramp intersections shall be substantially impacted at any one time.
- n. No two adjacent or parallel streets will be impacted at any one time. However, exceptions and adjustments will be made as needed to address safety concerns, construction progress and unforeseen circumstances.
- o. Carefully adhere to all traffic management mitigation measures established as part of the environmental review process for specific projects.